

Assange & Sweden

Miscellaneous Information: Part 9

14 November 2016 – 31 December 2017

This is a somewhat random collection of news clippings and other items relating to accusations of sexual misconduct that have been made against Julian Assange by Swedish authorities. I do not claim credit or responsibility for any of the information included here. It is provided merely as a service to anyone who is interested in the case, and especially to those who for various reasons may have not been able to learn much about it.

A large portion of the material is in Swedish, but I believe that at least half is in English. The quality and reliability of the various items vary widely. In some places I have added clarifications, warnings, etc. *[in italics, within square brackets and initialled --A.B.]*. But there is nothing systematic about that, either, and everything in this document should be interpreted with due caution. Let the reader beware.

Questions and comments regarding any of this information are welcome and may be addressed to me via e-mail at: editor@nnn.se

– Al Burke

Links to entire series

www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/resources.htm

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Assange Testimony: Interrogation in Ecuador's London Embassy, 14-15 November 2016

Cover letter by Julian Assange:

Six years ago today, on 7 December 2010, I was handcuffed and locked into Wandsworth prison by order of a Swedish prosecutor, Marianne Ny. I had not and still have not been charged with an offence. The claimed grounds for my arrest and extradition without charge were so that Ny could question me. But it was not until six years later — three weeks ago — that I was questioned for the first time. I have decided to release my responses. But first, some background:

I am Australian. I am not Swedish. I do not speak Swedish. I have never resided in Sweden.

I am entirely innocent. I was already cleared of exactly this allegation in 2010 by the Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm, Eva Finne, who closed the case.

During the height of the Pentagon's conflict with me the following month, the allegation was resurrected by the current prosecutor, Marianne Ny. It was immediately seized on to extinguish my freedom of movement and harm my reputation.

Without even bothering to take my statement, the Swedish Prosecution Authority broke its own rules and released my name to a tabloid newspaper. Prosecutor Ny went on to produce more than 40 press releases and press conferences about me. As a result, to this day more than half a million webpages falsely conflate my name with the word "rape".

For six years I called for my statement to be taken so that the 'preliminary investigation' might again be swiftly closed.

In February this year the United Nations found that Prosecutor Ny has caused Sweden and the UK to breach their international human rights obligations. The UN found that her actions are subjecting me to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" and an unlawful deprivation of liberty which must immediately cease.

Finally, as a result, last month Marianne Ny sent a deputy and a policewoman to London to question me over two days, but — true to form — my Swedish lawyer was excluded from the room in yet another breach of my basic rights.

On 30 November the United Nations re-affirmed its decision in relation to my case. I am now releasing my statement to the public. The reason is simple. I want people to know the truth about how abusive this process has been. **Furthermore, in the past the prosecution has fed partial information to tabloids that politically oppose me.** It is better that my statement, which I am happy with, and which makes it obvious to all that I am innocent, sees the light in full.

Julian Assange

London, 7 December 2016

<https://justice4assange.com/Assange-Testimony.html>

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14/15 NOVEMBER 2016
QUESTIONING AT THE ECUADORIAN EMBASSY
LEGALLY PRIVILEGED

You have subjected me to six years of unlawful, politicized detention without charge in prison, under house arrest and four and a half years at this embassy. You should have asked me this question six years ago. Your actions in refusing to take my statement for the last six years have been found to be unlawful by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and by the Swedish Court of Appeal. You have been found to have subjected me to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. You have denied me effective legal representation in this process. Despite this, I feel compelled to cooperate even though you are not safeguarding my rights.

I. THE SWEDISH PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

I, Julian Assange, an Australian citizen, have had my passport taken by British authorities and so cannot provide formal identification, am in a situation of arbitrary detention according to the decision of the United Nations Working Group of Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) of 4 December 2015; a political refugee since 19 June 2012 at the Embassy of Ecuador with asylum which was granted by Ecuador on 16 August 2012, and hereby appear before the authorities of Sweden and Ecuador in the framework of a rogatory commission that has been entered between these two states, requested by the Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny, and declare that:

1. I ratify what has been expressed by my Ecuadorian lawyer, both in relation to this procedure today and the concerns about the procedure pursued against me in Sweden, **including the failure to allow my Swedish lawyer to be present and the failure to provide me with exculpatory and other discovery material, which I have, to date, not been given proper access to, including in the preparation for this statement today.**

2. Today, 14 November 2016, after having made myself available to the Swedish authorities since the start of this outrageous process six years ago, I am finally given the opportunity to give my statement to the Swedish preliminary investigation. I am grateful to Ecuador for attempting to facilitate this process in the circumstances where the Swedish prosecutor has declined, since 2010, to accept this, my first statement on the allegation against me.

3. I went to Sweden on 11 August 2010. During my stay, I met a woman (hereinafter called "SW"). On the evening of 16 August, 2010 she invited me to her home. During the night and in the morning we had consensual sexual intercourse on several occasions.

4. I therefore could not believe my eyes when five days later I saw a headline in a Swedish tabloid that I was suspected of a crime and arrested in my absence. **I immediately made myself available to the Swedish authorities** to clarify any questions that might exist, although I had no obligation to do so.

5. That same day (21 August 2010), the Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm, Eva Finné, dropped the arrest warrant against me and within days would close the preliminary investigation with the finding that no crime whatsoever had been committed against

the woman "SW" (who is the subject of this procedure). I drew the conclusion that, other than the worldwide damage to my reputation caused by millions of web pages saying that I was "wanted for rape", my life, in this respect, would return to normal.

6. On 23 August 2010, the Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm, **Eva Finné stated she "made the assessment that the evidence did not disclose any offence of rape"**.

7. On 25 August, the Chief Prosecutor found that "The conduct alleged **disclosed no crime at all** and that file (K246314-10) would be closed".

8. A week later, I learned to my surprise that a different prosecutor by the name of "Marianne Ny" had **reopened the preliminary investigation without any consultation or opportunity for me to be heard** — after I had already been cleared and the case had been closed.

9. That prosecutor eventually issued an extradition warrant against me, supposedly to take my statement, **even though I left Sweden with her permission** and in good faith, and had repeatedly tried to see if the prosecutor was ready to accept my statement. **I had not and have still not been charged with a crime.**

10. It has taken more than six years for the prosecutor to now obtain my statement. The delay is entirely caused by the prosecutor who re-opened the closed preliminary investigation. A prosecutor is, according to Swedish law (Chapter 23, Section 4 of the Procedural Code), obligated to conduct the preliminary investigation as expeditiously as possible and when there is no longer reason for pursuing the investigation, it shall be discontinued. At the preliminary investigation phase, the prosecutor is obligated to take into account all the circumstances: those against the suspect **as well as those circumstances in favour of the suspect**, and any evidence favourable to the suspect shall be preserved. **The investigation shall be conducted so that no person is unnecessarily exposed to suspicion, or put to unnecessary cost or inconvenience.**

11. Instead of following the law, prosecutor Marianne Ny has kept the preliminary investigation open without justification for over six years. She deliberately suspended her work to progress and bring to a conclusion the preliminary investigation. She has for more than six years refused to take my statement during which time she has done nothing to pursue the preliminary investigation. The preliminary investigation entered into a stasis more than six years ago. I have always demonstrated my willingness to cooperate in order to speed up the process — although there is no obligation whatsoever for me to do so. All the obligation is on the prosecutor to progress the preliminary investigation. This attitude of **the prosecutor has clearly breached mandatory rules in Swedish law.**

12. I reiterate that over the past six years, **I have continued to call for this prosecutor to accept my statement, including by:**

— Willingly attending a **questioning on 30 August 2010 in Stockholm, where no questions were asked about the allegation, as I had already been cleared.**

— **Staying in Sweden for more than five weeks longer than planned, repeatedly asking if or when I could give a statement, despite pressing commitments elsewhere.**

— **Gaining the prosecutor's consent to leave Sweden** before doing so on 27 September 2010 in good faith, understanding that I was not required to provide a further statement for the time being. On the day I left the country three of my encrypted laptops were seized from me at Stockholm's Arlanda airport. The laptops contained evidence of war crimes pending publication and protected legal correspondence.

— **Offering to return to Sweden to give a statement in October 2010.**

— Offering to give my statement from London via numerous methods including telephone or videolink or in writing from London between October 2010 and up to and through the prosecutor unnecessarily issuing a European Arrest Warrant. The European Arrest Warrant attempted to extradite me, without charge, from the UK to Sweden, to take my statement. **I was actively offering the testimony she claimed she wanted when she sought my arrest.**

— **Providing a DNA sample six years ago** in December 2010 when I was first arrested at Sweden's request and which has been available to the prosecutor for the last six years. She has never bothered to even attempt to use it.

— Offering to give a statement in London via Mutual Legal Assistance, among other suggestions, during my time of house arrest (7 December 2010 – 19 June 2012).

— Offering to give a statement in the Ecuadorian embassy in London as from 19 June 2012, for instance via email from my Swedish lawyers on 24 July 2012 and during a meeting between my lawyers and the prosecutors in Stockholm 7 May 2013 — over four years ago and over three years ago respectively.

— **Offering to come to Sweden provided Sweden would give a guarantee that I am not extradited to another state over my publishing work. This offer was also requested by Ecuador** through diplomatic channels and publicly in 2012, as I am a refugee in its jurisdiction.

13. As this demonstrates, although I have no obligation to do so, I have done everything within my power to offer my testimony to the prosecutor while protecting my right to asylum and protecting myself against the risk of extradition to the United States, where there is an open national security case against me. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, WikiLeaks' alleged source in that matter, Chelsea Manning, has been subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in US detention, and has since been convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

14. The state of Sweden has refused to provide me the necessary assurances against extradition or other transport to the United States since 2010 when such was asked by my lawyers and since 2012 when requested to do so by the state of Ecuador. Sweden has also refused to accept that the asylum Ecuador has granted me requires it to protect me from onwards extradition to the United States, despite this being the recognized norm in asylum cases, thus making it impossible for me to go to Sweden without giving up my fundamental right as a political refugee. **This refusal to recognize my rights as a political refugee has been the sole impediment to my presence in Sweden. I explicitly offered to accept extradition to Sweden provided it simply guarantee that it will not transfer me to another state. This was declined.**

15. Nevertheless, I have continued to offer the prosecutor my statement through mechanisms which can be employed to achieve her stated purpose without putting at risk my fundamental rights, which she has, until recently, rejected.

16. Two years ago **the Svea Court of Appeal on 20 November 2014 severely criticized the prosecutor for her negligence:**

“The Court of Appeal notes, however, that the investigation into the suspected crimes has come to a halt and considers that **the failure of the prosecutors to examine alternative avenues is not in line with their obligation** — in the interests of everyone concerned — to move the preliminary investigation forward.”

17. It was not until March 2015 that Marianne Ny finally — **after she had been found in breach of her duties by Sweden's Court of Appeal** and my case was before the Supreme Court and it became apparent that she might lose — claimed that she would, under certain restrictive conditions, accept my statement after all.

18. Since that time, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) released its ruling on 5 February 2016 that my situation in the embassy amounts to an unlawful and arbitrary detention, **in breach of Sweden's binding legal obligations under international law. UNWGAD found that Sweden and the UK have disregarded the asylum that I have been granted by Ecuador**, forcing me to choose between deprivation of liberty and the risk of losing Ecuador's protection and being extradited to the United States.

19. **It then took Marianne Ny more than 18 months after her claimed change of position at the Supreme Court to arrange this meeting. I have not been responsible for a single day of delay in this process.** All the delay has been caused by prosecutor Marianne Ny and the state authorities. Again note that all the obligation is on the prosecutor.

20. Furthermore, the UNWGAD concluded that the Swedish prosecutor has breached my due process rights in the conduct of this preliminary investigation and that seeking my extradition to Sweden as the only option in these circumstances was “excessive and unnecessary” [para 97]. **In particular, it found:**

“... after more than five years' time lapse, he is still left at the stage of preliminary investigation with no predictability as to whether and when a formal process of any judicial dealing would commence...” [para. 97] “...**Mr Assange has been denied the opportunity to provide a statement, which is a fundamental aspect of the *audi alteram partem* principle, the access to exculpatory evidence, and thus the opportunity to defend himself against the allegations...**” [para. 98] “...the duration of such detention is *ipso facto* incompatible with the presumption of innocence.” [para. 98]

21. As a result of the Swedish prosecutor's actions, UNWGAD found my circumstances to be of an increasingly serious deprivation of liberty which is of an indefinite nature and is already far longer than the maximum penalty I could ever theoretically face in Sweden. For these reasons **UNWGAD found that the severe and indefinite nature of these deprivations amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in breach of Sweden's obligation under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 7.** The severity of this treatment is further confirmed by the expert opinion of Fernando Mariño, the former President of the UN Committee Against Torture, which is entered into the official record of this proceeding.

22. Ten months after the UNWGAD determination the harshness of the situation continues to affect my physical and psychological health. My lawyers have informed the Swedish authorities of the ongoing deterioration of my health through the medical certificates and expert opinions of Dr. Michael Korzinski and Dr. Fluxman, from 11 November 2015; of Dr. Ladbrooke from 8 December 2015; of Dr. Michael Korzinski from 15 June 2016; and of Dr. Ladbrooke from 9 November 2016.

23. And so, finally, here we are today, under the jurisdiction of Ecuador, with my rights ever increasingly limited, as my Ecuadorian defence counsel has expressed. After more than six years, I am finally being given the “opportunity” to give my statement but with my Swedish counsel having been excluded and under a clear situation of legal defencelessness, resulting from years of negligence and intentional and unlawful delays by the Swedish authorities.

24. All the irregularities that have occurred through the acts or omissions of the prosecution authority and the six-year delay to date of this disproportionate, inhumane and unlawful preliminary investigation **have permanently destroyed all possibilities for me to properly defend myself — which is no doubt their intention.**

25. Following the above, I wish to express in the strongest terms, that, in addition to the breaches of my due process rights in the investigation to date, **the procedure to be adopted today in taking my statement further breaches those rights:**

— My Swedish defence lawyer was not permitted to be present today, despite the fact that these proceedings concern a Swedish criminal preliminary investigation.

— In the opinion of my general practitioner, I am unfit to prepare and participate in these proceedings (after having been denied hospital treatment and sunlight for 4.5 years).

— My Ecuadorian defence counsel has had no access to the case file, let alone in Spanish, the language he understands, nor has he had adequate time to prepare my defence.

— My lawyers and I have not been permitted access to the case file.

— I have been denied my request to read the text messages that my Swedish defence lawyers have read, which are a key element to my defence because they clearly show that I am innocent.

26. Due to all the shortcomings stated above, prosecutor Marianne Ny should have drawn the obvious conclusion that she discontinue the preliminary investigation.

27. In this context I once again remind you that I have already been cleared and that the preliminary investigation was closed by Chief Prosecutor Eva Finné in August 2010.

28. Given this history I have good reason to have concern about whether this “preliminary investigation” is being conducted in good faith and whether honest and impartial consideration will be given to my statement. **I suspect that the real purpose of the Swedish prosecutor coming here today is not to obtain my statement but is**

simply a ruse to tick a box to ensure the technical possibility to indict me, irrespective of how I answer any questions.

29. I do not believe that prosecutor Marianne Ny is acting in good faith or with the objectivity and impartiality required of her office. For example, after circumventing the Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm's decision to close this case, **prosecutor Ny has made at least 40 press releases and press conferences about me where my name has been published, even though there is no charge against me and I have been previously cleared, subjecting me to endless needless suspicion, in clear violation of her duty to not do so under Chapter 23, Section 4 of the Swedish Procedural Code.**

30. My overall conclusion is that the prosecutor's conduct of the preliminary investigation, for all the reasons above has continued to deprive me of the right to defend myself.

31. I have no obligation to cooperate with this abuse, but I find myself in a coercive situation. I am meant to be protected by the decision of the UNWGAD which makes it clear that this "preliminary investigation" has violated my human rights and that its attempts to arrest me should be discontinued immediately. That decision was issued almost a year ago, but my situation remains unchanged. Despite the many violations already described I feel compelled to give my statement today so that there can be no more excuses for the Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny to continue my indefinite unlawful detention, which is a threat to my health and even to my life. I have been pushing and indeed litigating for this prosecutor to take my statement for more than six years. **The prosecutor has made excuse after excuse to not take my statement.** I will not grant this prosecutor any excuse to continue to avoid taking my statement as I fear she would use it as a means to indefinitely prolong my cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

II. REASONS WHY I TRAVELLED TO STOCKHOLM IN AUGUST 2010

32. I am the editor-in-chief and publisher of WikiLeaks, a publishing organisation specializing in the analysis of records under risk of censorship that are of political, diplomatic, historical or ethical importance. Among other countries, WikiLeaks publishes and analyses documents that concern the United States, Sweden and the United Kingdom, including millions of documents relating to actions of military, intelligence and foreign services. I have received numerous awards in relation to my publishing work, including the 2008 Index on Censorship Freedom of Expression Award, The Economist New Media Award (USA) 2008, the 2009 Amnesty International UK Media Award (New Media), the 2010 Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence (USA) award, the 2011 Sydney Peace Foundation Gold Medal (Australia), the 2011 Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism (UK), the 2011 Walkley Award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism (Australia), the 2011 Blanquerna Award for Best Communicator (Spain), the 2011 International Piero Passetti Journalism Prize of the National Union of Italian Journalists, the 2011 Jose Couso Press Freedom Award (Spain), the 2012 Privacy International Award, the 2013 Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award, and the 2013 Global Exchange Human Rights Awards, as well as formal nominations for the United Nations' Mandela Prize (2014) **and for the past six consecutive years for the Nobel Peace Prize.**

33. The US launched an investigation against me in early 2010 under the Obama administration, while Hillary Clinton was the US Secretary of State. This administration has expended very substantial resources on attempting to prosecute me and attempting to spy on my publishing work despite its constitutionally protected status. **The US government's WikiLeaks investigation is described in official diplomatic correspondence as being “unprecedented in scale and nature”.**

34. All the citations I mention are in my affidavit from 2 September 2013, which I am entering into the official record of this proceeding.

35. The US government has periodically confirmed in public that the national security case against WikiLeaks remains open and ongoing, including in proceedings from this year. **Numerous human rights and freedom of speech organizations such as Human Rights Watch have criticized the Obama administration for pursuing a criminal case against WikiLeaks and me.**

36. The investigation against Wikileaks is led by the FBI and has involved a dozen other agencies, including the CIA, the NSA, and the Defence Intelligence Agency. **The US government has described the investigation as a "whole of government" investigation. In Alexandria, Virginia, a Grand Jury has been meeting behind closed doors for the past six years under case number 10GJ3793 to explore ways to imprison me and seven others who they have identified as "founders, owners or managers of WikiLeaks".** The prosecution in the Chelsea Manning case attempted to establish that Private Manning acted as an agent under my control rather than as a journalistic source of mine, even though in Private Manning's own statement to the court, she said this was not the case. The US military charged Private Manning with twenty-two counts in connection with the release of more than 700,000 classified or confidential documents to WikiLeaks. On 30 July 2013 private Manning was convicted of twenty of these counts and sentenced to thirty-five years in prison on 20 August 2013.

37. Private Manning was detained for more than 1,000 days before the trial commenced. During this time she remained for 258 days in solitary confinement. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture found that the conditions and length of private Manning's confinement at Quantico, Virginia, amounted to “inhuman and degrading treatment”. **Private Manning's lawyer, David Coombs, said that the treatment of Private Manning was an attempt at breaking her so that Manning would implicate me. The US military court system eventually found that Private Manning was unlawfully punished as a result of this treatment while in US custody. Private Manning was convicted of espionage; the first whistleblower ever so convicted.** Private Manning was acquitted of the "aiding the enemy" charge, but the US government could still seek to employ this charge against me. Private Manning is serving a 35 year prison sentence.

38. According to the respected UK newspaper The Independent, **the US and Sweden entered informal talks regarding my extradition from Sweden to the United States in early December 2010. These talks of my extradition concerned the US Grand Jury and FBI investigation against WikiLeaks, which is also the reason that Ecuador granted me asylum.**

39. **The aggressive calls to stop WikiLeaks from publishing were the reason for my travel to Stockholm. US officials' rhetoric grew increasingly aggressive in the period immediately prior to my visit to Sweden on 11 August 2010. In June, a Daily Beast**

news report entitled 'The State Department's Worst Nightmare' revealed that the Pentagon was "conducting an aggressive investigation" into whether WikiLeaks had 260,000 US diplomatic cables and the material's whereabouts.

40. Two days later, an article titled 'Pentagon Manhunt' appeared, describing Pentagon investigators desperately trying to track me down in relation to the impending publication of Cablegate:

"Anxious that Wikileaks may be on the verge of publishing a batch of secret State Department cables, investigators are desperately searching for founder Julian Assange".

41. On 17 June 2010 US Department of Defense spokesman Geoff Morrell stated there was an "ongoing criminal investigation [concerning WikiLeaks], involving the Army Criminal Investigation Division, as well as, I believe, some other law enforcement agencies."

42. The Pentagon officials "would not discuss the methods being used to find Assange, nor would they say if they had information to suggest where he is now." On reading this, I realised WikiLeaks' continued ability to publish effectively and my own personal safety were at serious risk.

43. During the month of July I worked with a team of journalists in the United Kingdom to publish the Afghan War Diaries: 75,000 secret Pentagon documents about the war in Afghanistan, which included the detailed records about the deaths of nearly 20,000 people. The day after WikiLeaks published the Afghan War Diaries, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs stated that WikiLeaks "poses a very real and potential threat".

44. I published the Afghan War Diaries approximately two weeks before I travelled to Sweden. In the aftermath of the publication, US government officials made efforts to influence the way in which the media reported on our publications. The purpose was to delegitimise WikiLeaks protections as a publisher under the US First Amendment. **For example, it attempted to falsely cast WikiLeaks as an adversary, opposed to US national interests, a false claim that I would later see echoed in Swedish media.**

45. **The New York Times reported that the White House had emailed its reporters with suggested "reporting tacks to take" on WikiLeaks and WikiLeaks' disclosures, in an attempt to induce news outlets into referring to WikiLeaks in these terms.**

46. The White House sent an e-mail with the subject heading "Thoughts on Wikileaks" containing a memo in which the White House "advised journalists on possible reporting tacks to take on the [Afghan War Diaries] documents [...] As you report on this issue, it's worth noting that wikileaks is not an objective news outlet but rather an organization that opposes US policy in Afghanistan."

47. I also learned from news reports that **security authorities from my home country Australia were assisting the US intelligence investigation into WikiLeaks and me:**

"Australian security authorities are assisting a United States intelligence probe into the whistleblower website Wikileaks and its Australian founder and editor, Julian Assange. The US request for support in what Australian national security sources described as 'a counter-espionage investigation' preceded Wikileaks' dramatic publication yesterday of a leaked US military operations log, described as an

"extraordinary compendium" of 91,000 reports by United States and allied soldiers fighting in Afghanistan."

48. On July 28th, just three days after publishing the Afghan War Diaries and two weeks before I travelled to Sweden, US Department of Defense Secretary Gates "called FBI Director Robert Mueller and asked for the FBI's assistance in [the WikiLeaks] investigation as a partner." The US Defence Department declared:

"Calling on the FBI to aid the investigation ensures that the department will have all the resources needed to investigate... noting that **use of the bureau ensures the investigation can go wherever it needs to go.**"

49. The New York Times reported that US Defense Secretary Robert Gates "declined to comment about the investigation beyond noting that he had enlisted the Federal Bureau of Investigation to assist Army investigators, a move that is seen as a precursor to potentially charging people who are not uniformed service members... A person familiar with the investigation has said that Justice Department lawyers are exploring whether Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks could be charged with inducing, or conspiring in, violations of the Espionage Act, a 1917 law that prohibits the unauthorized disclosure of national security information."

50. On 1 August 2010, the press reported that the FBI and British police were carrying out searches and interrogations in the UK, where I found myself at the time, in connection with WikiLeaks' publications.

51. Over the next days, US rhetoric and actions against WikiLeaks intensified. **Prominent commentators and former White House officials championed extraterritorial measures and the violation of international law "if necessary".**

52. One of these commentators was **former presidential speech writer** Marc Thiessen, who published a Washington Post article entitled 'WikiLeaks Must be Stopped':

"...the government has a wide range of options for dealing with him. It can employ not only law enforcement but also intelligence and military assets to bring Assange to justice."

53. Thiessen argued that the US should put pressure on any state in which I was located **and that the US should, if necessary, arrest me even without the consent of that state.** He cited legal advice from the Department of Justice regarding FBI operations abroad:

"The United States should make clear that it will not tolerate any country — and particularly NATO allies such as Belgium and Iceland — providing safe haven for criminals who put the lives of NATO forces at risk. With appropriate diplomatic pressure, these governments may cooperate in bringing Assange to justice. **But if they refuse, the United States can arrest Assange on their territory without their knowledge or approval.**"

54. **Thiessen further asserted that the FBI could violate international law in order to stop me and apprehend other people associated with WikiLeaks' publishing activities.** Thiessen cited a Department of Justice memo:

"The FBI may use its statutory authority to investigate and arrest individuals for violating United States law, even if the FBI's actions contravene customary international law" and that an "arrest that is inconsistent with international or foreign

law does not violate the Fourth Amendment." In other words, we do not need permission to apprehend Assange or his co-conspirators anywhere in the world.

"Arresting Assange would be a major blow to his organization. But taking him off the streets is not enough; we must also recover the documents he unlawfully possesses and disable the system he has built to illegally disseminate classified information.

"This should be done, ideally, through international law enforcement cooperation. But if such cooperation is not forthcoming, the United States can and should act alone."

55. Seven days before I travelled to Sweden I was acutely aware that my personal safety was at risk. Scott Horton, legal affairs and national security contributor at Harper's, wrote the article 'WikiLeaks: The National-Security State Strikes Back':

"[Assange] will certainly be targeted for petty harassment and subject to steady surveillance, and efforts to kidnap him are almost certainly being spun at this very moment."

56. Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell announced **an anti-WikiLeaks task force comprised of 80 people was operating 24 hours a day. One month later, it had grown to 120 people.** The "distinct responsibility" of the Information Review Task Force — dubbed by some occupants as the "WikiLeaks War Room" — was "... to gather evidence about the workings of WikiLeaks that might someday be used by the Justice Department to prosecute Assange and others on espionage charges."

57. The article "The General Gunning for WikiLeaks" described the task force: "In a nondescript suite of government offices not far from the Pentagon, nearly **120 intelligence analysts, FBI agents, and others are at work — 24 hours a day, seven days a week — on the frontlines of the government's secret war against WikiLeaks.** Dubbed the **WikiLeaks War Room** by some of its occupants, the round-the-clock operation is on high alert this month ..."

58. The same article states that Brig. General Robert A. Carr, who runs "the Pentagon's equivalent to the CIA", the Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Center of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), was "handpicked" by Defense Secretary Robert Gates to head the team because he "is highly respected ...and a fitting adversary to Assange".

59. General Carr's "central assignment" was reportedly "to try to determine exactly what classified information might have been leaked to WikiLeaks". General Carr testified at the Chelsea Manning sentencing hearing on 31 July 2013.

60. I followed closely how pressure mounted on US allies to track my movements and to stop our publications. Official sources within the administration revealed to the press that the US was not only considering how to prosecute me in relation to WikiLeaks' publications in the US, but was also requesting their allies to prosecute me under their own national security laws:

"American officials confirmed last month that the Justice Department was weighing a range of criminal charges against Assange and others... Now, the officials say, they want other foreign governments to consider the same sorts of criminal charges."

An article published the day before I went to Sweden stated that "The Obama administration is pressing Britain, Germany, Australia, and other allied Western governments to consider opening criminal investigations of WikiLeaks founder Julian

Assange and to severely limit his nomadic travels across international borders, American officials say."

61. In addition to the stated intention to restrict my freedom of movement, the US government attempted to convince its allies not to allow me entry into their territory as a warning to me, to those working with me and WikiLeaks, and to our supporters:

"Through diplomatic and military channels, the Obama administration is hoping to convince Britain, Germany, and Australia, among other allied governments, that Assange should not be welcome on their shores either, given the danger that his group poses to their troops stationed in Afghanistan, American officials say. They say severe limitations on Assange's travels might serve as a useful warning to his followers that their own freedom is now at risk."

62. The Australian government publicly entertained the possibility of canceling my passport, reportedly as a result of pressure placed on Australia by the United States. Australian Attorney General Robert McClelland assured the United States that the Australian government would "provide every assistance to United States law-enforcement authorities", including by exploring the possibility of canceling my passport.

63. US pressure even resulted in public attempts to influence decisions based on human rights considerations where I and WikiLeaks were concerned. Through US ambassador to Switzerland Donald Beyer, the Obama administration pressured Switzerland not to grant me political asylum while I participated at the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the United States. US ambassador Beyer gave an interview to Swiss newspaper Sonntag:

"The United States ambassador to Switzerland, Donald Beyer, has also entered the Wikileaks debate. He has warned the Swiss government against granting Assange asylum, which the Australian founder of Wikileaks has said he was considering requesting. "Switzerland should very carefully consider whether to provide shelter to someone who is on the run from the law".

64. The Daily Beast reported that Washington was prepared to review its diplomatic relations with Iceland because parts of WikiLeaks operations had been conducted in that country:

"An American military official tells The Daily Beast that Washington may also want to closely review its relations with Iceland in the wake of the release of the Afghan war logs."

65. In the context of my heightened concerns about US activities in the United Kingdom in relation to the WikiLeaks investigation, I decided to leave the country. When I travelled to Sweden on 11 August 2010, the aggressive rhetoric against me had reached new heights. **Former CIA general counsel Jeffrey Smith told National Public Radio:**

"I think it is entirely appropriate for us to be very aggressive.... If I were the US government, I would be trying to make it as difficult as possible for the WikiLeaks founder to continue to do business... To the extent we can persuade our allies to consider prosecution, I think that's all to the good."

66. On the same day I arrived in Sweden, 11 August 2010, I received information from an Australian intelligence source that extra-legal actions might be taken against

me by the US or its allies. This was later reported in the **Australian newspaper The Age**:

“An Australian intelligence official privately warned Wikileaks on August 11 last year that Assange was the subject of inquiries by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, and that information relating to him and others associated with Wikileaks had been provided to the US in response to requests through intelligence liaison channels. The Australian intelligence official is also claimed to have specifically warned that Assange could be at risk of 'dirty tricks' from the US intelligence community.”

67. Friends and associates of mine and volunteers for WikiLeaks were regularly targeted at borders from this moment on. Border searches and interrogations have affected security researcher Jacob Appelbaum, who had given the keynote speech in my place at the HOPE conference on 16 July 2010. In an interview for Democracy Now, Appelbaum described the targeting he experiences at airports:

“In the period of time since [the HOPE conference on 16 July 2010] they’ve started detaining me, around a dozen-plus times... I was put into a special room, where they frisked me, put me up against the wall... they took my laptop... then they interrogated me, denied me access to a lawyer. And when they did the interrogation, they have a member of the U.S. Army, on American soil. And they refused to let me go. They... implied that if I didn’t make a deal with them, that I’d be sexually assaulted in prison.”

68. Within days of arriving in Sweden I became concerned about my safety and security there, in particular because of the pressure being brought to bear on US allies, including Sweden.

69. I was aware of the publicly stated attempts to track my movements. I used a number of risk minimisation procedures, including relying on the goodwill of friends and their circles for my safety and to protect the confidentiality of my whereabouts and communications.

70. My contacts in Sweden had arranged for me to stay in two safe houses during the few days I had intended to stay in Sweden. One of the safe houses belonged to a journalist who I knew and another to a Social Democrat party figure unknown to me who had lent her apartment while she was away, or so I had been told. However, because these two original safe houses arranged prior to my arrival became known very soon, I stayed in three additional safe houses between 11 and 20 August 2010.

71. I travelled to Sweden to put in place a legal strategy to try to protect our publishing servers, some of which were in Sweden. **I believed these assets were at risk as a result of the intense political pressure from the US described above. I met with the Swedish Pirate Party, which was represented at the European Parliament at the time, who agreed to host copies of WikiLeaks servers under their party name in order to further protect our publishing work.** I also felt it was best to leave the United Kingdom at that time because the FBI was known to be carrying out operations in connection with the investigation into our publications. I intended to stay in Sweden for less than a week.

72. **My dependency on other people while in Sweden was aggravated when, shortly after my arrival in Stockholm, my personal bank cards were blocked. On**

13 August 2010, the WikiLeaks organization's Moneybookers account could no longer be accessed. That same day, I contacted the company, who replied: "following recent publicity and the subsequently (sic) addition of the Wikileaks entity to blacklists in Australia and watch lists in the USA, we have terminated the business relationship". I requested further information from MoneyBookers on 13 August and 16 August regarding the closure, including which blacklists and watchlists my accounts and/or WikiLeaks' account had been added to, but I was refused this information.

73. The freezing of WikiLeaks' Moneybookers account was an early example of what **in December 2010 would become a concerted extra-judicial global economic blockade against WikiLeaks by US financial service companies, including VISA, MasterCard, PayPal, Bank of America, Western Union and American Express.** The blockade was the subject of several court actions, a European Commission investigation, a resolution by the European Parliament, and condemnation by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. On 24 April 2013 the Supreme Court of Iceland found the blockade against WikiLeaks to be unlawful.

74. **As a result of being suddenly cut off from personal and organizational funds upon arriving in Sweden, I had to rely on others not only for shelter, but also for food, safety and telephone credit.** Unfortunately, I knew very few people in Sweden and those I did were only sporadically in the country.

75. On 13 August 2010 one of the main Swedish newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet, published an article entitled 'Defence ministry prepared for the next leak', which **reported that the Swedish Ministry of Defence had a dedicated group 'preparing for WikiLeaks next publication' and had analysed 76,000 previous publications from WikiLeaks in relation to Swedish troops in Afghanistan.**

76. Five days later, **Swedish state television (SVT) published a segment entitled 'We risk United States relationship deteriorating', which argued that the presence of WikiLeaks in Sweden would negatively affect the strategic relationship between Sweden and the United States.**

III. THE PERIOD 14-20 AUGUST 2010

77. I met "SW" during my visit to Stockholm. The first time I met her was on the morning of 14 August 2010 when she came to a speech I gave on what my work revealed about the war in Afghanistan, in which Sweden has troops under US command. She sat in the front row and photographed me. She came to the small private lunch after my talk where **one of the organizers stated that she was a volunteer for their organization although they would later claim that this was not true.** Due to the security threats against me as a result of my work, **I was in a precarious situation.** I relied on the kindness of strangers and the safety and discretion they were willing to offer me. I was in a foreign northern country, where I did not speak the language. I had no access to cash because the bank cards I was travelling with had been frozen due to the extra-judicial political measures taken by financial service companies against my organization and me (which are well-documented and the subject of extensive litigation).

78. Prominent “pro-war” personalities were calling for my assassination and capture, and the US administration had stated publicly that my movements were being tracked. “SW” appeared to be sympathetic to my plight and also appeared to be romantically interested in me. **She was not close to people I was close to, so it seemed that those who meant me harm would be unlikely to try to find me by monitoring her movements.** She said she worked at the National Museum so I asked her to show me, to try to establish her bonafides. At the Museum an IMAX film was playing, where **she kissed me and placed my hands on her breasts.** She asked whether I was staying with woman “AA”, a Swedish politician, and seemed concerned by it in a manner which I found strange.

79. At her initiative we met again on the evening of 16 August 2010 and she suggested we go to a hotel in Stockholm. For security reasons, I said I would prefer to go to her house even though it was outside of Stockholm. She then invited me to her home. We went by train and she paid for my ticket since my bank cards had been frozen.

80. **“SW” made it very clear that she wanted to have sexual intercourse with me.** I felt concerned about the intensity of “SW”'s interest and I also deeply loved another woman, which played on my mind and left me emotionally distracted. “SW” knew an unusual amount of detail about me, and appeared annoyed with me when I was on my phone searching for news related to the US official government statements against me. **I perceived she was irritated when I wasn't giving her my full attention.**

81. **I felt there was a risk my location would be revealed and that she might act unpredictably if she believed I was rejecting her.** During that night and again in the morning we had consensual sexual intercourse on four or five occasions. Her words, her expressions and her physical reactions made it clear to me that she encouraged and enjoyed our interactions.

82. I would later discover that she had collected dozens of photos of me in the weeks before we even met. **Her recent FLIKR photo account was filled with pages and pages of photos of me and no other person.**

83. In the morning she went out to pick up breakfast for us. After enjoying breakfast together, I left her home on good terms. **At no stage when I was with her did she express that I had disrespected her in any way or acted contrary to her wishes other than to not be interested in her enough to pay her attention** above my security situation or attempts to sleep. She accompanied me to the train station on her bicycle and we kissed each other goodbye. She asked that I call her so we could see each other again and I said I would. She called the next day or the day after. We made friendly small talk but we were quickly disconnected due to a failing mobile connection. I did not call her back due to problems obtaining telephone credit (as a result of my bank cards being blocked) and the pressing security situation.

84. I spoke to her next on Friday 20 August, after a Swedish friend said that he had heard that “SW” was at the hospital and that she wanted to talk to me. As I had not called her back, and she had previously gone through considerable effort to attract my attention, I was initially concerned that she may have attempted self-harm in order to force me to pay attention to her. So I called her. She said she was at a hospital and asked me to come down to meet her to test myself for sexually transmitted diseases so

she would not have to worry while she was waiting for her own test results (HIV, for instance, needs months to show up).

85. But I was busy that day attempting to deal with the escalating political and legal threats against me from the Pentagon. I said I couldn't do anything until the next day (a Saturday). She said that it was normal in Sweden to go to the police to get advice about STDs and that if I didn't come down to the hospital she would go to the police to ask whether I could be forced to get tested. **I told her I found her mention of police strange and threatening. She stated that she was only concerned about the tests and that it had no concealed meaning. I agreed to take the test out of goodwill and to reassure her, although I told her I could not do it until the following day, Saturday.**

86. We were in agreement and arranged to meet the following day in the nearby park around lunchtime when I would have time to get tested. She said she was fine and seemed at ease.

87. You can imagine my disbelief when I woke the next morning to the news that I had been arrested in my absence for "rape" and that police were "hunting" all over Stockholm for me.

88. Her behaviour towards me on the night in question and in the morning made it clear that she actively and enthusiastically wanted me to have sex with her. This is also shown by text messages "SW" sent to her friends during the course of the evening I was at her home and during that week, which the Swedish police collected from her phone. **Although the prosecutor has fought for years to prevent me, the public and the courts from seeing them, my lawyers were permitted to see them at the police station and were able to note down a number of them, including:**

— On 14 August 2010 "SW" sent the following text to a friend: "I want him. I want him." Followed by several more of similar content (all referring to me) in the lead-up to the events in question (13:05);

— On 17 August "SW" wrote that we had long foreplay, but nothing happened (01:14); then it got better (05:15);

— On 17 August, after all sex had occurred, "SW" wrote to a friend that it "turned out all right" other than STD/pregnancy risk (10:29);

— **On 20 August "SW", while at the police station, wrote that she "did not want to put any charges on Julian Assange" but that "the police were keen on getting their hands on him" (14:26); and that she was "choked (*sic* shocked) when they arrested him" because she "only wanted him to take a test" (17:06);**

— **On 21 August "SW" wrote that she "did not want to accuse" Julian Assange "for anything", (07:27); and that it was the "police who made up the charges (*sic*)" (22:25);**

— On 23 August "AA" (the other woman whose case was dropped in August 2015) wrote to "SW" that it was important that she went public with her story so that they could form public opinion for their case (06:43);

— On 23 August "SW" wrote that it was the police, not herself, who started the whole thing (16:02);

— On 26 August "AA" wrote to "SW" that they ought to sell their stories for money to a newspaper (13:38);

— On 28 August "AA" wrote that they had a contact on the biggest Swedish tabloid (12:53); and "SW" wrote that their lawyer negotiated with the tabloid (15:59);

89. These text messages clearly show what really happened between "SW" and me. It is clearly consensual sex between adults. The communication between "AA" and "SW" later sadly speaks for itself.

90. The prosecutor's allegation in the extradition proceeding was reported to be that one of these sexual interactions started the next morning while "SW" was asleep (in the same bed after a night of consensual intercourse) and that when she woke up she consented to the intercourse in question, but for the first few moments was not theoretically capable of consent due to sleep.

91. **This is false. I was certain "SW" was not asleep. I was also certain she expressly consented to unprotected sex before such intercourse started.** This is also evidenced by "SW"'s own text messages. For example, my lawyers refer me to the following text message to her friend:

— 17 August, 08:42 am: JA did not want to use a condom.

92. Then a day later she explicitly texts her friend that she had not, in fact, been asleep.

— 18 August, 06:59 am: I was half asleep.

IV. SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

93. Although the police initially opened an investigation into 'rape' in relation to woman AA, there was no allegation in her testimony that she had been raped. She expressed in her statement to the police that she consented to sex and subsequently **tweeted on 22 April in 2013 "I have not been raped"**.

94. The press was immediately and unlawfully informed that there was a warrant for my arrest for what was reported as the "rape of two" women. The prosecutor unlawfully, and without any subsequent explanation or remedy, immediately confirmed to the press that there was a live warrant for my arrest. The prosecutor's breach triggered an avalanche of news reports. **Within days there were millions of references online which associated my name with the word 'rape'.**

95. Immediately the police accusations were used to attack WikiLeaks' work and my reputation as its publisher. US Defense Secretary Robert Gates celebrated the news of my 'rape' arrest warrant with a smile, telling reporters that the arrest "sounds like good news to me". **Various twitter accounts officially associated with the Pentagon spread descriptions of me as a "rapist" and a "fugitive". This slander was then used as a means to attack my organization's reputation.**

96. I canceled my other appointments and remained in Sweden. I gave an interview to the police on 30 August 2010 in relation to the only remaining allegation. **The Agreed Statement of Facts and Issues submitted to the Supreme Court of the UK states:**

“On 30th August 2010, the Appellant, who had voluntarily remained in Sweden to cooperate with the investigation, attended for police interview in respect of the ongoing Preliminary Investigation in respect of AA’s report. He answered all questions asked of him.”

97. **I was highly concerned for my personal safety and the safety of WikiLeaks' operations while I remained in Sweden, but I stayed for another five weeks after the 'preliminary investigation' was initiated in order to clear my name and to cooperate with the police investigation. Only after I had obtained an assurance from the prosecutor Marianne Ny that I could leave the jurisdiction did I prepare to leave the country.**

98. Less than 24 hours after the warrant for my arrest was issued, the chief prosecutor of Stockholm was appointed to take over the investigation and canceled the arrest warrant, stating “I don't believe there is any reason to suspect that he has committed rape”.

99. Shortly after prosecutor Marianne Ny had resurrected the “SW” allegation, the **head of the Swedish military intelligence service (“MUST”) published an article 'WikiLeaks is a threat to our soldiers'. I became increasingly concerned about Sweden’s close relationship to the US government in military and intelligence matters.**

100. Through the diplomatic cables I also learned of secret, informal arrangements between Sweden and the United States. **The cables revealed that Swedish intelligence services have a pattern of lawless conduct where US government interests are concerned. The US diplomatic cables revealed that the Swedish Justice Department had deliberately hidden particular intelligence information exchanges with the United States from the Parliament of Sweden because they believed the exchanges were likely unlawful.**

101. The US diplomatic cables, reports by major human rights organizations, and the UN's own findings made me aware that **Sweden had been complicit in torture as a result of its participation in secret CIA renditions from 2001 through to at least 2006** (which I would subsequently reveal). The rendition of the Swedish political refugees Agiza and Alzery resulted in strong condemnation by the UN Committee Against Torture, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others. **There is still complete impunity for the officers of the Swedish state involved and their US counterparts.** No charges have been laid although **the complicity of the Swedish state has been well established in successful civil litigation.** I subsequently learned that Sweden was partly implicated in CIA renditions of its own citizens from Djibouti in 2013. My Swedish lawyer Thomas Olsson represents one of the rendered.

102. Through an intelligence source, I became aware that on 19 August 2010, the **Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) had requested information about me from an Australian intelligence organization.** The Australian intelligence organization (ASIO) responded to the request with information about me on 21 August 2010.

103. On 29 November 2010 WikiLeaks commenced publishing Cablegate, 251,287 US State Department diplomatic cables. The classified diplomatic dispatches related to every country in the world. In terms of content, it was the largest set of classified documents ever to be published.

104. The next day State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley stated that “we are investigating aggressively” into WikiLeaks and that **a State Department “War Room”, which is different from the Pentagon “War Room”, had been set up.**

105. On 30 November 2010, two days after WikiLeaks started publishing Cablegate, Interpol, at the request of Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny, issued a Red Notice to 188 countries for my arrest in relation to the Swedish “preliminary investigation” (for which no charges or indictment existed). **At the request of the Swedish prosecutor Interpol also made the notice public.**

106. The Swedish prosecutor issued a European Arrest Warrant on 2 December 2010 to the UK which was processed by the UK Serious Organised Crimes Agency (SOCA).

107. I lost my freedom on 7 December 2010, the day after UK authorities certified the Swedish extradition warrant. I appeared at the police station, having made a prior appointment. I was arrested and placed in solitary confinement in the highest security unit of Wandsworth prison, the CSU.

108. The day after I was imprisoned, the UK newspaper **The Independent reported that US and Swedish officials had entered informal talks regarding my extradition from Sweden to the United States in connection with the US Grand Jury and FBI investigation against WikiLeaks.**

109. After ten days, the UK courts found that I should be released on bail. In response the Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny instructed her representatives in the UK, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), to appeal to keep me in prison, but the UK courts found her request to be excessive.

110. I was moved to house arrest after providing UK authorities with £340,000 (nearly half a million dollars) and having an electronic monitoring device fitted to my ankle.

111. On 13 January 2011 **the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) wrote to Marianne Ny, assuring her “Please do not think that the case is being dealt with as just another extradition request”.**

112. **I was forced to meet with police for 551 days in a row.** I continued publishing regardless.

113. I applied for asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy on 19 June 2012. The embassy was then surrounded by police at an admitted cost to the UK taxpayer of £12.6 million by October 2015.

114. On 28 October 2014, the UK Minister of State Hugo Swire, told Parliament that “if she [Marianne Ny] wishes to travel here to question Mr. Assange in the embassy in London, we would do absolutely everything to facilitate that, indeed, we would actively welcome it.”

115. On 14 November 2014 I submitted my case to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD).

116. On 20 November 2014 **Sweden's Court of Appeal (Svea) found that the Swedish prosecutor had breached her duty by failing to accept my statement.**

117. On 12 October 2015 the UK announced that it was removing the overt police around the embassy as it was “no longer proportionate”.

118. On 14 October 2015 London police chief Bernard Hogan-Howe told the Standard that the visible police were being removed from the embassy encirclement as “it seems a disproportionate response” and “we think the public are not necessarily supportive of it.”

119. Subsequently (6 Feb 2016) the London Times would report that the removal of overt police was also due to “fears that officers of the diplomatic protection group standing guard were thought to resemble jailers” during the UNWGAD determination. However the 12 October statement reveals that **the “overt” police had in fact been replaced with a “strengthened” “covert plan”.**

120. On 5 February 2016 UNWGAD found that I have been unlawfully deprived of my liberty since 7 December 2010 as a result of the actions of the Swedish prosecutor.

Answer to subsequent questions:

You have subjected me to six years of unlawful, politicized detention without charge in prison, under house arrest and four and a half years at this embassy. You should have asked me this question six years ago. Your actions in refusing to take my statement for the last six years have been found to be unlawful by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and by the Swedish Court of Appeal. You have been found to have subjected me to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. You have denied me effective legal representation in this process. Despite this, I feel compelled to cooperate even though you are not safeguarding my rights. I refer you to my statement where all these questions were answered.

<https://justice4assange.com/IMG/html/assange-statement-2016.html>

**Guardian ‘fake news’ story on Julian Assange
'punishment for his inconvenient truth-telling'**

RT
3 Jan. 2017

It was shocking to discover that the Guardian, which has always [??] been a reputable paper, would run a piece highlighting two bald-faced lies about Assange, **Mark Crispin Miller, professor of media studies at NYU**, told RT America's Ashlee Banks

Journalist Glenn Greenwald accused his former employer, the Guardian, of falsifying the words of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in a report summarizing an interview he gave to La Republica.

The popular British daily ran an article with the title 'Julian Assange gives guarded praise of Trump and blasts Clinton in interview.'

It claims that Assange, the publisher of Wikileaks, made statements in support of Russia and Trump all the while attacking Clinton.

However, Greenwald pointed out in his own article that the Guardian summary of Assange's interview is completely false. RT is joined by NYU professor of media studies, Mark Crispin Miller, to discuss this latest round of misleading media reporting.

RT: What was your response to this article?

Mark Crispin Miller: It was, on the one hand, shocking to discover that the Guardian, which has always [???] been a reputable paper and one of the flagship outlets of the liberal media in Britain and the US, would run a piece highlighting two bald-faced lies, basically that Julian Assange had praised Donald Trump— expressed a kind of optimism about his presidency— and that he also had described Russia as a “vibrant marketplace of ideas with a tremendous amount of free expression.”

These two claims bore no relation to the actual interview that the reporter for the Guardian was purporting to paraphrase. This was an interview that Assange had done with an Italian journalist [Stefania Maurizi] who is outraged at this complete and total misrepresentation of the interview she did with Assange....

Meanwhile, the Guardian article has been tweeted and reprinted and basically heralded the world over. Hundreds of thousands of people have now picked up the propaganda from the Guardian and convinced people that Assange has said these things, which were calculated to defame him, to discredit him. It is just the latest propaganda salvo in a long attempt to basically demonize Julian Assange and punish him for his inconvenient truth-telling.

RT: We're hearing the term 'fake news' a lot these days. Is it meant to help us to distinguish between what is true and what is false, or could there be other reasons that we're hearing this term so much?

MSM: Yes, 'fake news' is a serious problem, but not because of the fact that there are outlets online that post falsehoods— fringe outlets that post falsehoods— that is the claim about 'fake news.' **'Fake news' is a problem, because the corporate press itself pumps out so much of it. These claims in the Guardian are just one example** among countless cases of fake news that has been successfully propagated as truth. I can't even begin to catalogue all the nuggets of fake news that have been used to keep the war in Syria going.

RT: The reporter who did the actual interview with Assange has protested that the Guardian has deliberately distorted her interview and whistleblower's comments. Why has the press chosen to ignore this, even as they re-tweet and repost the false claims in the Guardian?

MSM: Well, why would they pay attention to her attempt to set the records straight— since **what we're talking about here is clearly a deliberate propaganda effort to**

defame Julian Assange and with no concern for accuracy or truth or nay of that old-fashioned stuff? Why would they mention the objections by the actual journalist who did the interview with him? It would defeat the whole purpose of this fake news effort to attack Assange and **to add to the long list of attacks on him over the last few years.**

<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/372562-guardian-fake-news-story-assange/>

'14-yr old kid could do it' — Assange on Podesta email hack

RT

4 Jan. 2017

Even a 14-year old teenager could have hacked the emails of Hillary Clinton's campaign chief, John Podesta, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has said in an exclusive interview with Fox News.

"We published several... emails which show Podesta responding to a phishing email," Assange stressed speaking from the Ecuadorean Embassy in London.

"Podesta gave out that his password was the word 'password'. His own staff said this email that you've received, this is totally legitimate. So, this is something... a 14-year-old kid could have hacked Podesta that way," he said in an interview which aired on "Hannity" Tuesday night.

He added that neither the Russian government nor "a state party" was the source of emails from Podesta, published on the WikiLeaks website.

"We can say, we have said, repeatedly that over the last two months that our source is not the Russian government and it is not a state party," Assange said.

Assange noted that for some reason, "the word WikiLeaks" was missing in recent statements from the FBI and White House, even when US President Barack Obama expelled 35 Russian diplomats in what he said was Washington's "response to the Russian government's aggressive harassment of US officials and cyber operations aimed at the US election."

"It's very strange," Assange told Fox News' Sean Hannity. Asked whether he thought Obama lied to the American people about Russia's involvement, Assange replied that the outgoing president has been "acting like a lawyer" with his allegations.

"If you look at most of his statements, he doesn't say that. He doesn't say that WikiLeaks obtained its information from Russia, worked with Russia," Assange said.

The 45-year-old Australian said the Obama administration was meanwhile trying to "delegitimize" US President-elect Donald Trump ahead of his inauguration. "They are trying to say that President-elect Trump is not a legitimate president," Assange said.

There is "zero evidence" that Russia influenced the US presidential election, incoming White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said on Fox News on Tuesday, adding that it would be "irresponsible to jump to conclusions" before receiving a final intelligence report.

Spicer noted that the preliminary report, published on Thursday, was basically just “a how-to manual for the DNC as to how they can improve their IT security. The way the mainstream media is playing this up is that [Russia] had an influence on the election,” Spicer added.

Earlier, CIA Director John Brennan said the forthcoming intelligence report would set the record straight. “I would suggest to individuals that have not yet seen the report, who have not yet been briefed on it, that they wait and see what it is that the intelligence community is putting forward before they make those judgments,” he told PBS on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump said that a briefing he was due to receive on Russia’s alleged hack attacks and meddling with US elections was strangely delayed until Friday, making the President-elect wonder whether there was enough “intelligence” to “build” the case in the first place.

Trump previously expressed skepticism about the US intelligence community’s assessment of Moscow’s involvement in hack attacks and its alleged attempts to influence presidential elections. “I just want them to be sure because it’s a pretty serious charge,” Trump said on December 31, recalling the US invasion in Iraq was based on flawed and false intelligence. “If you look at the weapons of mass destruction, that was a disaster, and they were wrong,” he added.

Swedish prosecutors receive Assange interrogation report

RT

5 Jan. 2017

Sweden has received a report on the interrogation of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, which took place in November at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, the Swedish Prosecutor’s Office said.

“The Ecuadorian authorities have submitted a written report from the interrogation of Assange,” the Prosecutor’s Office said in a statement on Thursday.

The report is mainly written in Spanish and consists of “several hundred pages,” it added.

According to prosecutors, the report will now be translated, which is expected “to take at least several weeks.”

“After that the prosecutors will consider continuing the investigation” against Assange, the Swedish statement read.

The WikiLeaks founder was interrogated on November 14 in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he remains holed up after Sweden issued a European arrest warrant on him in 2012.

Assange flatly denies accusations of sexual misconduct with a woman known as ‘SW’ during a trip to Sweden in 2010. The accuser claims the whistleblower initiated sex with her while she was asleep, which is viewed as rape by Swedish law.

The whistleblower was interviewed by an Ecuadorian prosecutor who asked questions prepared by Sweden. The interrogation in the British capital was attended by Sweden's chief prosecutor, [???] Ingrid Isgren.

In December, Assange himself released a 19-page testimony he gave during the November questioning.

In his statement, the 45-year-old gave detailed accounts of what he called "consensual and enjoyable" sex with the accuser, which he said occurred four or five times.

"I ... could not believe my eyes when five days later I saw a headline in a Swedish tabloid that I was suspected of a crime and arrested in my absence," he said.

Assange blasted the Swedish side for subjecting him to "six years of unlawful, politicized detention without charge."

The WikiLeaks founder explained that he decided to release the full testimony, which he says makes his innocence "obvious," because the prosecutors previously "fed partial information to tabloids that politically opposed me."

Clapper Confirms Assange, Wikileaks Have Put Intel Officers in Danger

When asked about Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper says, "I don't think those of us in the intelligence community have a whole lot of respect for him."

NBC Video

<http://www.nbcnews.com/video/clapper-confirms-assange-wikileaks-have-put-intel-officers-in-danger-848256579682>

Hannity Interview WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange

Fox News
January 5, 2017

Assange addresses the FBI, DHS report on Russian hacking

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wr2uWYTgtw>

Assange blasts 'embarrassing' ODNI report, says 'no evidence' given

RT
9 Jan, 2017

During a press conference Monday, WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange criticized the recent ODNI [Office of the Director of National Intelligence] report describing it as "quite embarrassing to the reputations of the US intelligence services."

Assange answered questions submitted via #AskWL on Twitter for over an hour, which was streamed live via Periscope from the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

He described the ODNI's report as containing "zero evidentiary weight" and being "deliberately political."

Asked about the source of the leaked emails from Hillary Clinton campaign chair John Podesta Assange denied it was a state

"If our sources were a state we would have a lot less concern in attempting to protect them," he said, adding that he would not provide additional information as this could lead to their identification.

"Take the data now, keep it under your bed or with your mother. You can give it to WikiLeaks," Assange said, encouraging members of the Obama administration to prevent information being destroyed before he leaves office.

He denied that WikiLeaks possessed information from the Republican National Committee which they refused to publish, calling the claim "false."

Assange said he believed that whistleblowers would continue to be persecuted under Trump's administration, saying "No system of authority likes those who undermine their authority."

The whistleblowing site has been accused of working with the Russian government to ensure Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections.

Both WikiLeaks and founder Julian Assange have repeatedly denied the leaks came from state actors, with former UK ambassador and WikiLeaks associate Craig Murray stating the leak came from a "disgusted" whistleblower from within the Democratic establishment.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence's (ODNI) unclassified findings report released Friday has drawn much criticism and mockery for its apparent lack of evidence and its substantial padding with outdated details about RT.

It claims Russian President Vladimir Putin personally ordered a negative online campaign to influence the elections in a bid to facilitate a Trump victory, and that the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) then fed the information to WikiLeaks.

"We assess with high confidence that the GRU relayed material it acquired from the DNC and senior Democratic officials to WikiLeaks," it read.

Among critics was former CIA analyst Larry C Johnson who described the report as a "farce" and a "charade," claiming Hillary Clinton was effective in discrediting herself, without needing the help of Russia.

"I don't think they're hiding anything because they don't have anything," Johnson told RT. "These are 'or and how' intelligence estimates as opposed to an intelligence analysis based on fact. There's no fact underlying this. There are analytical assumptions."

"You can tell that because whenever they use the language like 'we assess that' or 'we believe that' or 'it's likely that'," he added. "That means they don't know, because if you knew, you could say ... in public 'according to multiple sources we know that.' You state facts."

The report states the Russian government is behind the 'DC Leaks' website and Romanian hacker Guccifer 2.0, who released emails from the DNC and other Democrats.

While the report does state that Russians didn't meddle with voter tallies to influence the results of the election, it claims that the Russian government smeared Clinton.

While the report states the CIA and FBI have "high confidence" the hacks were ordered to help Trump. The NSA, who deals in signals intelligence over human intelligence, have "moderate confidence."

The report also cites Russian politicians celebrating Trump's win as further evidence. It does not, however, draw the same conclusions about the Israeli government's delight at Trump's victory.

<https://www.rt.com/news/373071-wikileaks-odni-report-hacking/>

Assange blasts Soros & USAID over Russian propaganda campaign

RT

10 Jan. 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange claimed George Soros and the USAID funded the mainstream media's framing of the Panama Papers scandal as part of a broader negative propaganda campaign against Russia in a "Reddit Ask Me Anything" [AMA] on Tuesday.

During the AMA, which was livestreamed via Twitch, the WikiLeaks editor explained he took issue with the fact that the Panama Papers revelations were framed as being all about Putin by the "usual idiots in the ruling class press."

The Putin angle was "pushed as the leading story" rather than focusing on the many Western figures who were implicated, with Assange mentioning David Cameron as an example, as part of an effort funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Soros. "That is no model of integrity" he said.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4WIBie1fdo&feature=youtu.be>

Assange detailed the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project's role in the Putin framing and how the Maryland-based organization is funded by George

Soros and USAID and “focuses exclusively on negative stories about Russia and former Soviet states.”

“We don’t like it when we’re competing with narratives that are funded by Washington,” he said.

Assange drew comparisons between those narratives and that of WikiLeaks in relation to trust. “One is funded by a government attacking another government,” while WikiLeaks is “funded by readers” and has a track record of publishing accurate information.

Assange also expressed “great sadness” at the loss of video evidence of US war crimes committed in Granai, Afghanistan in 2009, which he said was stolen in a Swedish intelligence operation in 2010.

“There is a disappeared video and that video is of Granai massacre,” he said. “Over 80 children are killed in a US airstrike in Afghanistan... quite a serious video.”

Assange said Swedish authorities seized “three laptops, not the highest security laptops, backup laptops, that were encrypted but which ended up being the only copy that we had of that video. **We had other copies, and they were also attacked.**”

“That’s also a great sadness from us that this terrible proof of a war crime has been possibly lost to history as a result of very difficult attacks on us,” Assange said. **“It’s something we’re less susceptible to know, because we have a bigger infrastructure.”**

When asked about the Snowden documents and the way in which they were released by journalists, **Assange said “more than 97 percent of the Snowden docs have been censored,” as a result.**

“Enormously important material [was] censored,” Assange said. “And while there have been some pretty good journalists working on them, Glenn Greenwald I think is one of the best journalists publishing in the US, you have to have hundreds of people working on material like this.”

Assange said the media organizations have “effectively privatized that material and limited it.”

Information from the Snowden files, which was released after the initial media coverage, “included ways to find sites in the US used by the National Security Agencies, and procedures for visiting those sites,” Assange said. “If those had been released in 2013, investigative journalists and individuals could have gone to those sites before there was a cover-up.”

“So I’m a bit sad, in some ways, about how the impact of the Snowden archive has been minimized as a result of not having the greatest number of eyeballs.”

Reddit users also quizzed Assange about his safety and the conspiracy theories that he is in fact dead, with WikiLeaks boss noting that the live video feed itself would be one form of proof of life. He did, however, read out bitcoin blockchain hash as evidence, while also urging everyone not to reduce their levels of concern for him and other members of WikiLeaks.

“I am in a difficult situation, that’s a reality,” he said, adding that he and other WikiLeaks associates are “still constantly spied on and harassed.” Assange told Redditors not to wait until something happens, urging them to “make sure we’re strong now, going into difficult situations.”

<https://www.rt.com/viral/373253-assange-reddit-soros-usaid>

Julian Assange faces questions on links to Russia from Reddit users

Users express frustration after WikiLeaks founder ignores or offers one-word answers about ethics and Kremlin relations

Jamie Grierson
The Guardian
11 January 2017

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has taken part in an online interview session in which he faced questions from the public on subjects ranging from his relationship with Russia to whether he was, in fact, still alive.

Assange, who sought political asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy in London and who has been living there since 2012, participated in the Reddit Ask Me Anything (AMA) event on Tuesday.

He has faced criticism for what critics have alleged was interference in the US election. WikiLeaks published batches of information about the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, which some believe cost her the US presidential election.

In the AMA, questions about links to Russia, WikiLeaks’s ethics and relationship with Fox News were either ignored or given one-word answers.

One person, LameMeme, did not receive an answer to the question: “Please address the allegations that WikiLeaks has a friendly relationship with Russia and cannot be considered objective with their leaks and their agenda. The timeline that makes these allegations seem plausible:

- 10/26/10 - WikiLeaks ready to drop a bombshell on Russia
- 11/01/10 - Russia’s FSB to WikiLeaks: We Can Destroy You
- 1/20/11 - Julian Assange gets Russian visa
- 1/25/12 - WikiLeaks founder Assange’s TV show to be aired on Russian channel
- 4/6/16 - WikiLeaks: US Gov’t Behind Panama Leaks to Attack Putin
- 8/8/16 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/opinion/can-we-trust-julian-assange-and-wikileaks.html>

“Since you are so adamant that Russia was not involved in the recent leaks that played a major role in the US presidential election, **it would be helpful if you can make a compelling case for why Americans should trust you over their own intelligence agencies whose reason for existence is to defend the US against foreign threats and who are saying the opposite about Russian involvement.**”

Gddboygb, another participant, did not receive a reply for the query: “People frequently group you together with Edward Snowden because you’ve both released classified American documents. But your motivations and [philosophies] couldn’t be more different. Snowden claims to fight for privacy. He’s called privacy the bedrock of freedom, that one cannot be free without privacy.

“You have called privacy obsolete and unsustainable. You’ve said that privacy has no inherent value. You appear to believe privacy and freedom are incompatible, that you cannot be free if others can keep secrets from you. You’ve published the credit card numbers, social security numbers, medical information, and sexual preferences of individuals of zero public interest. **Two of your most recent publications are the personal Gmail inboxes of civilians, exactly the sort of thing Snowden has tried to protect. Can you convince me that you’re right and Snowden’s wrong?**”

Velocity_Rob, summed up the frustration expressed by some users. **“For someone who claims they’re all about transparency and openness, your answers here really don’t live up to those lofty ideals.** Terse one-word answers, ignoring really pertinent questions, what exactly is the point of this AMA?”

Assange closed the session by addressing rumours that he was no longer alive or had been kidnapped. “I’m alive, and free from duress,” he said. The 45-year-old read from the online currency bitcoin blockchain, a constantly updated listing of transactions, to prove that the video had not been recorded at an earlier time.

www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jan/11/julian-assange-accused-of-dodging-queries-on-reddit-livestream

DN: 2017-01-18

Assange hoppas gå fri — inget talar för att han påverkas

Julian Assange hoppas att han själv ska gå fri från anklagelser i USA efter president Obamas beslut att förkorta straffet för Chelsea Manning. Men just nu talar ingenting för att Wikileaksgrundaren påverkas.

Julian Assange har under de senaste dagarna gjort flera uttalanden om USA:s behandling av Chelsea Manning och att han själv ska frias från anklagelser. Men uttalandena har byggts på direkt felaktigheter och även obekräftade uppgifter.

Redan för några dagar sedan twittrade Wikileaks att om president Obama mildrade straffet för Manning så skulle Assange gå med på att överlämnas till USA, berättade The Guardian på onsdagen.

Det beskedet gäller fortfarande, meddelade en av Assanges brittiska juristerna till tidningen.

Men någon utlämning till USA är inte aktuell, åtminstone inte just nu. Det enda land som hittills har begärt Assange utlämnad är Sverige, fortfarande för att utreda misstankarna om sexualbrott från år 2010.

– Jag tror att han har missförstått lite. Om han lämnar Ecuadors ambassad i London så kommer han att överlämnas till Sverige. Han kan aldrig hamna i USA utan att först komma till Sverige, säger advokat Per E Samuelson som försvarar Assange beträffande sexbrottsmisstankarna.

Senare kom Assange med ett annat budskap. Han kan nu tänka sig att förhandla med USA om brottsmisstankarna där emot honom. Om dessa anklagelser läggs ner så kan han tänka sig att komma till Sverige för att försvara sig mot anklagelserna om sexualbrott.

– Han brinner av iver att komma hit och rentvå sig, säger Per E Samuelson.

Men även på den punkten råder stor oklarhet. Assange är övertygad om att det i USA pågår en förundersökning mot honom och andra ledande företrädare för Wikileaks. Detta har inte bekräftats av USA.

Sverige har gjort klart att USA inte har framställt någon begäran om att Assange ska förflyttas dit.

Wikileaksgrundaren tror att det kan bli en förhandling med USA efter att Donald Trump har tillträtt som president i USA nu på fredag.

– Bollen ligger nu hos de svenska åklagarna och hos Donald Trump, säger Per E Samuelson.

De svenska åklagarna låter meddela att Assanges uttalanden inte på något vis påverkar brottsutredningen om sexualbrott.

Just nu arbetar åklagarna med att översätta de förhör som hölls med Assange på Ecuadors ambassad. Därefter väntas ett beslut om han kommer att åtalas för sexualbrott eller om utredningen läggs ner.

• *Stefan Lisinski*

'Obama's decision on Manning very tepid attempt to address issue' -- Assange's lawyer

RT
18 Jan. 2017

Julian Assange's lawyers are "assessing" the situation, following Chelsea Manning's commutation announcement and Assange's comments that he's willing to make a deal with the US should the whistleblower be granted clemency.

"Mr. Assange stands by everything what he has said," Melinda Taylor, Assange's lawyer told RT from the Hague, but added Obama's decision to commute much of the sentence "certainly falls far short of what Miss Manning deserves."

"Her sentence was commuted, but she wasn't pardoned. She should also never been convicted in the first place," Taylor said.

When asked if Assange is likely to get on a plane to America shortly after Manning is freed in May, his lawyer said her colleagues are now "assessing" the situation.

"The reason why Mr. Assange has been illegally, arbitrarily detained for over five years is because of the risk that he would face prosecution in an unfair trial in the United States. [Obama's] decision is the first step in the right direction, but of course his [Assange's] lawyers need to assess whether it goes far enough in ensuring his fundamental rights."

Referring to a UN ruling that required both London and Stockholm to end the WikiLeaks founder's "arbitrary detention" which has not been implemented, Assange's lawyer said "there is a sense of frustration, that there is no light at the end of the tunnel."

"It remains to be hoped that 2017 will end this stalemate," she added, saying that if "the risk of prosecution and mistreatment in the US can be addressed, if he can be given effective protection against that," then there is hope Assange "could be free."

"His lawyers are trying to clarify his position in the US and to call on President Obama and the new administration to close this unfair prosecution of him," Taylor said.

The lawyer has also called on "organizations and persons" to "assist" Manning after she is released from jail "and ensure that she has employment." She added that the US soldier turned whistleblower's "bravery should have been applauded and it can now be applauded by people's help."

Speaking as of why the decision on the former US Army intelligence analyst originally convicted under the Espionage Act to serve her sentence until 2045, has been announced just days before the Democratic president leaves the White House, the lawyer said she considered it as Obama's attempt "to quieten a lot of criticism against him for his treatment of whistleblowers."

"But it doesn't go far enough. He still hasn't pardoned Edward Snowden and he's still on an ongoing prosecution against WikiLeaks. So certainly this is a very tepid attempt to address the issue," Taylor said.

"Why did Chelsea Manning have to spend so much time in jail after such an unfair trial? After all, it was back in 2012 that the UN already found that her interrogation [amounted] to torture, so why did the president sit on this for so long and allow her to endure continued mistreatment? It would appear that he's only doing it at the very last minute to stem the criticism," she told RT.

She also expressed WikiLeaks' hopes that the new US administration under Trump "will end this futile and unfair war on whistleblowers and ensure real and effective protection for people who expose war crimes and human rights violations." Assange's lawyer added they hoped the new White House policy towards whistleblowers in particular would be "an open book."

"Obviously this brings in a new set of factors, new policy, potential new standards to be applied to whistleblowers. So it's to be hoped that it will be an open book and that the previous precedents of the Obama administration won't be applied, because these precedents were wrong, unfair, they stifled democratic expression. We can certainly hope that the new administration appreciates the role played by independent organizations such as WikiLeaks — organizations who are brave enough to publish authentic information about those in power," Taylor told RT.

<https://www.rt.com/news/374148-assange-lawyer-manning-decision/>

Assange says would go to US only if rights guaranteed: WikiLeaks

AFP

January 18, 2017

WikiLeaks said Wednesday its founder Julian Assange could travel to the US to face investigation after one of the site's main sources was given clemency -- but only if his rights were "guaranteed".

"Assange is still happy to come to the US provided all his rights are guaranteed," WikiLeaks said on Twitter, the day after US President Barack Obama commuted a prison sentence for former soldier Chelsea Manning.

Manning was sentenced by a military court martial to 35 years behind bars in 2013 for handing 700,000 sensitive military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks.

Assange described Manning as "a hero, whose bravery should have been applauded not condemned".

The WikiLeaks founder said last week he would abandon his refuge in the Ecuadoran embassy in London, where he has been since 2012, if the United States agreed to free Manning.

One of the Australian's lawyers, Barry Pollack, said Obama's decision was "well short" of his client's earlier request.

"Mr. Assange welcomes the announcement that Ms. Manning's sentence will be reduced and she will be released in May, but this is well short of what he sought," Pollack told AFP.

"Mr. Assange had called for Chelsea Manning to receive clemency and be released immediately," he added.

Washington has maintained the threat of prosecuting Assange over the 2010 documents leak, although no charges have been publicly filed.

Pollack said he has repeatedly asked the US Department of Justice to clarify his client's status and there has not been a public extradition request.

"I remain willing to discuss Mr. Assange's situation with the DOJ and call for it to announce that it will not pursue any charges against Mr. Assange," he said.

Assange has been living in the Ecuadoran embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden to face sexual assault allegations, which he says are politically motivated and intended as a stepping stone to extraditing him to the US.

Amnesty International campaigned for Manning's release and on Tuesday the human rights organisation described Obama's decision to commute her sentence as "long overdue".

"It is unconscionable that she languished in prison for years while those allegedly implicated by the information she revealed still haven't been brought to justice," Margaret Huang, executive director of Amnesty International USA, said in a statement.

The transgender soldier was tried as Bradley Manning and she has since been held in an all-male prison, where she has twice attempted suicide.

Manning has become a symbol for WikiLeaks, along with Edward Snowden, a former contractor of the US National Security Agency who fled to Russia after revealing a highly classified global communications and internet surveillance system.

Snowden was not included in the outgoing president's list of commutations or pardons, but he posted a "Thanks, Obama" message on Twitter regarding Manning's release.

www.yahoo.com/news/assange-says-us-only-rights-guaranteed-wikileaks-165600027.html

Assange confirms he is willing to travel to US after Manning decision

WikiLeaks founder says Obama's decision to free whistleblower means he could submit to extradition request

*Robert Booth and Alice Ross
The Guardian
19 January 2017*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has said he stands by his offer to travel to the US following Barack Obama's decision to release whistleblower Chelsea Manning from prison.

Speaking from the Ecuadorian embassy in London during a web broadcast on Thursday, Assange said there were many discussions about his future that could happen before Manning left prison in May, adding: "I have always been willing to go to the United States provided my rights are respected."

Assange has been living in the embassy since claiming asylum there in 2012. He has refused to meet prosecutors in Sweden, where he remains wanted on an allegation of rape, which he denies, and has repeatedly said he fears extradition to the US on

espionage charges if he leaves the embassy. At the moment, the only public extradition ruling against him comes from Sweden.

WikiLeaks tweeted last week that Assange would agree to US extradition if Obama granted Manning clemency. Asked during a web broadcast on Thursday if he would now leave the embassy, Assange said: "I stand by everything I said, including the offer to go to the United States if Chelsea Manning's sentence was commuted."

Assange said there had been a seven-year-long attempt to build a prosecution against him and WikiLeaks in the US and his name was on several warrants and subpoenas. "As of this year, it is active and ongoing," he said.

"If it takes me going to United States to somehow flush out this case and get the DoJ [Department of Justice] to either make a charge or extradition or to drop it, then we are interested in looking at that as well."

He said it remained to be seen whether the DoJ under Donald Trump would treat his case differently from Obama's administration.

The US justice department has never announced any indictment of Assange and it is not clear that any charges have been brought without becoming a matter of public record. The department, in refusing to turn over investigative documents sought by Manning under the Freedom of Information Act, has acknowledged that the FBI is continuing to investigate the publication of national security information on WikiLeaks arising from Manning's disclosures.

The government's refusal to confirm or deny the existence of charges is a "deliberate attempt by the Department of Justice to keep me and WikiLeaks in a state of uncertainty, abusing the process for psychological gains," Assange said.

Earlier this week, the White House insisted that Assange's offer to submit to extradition if Obama granted Manning clemency had no bearing on the US president's action. "I have no insight into Mr Assange's travel plans," a White House official said. "I can't speak to any charges or potential charges he may be facing from the justice department."

Obama used his final hours in the White House to allow Manning to go free nearly 30 years early. The 29-year-old transgender former intelligence analyst in Iraq was sentenced in 2013 after a military court convicted her of passing more than 700,000 documents, videos, diplomatic cables and battlefield accounts to WikiLeaks. She said she did so to raise awareness about the impact of war.

During Thursday's web broadcast, Assange said Trump's impact on global relations was "very interesting" adding: "His behaviour is [that of] someone who's not a diplomat at all, making inflammatory statements about what he really thinks ... From WikiLeaks' perspective, we like to see this churn and invigoration and everything being reconsidered."

Stunning Admission from Obama on Wikileaks

Obama refers to "The DNC emails that were leaked". Note "leaked" and not "hacked".

Craig Murray

In his final press conference, beginning around 8 minutes 30 seconds in, **Obama admits that they have no evidence of how WikiLeaks got the DNC material. This undermines the stream of completely evidence-free nonsense that has been emerging from the US intelligence services this last two months**, in which a series of suppositions have been strung together to make unfounded assertions that have been repeated again and again in the mainstream media.

Most crucially of all Obama refers to "The DNC emails that were leaked". Note "leaked" and not "hacked". I have been repeating that this was a leak, not a hack, until I am blue in the face. William Binney, former Technical Director of the NSA, has asserted that were it a hack the NSA would be able to give the precise details down to the second it occurred, and it is plain from the reports released they have no such information. **Yet the media has persisted with this nonsense "Russian hacking" story.**

Obama's reference to the "the DNC emails that were leaked" appears very natural, fluent and unforced. It is good to have the truth finally told.

- *Craig Murray is an author, broadcaster and human rights activist. He was British Ambassador to Uzbekistan from August 2002 to October 2004 and Rector of the University of Dundee from 2007 to 2010.*

<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk>

Assange 'stands by' US extradition offer, promises 'big publishing year ahead'

RT

19 Jan, 2017

WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, has said he'll stand by his promise to be extradited to the US following Chelsea Manning's commutation, while promising a "big publishing year ahead."

In a press conference broadcast on Periscope on Thursday, Assange said he "stands by everything I said including the offer to go to the United States if Chelsea Manning's sentence was commuted."

"We look forward to having a conversation with the DoJ [Department of Justice] about what the correct way forward is," Assange said.

"I've always been willing to go to the United States provided my rights are respected because this is a case that should never have occurred," he added.

Assange's comments echo that of his lawyer, Melinda Taylor who told RT, "Mr. Assange stands by everything what he has said," Taylor told RT on Wednesday, although adding that Obama's decision "certainly falls far short of what Miss Manning deserves."

Assange did however criticize those who have been pushing for him to deliver on his promise, describing the "frankly disturbing glee" that members of the establishment are showing though "trying to re-contextualise my comments, hoping, lusting for my extradition to the US."

"Come on guys, what are you doing?" he asked, "jumping after every ball the establishment throws."

Assange promised a "big publishing year ahead" for WikiLeaks, adding "I'm in love with the publications we have coming."

Following the media coverage the Podesta emails garnered, Assange said "that exposure has, like it always does, encouraged other sources to come forward."

"We have a lot of material to get through, it takes time," he said, concluding that WikiLeaks' decade-long record of accuracy is a valuable reputation to maintain.

When asked whether the fake news narrative makes WikiLeaks more desirable, Assange said the organization was very proud of its "100 percent record of accuracy."

"Any such list of reliable news, we're going to be at top of, any list of fake news, we're going to be at bottom of," he said. "There's a lot of inaccurate reporting in the legacy press, and in new media."

"We constantly see articles saying I've been charged," he said as an example. "Most media doesn't do basic fact checking."

Assange admitted that it was easier for WikiLeaks to maintain a record of accuracy than for the media. "It's a black and white criteria for us," he explained. "Either it's an official document or archive, or it isn't."

Assange described Facebook's attempts to stop fake news as "super interesting," saying that as Facebook "became rich [it] has integrated with the US establishment," adding the social media site was "more or less in that tank for Clinton" during the election.

"Organizations like Facebook are permitting many people to publish billions at the touch of a button - that's breaking down the control structure," he said. "That is a new circumstance in democracy."

A day before Donald Trump's inauguration, Assange said he thinks the "conflict which has developed between the embryonic Trump administration and the CIA" will "lead to dissidents and sources in both camps coming forward."

"We've already seen this from the CIA side and the Obama administration with information coming out about Trump," Assange said, referring to the "Trump dossier" that was recently leaked. "Perhaps in the future we'll see high quality information [coming out]."

Assange said he is “under no illusions” that the incoming Trump cabinet will make his life any easier, as Trump’s appointees have already said “appalling things about the rights of the press and WikiLeaks and myself, personally.”

“We can see a big fight ahead, perhaps, and are looking forward to it.”
Russian Hacking

Referring WikiLeaks’ recent German parliamentary leak being falsely attributed to Russian hacking, Assange said, “There is that environment now, where you can see the incentives, so whatever, uh, y’know, propaganda Russia may be putting out, through RT or elsewhere, and it certainly has its angle on things, you can see the incentives for incumbents, like Merkel, just like we could see with Clinton to try and hype up an issue about potential Russian involvement.

“It’s not that they [the incumbents] have a genuine opposition,” he continued. “It’s not that the people are annoyed with misbehavior in government, and of course there is, I’m not saying anything in particular about Merkel’s government, but as a government who misbehaves, well, there’s an attempt to go, any criticism of governmental misbehavior, corruption, or incompetence, well it’s not the opposition or the people making a fuss, no it’s secretly the Russians.”

<https://www.rt.com/news/374274-assange-wikileaks-us-extradition/>

Julian Assange says Barack Obama pardoned Chelsea Manning 'to make life hard' for him

Obama said that the clemency was unrelated to Assange so he could 'look tough', the WikiLeaks boss claimed

*Andrew Griffin
The Independent
2017-01-24*

Julian Assange has claimed that Barack Obama only granted clemency to Chelsea Manning to "make life hard for him".

One of Mr Obama's last acts as president was to commute Ms Manning's sentence, allowing her to be released in a matter of months rather than decades. The act was widely seen as a gesture of goodwill on the basis that Ms Manning was jailed for being a whistleblower.

But now Mr Assange has claimed that Mr Obama actually made the decision in spite of him. That was in reference to WikiLeaks' promise that if Ms Manning were granted clemency then Mr Assange would hand himself in to be extradited to the US -- a claim that he initially appeared to be sticking by, then changed his mind on and then committed to again so long as he can come to an agreement with the Department of Justice.

“What’s the result?” he said in an interview with Australian current affairs programme The Project. “It is going to make life hard for Assange because either he will be

extradited to the US or we will show him [to be] a liar. Therefore, it is OK to pardon Chelsea Manning -- that's what happened."

It isn't clear whether or not the US justice department is actually looking to extradite Mr Assange, and it has not publicly brought charges against him. WikiLeaks claims that those charges have been brought in private and that if he leaves the Ecuadorian embassy – where he has lived since summer 2012 – he will be taken there.

For the same reason he has refused to meet prosecutors in Sweden, where there is an allegation of rape that he denies. He says that an outstanding extradition order that would take him to Sweden would lead to him then being extradited to the US.

The White House has said that Mr Assange's promise to leave the embassy didn't have anything to do with Mr Obama's decision. But Mr Assange said that he had done so in order "to look tough".

"In the end, Barack Obama – wanting, I guess, to look tough – said that my offer had nothing to do with Chelsea Manning being granted clemency, so there is no quid pro quo," he told the programme.

He also said that he had avoided mentioning his terms in the offer to leave – that he would require a deal with the US Department of Justice – because he's "not an idiot".

"We had a major strategic victory in liberating Chelsea Manning," he told the programme. "But, of course, saying I'm willing to accept extradition doesn't mean I'm saying that I'm willing to be a complete idiot and throw all my lawyers away and so on.

"We are going to have a discussion with the DoJ about what that looks like. The ball is in their court."

It remains unclear whether or not such a deal is actually on the table, or when and even whether Mr Assange will actually look to leave the embassy.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/julian-assange-barack-obama-pardon-chelsea-manning-to-make-life-hard-commute-sentence-wikileaks-us-a7542896.html>

WikiLeaks editor Assange 'wants to engage' with US over Manning extradition promise

RT

24 Jan. 2017

WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange has once again defended the promise to allow his extradition to the US if Chelsea Manning was granted clemency during a rare appearance on Australian television.

Assange was interviewed by Waleed Aly on Channel 10's 'The Project' on Tuesday, and fielded pointed questions suggesting he was lying by not handing himself over to US authorities following the "major strategic victory" which the commutation of Manning's sentence provided the whistleblowing organization.

Former US President Barack Obama announced last week he would commute Manning's 35-year sentence for leaking hundreds of thousands of documents revealing US war crimes and exposing secrets of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Manning, who has served seven years in confinement, will be released in May.

Before the commutation was announced, WikiLeaks tweeted that Assange would "agree to US extradition despite clear unconstitutionality of DoJ case."

"We want to engage with the US case because it continues on forever," Assange explained on Tuesday. "It's better to engage with the US case, have a discussion with the DoJ [Department of Justice], what are you doing with this case, are you going to keep it going, am I going to have to stay in the embassy forever, or is there some way that you guys can drop it, or can we look at under what circumstances I would be extradited to the United States."

Aly argued, however, that what Assange wanted was to "leave the embassy if you could come to terms with them about your case, nothing really to do with Chelsea Manning."

Assange explained that Obama "wanting, I guess, to look tough, said that my offer had nothing to do with Chelsea Manning being granted clemency, so there's no quid pro quo."

"No, but on your side, you said that if Chelsea Manning was released you would leave, you would leave the embassy," Aly responded.

"I didn't say that," Assange replied. "I said that I would accept extradition to the United States," adding that he's "not a complete idiot."

"We had a major strategic victory in liberating Chelsea Manning, the most significant alleged whistleblower in the last 10 years — Edward Snowden says that he was inspired by Chelsea Manning — so look, I'm not an idiot."

"Saying I'm willing to accept extradition doesn't mean I'm saying that I'm willing to be a complete idiot and throw all my lawyers away and so on," Assange said. "No, we're going to have a discussion with the DoJ about what that looks like. The ball is in their court."

"I was willing to do anything possible to try and encourage Barack Obama to do the right thing and to give Chelsea Manning a clemency, which he did in the end for a variety of reasons," Assange explained. "Now, part of that encouragement is preventing Democrats who are still upset that we exposed what Hillary Clinton said behind the scenes during the election campaign."

Assange suggested the Democratic establishment supported pardoning Manning in part because it would paint the WikiLeaks editor as a liar.

“Let’s look at it from their perspective,” he said. “If we give Chelsea Manning clemency, what’s the result? That seems like it’s a favor to WikiLeaks. But we don’t want to do WikiLeaks a favor because they really kicked us in the teeth during the election.”

“But it’s going to make life hard for Assange, because either he’s going to get extradited to the United States or we’re going to show he’s a liar and both of those things are going to make life hard for Assange, and therefore it’s okay to pardon Chelsea Manning, and that’s what happened,” he said.

Assange was also pressed on whether there was Russian involvement in the WikiLeaks release of Democratic National Committee emails or the emails of Hillary Clinton’s campaign chair John Podesta.

“I can state clearly, and I have stated clearly, that our source is not a member of the Russian government,” Assange said.

Assange is scheduled to host a number of video conferences in Australia in the coming months.

<https://www.rt.com/news/374953-wikileaks-assange-manning-extradition/>

Lawyer responds: yes, he would hand himself in

Julian Assange’s lawyer responds to Crikey writer Michael Bradley and says yes, Assange would have turned himself in to save Chelsea Manning.

*Melinda Taylor
Crikey
Jan 24, 2017*

On 20 January, Michael Bradley published a detailed harangue against Julian Assange, which posed the question: “Is Julian Assange’s long stint in the Ecuadorian embassy a martyr’s travail or a narcissist’s temper tantrum?”

Umm -- how about c) “none of the above”, or d) the prolonged illegal and arbitrary detention of a person who has never been charged?

The idea that an individual would choose to remain detained in a confined space where they have no access to fresh air or sunlight, no access to necessary medical treatment, and are subject to constant overt and covert surveillance is, quite frankly, ludicrous. I, for one, would rather spend time in the Libyan desert surrounded by militia with AK-47s than change places with Assange.

The United Nations appears to agree. A panel of legal experts confirmed twice in 2016 that Assange is illegally and arbitrarily detained and called on Sweden and the United Kingdom to ensure Assange’s liberty and protection. They also found that the circumstances of this detention (the prolonged nature, lack of access to necessary medical treatment) was tantamount to cruel and inhumane treatment.

The rulings recognised that Assange had been compelled to remain in the embassy due to the failure of either United Kingdom or Sweden to provide assurances that Assange wouldn't be shipped off to **the United States, where:**

The Vice-President had called him an “electronic terrorist”;

The NSA had placed him on on a “MANHUNTING” list with members of terrorist organisations;

The Secretary of States had queried whether the US could just drone him;

The person alleged to be his source was subjected to conditions, such as prolonged solitary confinement, which an independent United Nations expert described as tantamount to torture; and

The Department of Justice and FBI had both confirmed the existence of an ongoing investigation against Assange and WikiLeaks, of an unprecedented breadth and scale.

Mr Bradley, would you have risked these odds? Or would you, as a presumably sane individual, seek an effective form of protection against torture and persecution?

Enter Ecuador — which is what Julian did, seeking asylum at the Embassy of Ecuador. Ideally, Australia would have stepped up to the plate and intervened on Assange's behalf with the US. But it didn't. Bob Carr was evidently busy rescuing Australians elsewhere — sorry about that, Julian!

Assange has now been detained for more than six years, and **the UK and Sweden continue to flout the UN ruling with impunity**. The prosecution against Assange and WikiLeaks continues behind the scenes, as reflected by January court documents in the Manning case that refer to its existence.

As the days of the Obama Presidency ran down, Assange tweeted that if US President Barack Obama granted Manning clemency, he would agree to be extradited to the US despite the clear unconstitutionality of the case against him. Manning had endured several stints of prolonged solitary confinement and had twice attempted suicide. One of her lawyers had opined publicly that Manning wouldn't make it if she were forced to serve more time.

Did Assange tweet this message because he wanted to go to jail in the US? Absolutely not. Would he have done so if it meant saving Manning's life? Yes. As things turned out, President Obama decided to commute Manning's sentence to time served (she will be released in May) but **also made very clear that his decision had nothing to do with Assange's offer**; it was because Manning's sentence had been “tough” and disproportionate.

Mere hours after this wonderful news became public, a media frenzy began, with journalists baying for Assange's blood. I received call after call — when is Julian leaving the embassy? Why is he not in a taxi to the airport? Or, as claimed by Mr Bradley, that it was “bullshit” to suggest that President Obama should have released Manning immediately (rather than in four months' time), and pardoned her (which would have made it easier for her to obtain employment, and set a better legal precedent for journalists and other whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden).

Where did that level of antipathy come from? Since when do Australians spend their time and energy lobbying for an Australian publisher to hightail it to a maximum-security penitentiary for life, for the “crime” of publishing authentic documents concerning war crimes and human rights violations?

Since media organisations seem unwilling or unable to read WikiLeaks tweets with anything but guilt-coloured glasses, let me recap Assange’s position for everyone in simple terms:

Assange was very happy that Manning’s sentence was commuted, but also believes that she deserved to be released immediately, and pardoned;

Assange remains wiling to be extradited to the US to stand trial in fair proceedings — if going to the US is the only way to end his arbitrary and indefinite detention, then he will do it.

Assange is a publisher, whose right to publish documents that are in the public interest is protection by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The case against him is unfair and unconstitutional and should be dropped. An Assange prosecution undermines the rights and protections of journalists and publishers everywhere; it has a chilling effect on whistleblowers, and undermines the democratic right to hold the government to account for its abuses. It’s a no-brainer that we should all be calling on the US authorities to drop the case.

So in sum, Mr Bradley, what you term “temper tantrums” and “narcissism”, I term courage, and solidarity for the rights of whistleblowers, journalists and publishers everywhere.

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2017/01/24/julian-assanges-lawyer-responds-yes-hand/>

New Book Details US Attempts to Topple Correa

Norwegian journalist Eirik Vold identifies current vice presidential candidate for the right-wing CREO party as a key U.S. contact in the country.

Telesur

3 February 2017

In his new book, "Ecuador In the Sights: The WikiLeaks Revelations and the Conspiracy Against the Government of Rafael Correa," released this week in Quito, Norwegian journalist Eirik Vold details attempts by the U.S. government to topple Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa and derail his Citizens' Revolution.

"Correa was not about to let Washington maintain its dominance through financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund," Vold told the Andes press agency in explaining the motivation behind years of U.S. efforts to undermine the Ecuadorean president.

The book is largely based on the "Cablegate" documents released by WikiLeaks in 2010, including thousands of secret documents sent from the U.S. Embassy in Quito and the U.S. consulate in Guayaquil.

"There is direct U.S. interference in Ecuador," Vold told El Telegrafo, adding that **"documents show a close relationship between several figures of Ecuadorean political life, the financial sector, and the United States Embassy."**

In the book, **Vold outlines how the U.S. looked to thwart Correa from the very beginning**, trying to directly prevent his election out of fear of losing the U.S. military base in Manta, the base of CIA operations in the region, as well as control over the U.S. oil company Occidental Petroleum Corp.

After his 2006 election, Correa nationalized the oil company and closed the U.S. base in Manta.

Vold says his book **documents multiple attempts by the U.S. to sabotage UNASUR** — the regional cooperation body founded in 2007 by progressive governments in Latin America — as well as **extensive contacts between the U.S. Embassy and members of the national police force** before an attempted 2010 coup, known as 30S. In 2015, 22 police officers were found guilty of insubordination for their role in the failed coup.

Vold also claims **the secret cables identify multiple NGO, media, finance, and political contacts which the U.S. embassy used to attempt to destabilize Correa's government.**

One of those Vold names is current vice presidential candidate Andres Paez. Paez, formerly the president of the left-wing Left Democracy Party, is now running on the right-wing CREO ticket along with former banker Guillermo Lasso.

"The U.S. says in a document he is one of our most trusted contacts. In other documents, it is pointed out that he was considered an ally for imposing free trade agreements, and it is evident that he had meetings at the United States Embassy."

The Norwegian journalist, who has written extensively about U.S. involvement in Latin America, including a book about Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution, **said that Ecuador is of particular importance due to its efforts to protect WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange** from U.S. persecution, ensuring its role as a "protector of the right to information for the whole planet."

"We're talking about a region with the world's greatest concentration of natural resources, and obviously a region which has been known as the U.S.'s 'backyard'," he told Andes. "So U.S. activities are very intense in the region, but they have been maintained, for the last decade, with a more discrete, more covert strategy."

"The revelations are many, the purpose is one," he said at a book launch in Quito on Thursday. "That the Ecuadorean public regardless of their political inclination has access to truthful information about the activities of U.S. officials. And local informants in the country who had previously been concealed from them."

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/New-Book-Details-U.S.-Attempts-to-Topple-Correa-20170203-0004.html>

6 February 2017

Press Release

On anniversary of UN decision, Assange calls on UK, Sweden to release him

Today marks one year since the UN announced that Sweden and UK were acting unlawfully by depriving Julian Assange of his liberty since December 7, 2010. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) [instructed](#) the UK and Sweden to "ensure the right of free movement of Mr. Assange and accord him an enforceable right to compensation".

[Video of UN announcement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fcw3SKVRUbm>]

The UK exhausted all avenues for appeal when the UN announced on November 30, 2016 that it had [re-affirmed](#) its original decision.

One year on, neither government has complied with the UN's findings. **They remain in breach of their international obligations** under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) including its Article 7 prohibition against "cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment".

Julian Assange, the publisher and editor of WikiLeaks, said:

"I call on UK and Sweden to do the right thing and restore my liberty. These two states signed treaties to recognise the UN and its human rights mechanisms. **Their governments accepted the jurisdiction of the UNWGAD in my case** -- the world's peak legal body for cases of arbitrary detention. At no time in the 16 month process did they withdraw. They lost, appealed and lost again. This refusal to respect the umpire's decision comes at a terrible cost: **other states can now illegally detain Swedish and UK citizens with effective impunity and the UN human rights system more broadly is imperilled. Already their breach has been used to justify human rights abuses from Sri Lanka to the UAE.**"

For the last 4.5 years that Mr. Assange has been forced to remain in the embassy of Ecuador by threat of arrest. Ecuador granted him refugee status due to the ongoing US case against him over his publishing work which threatens him with life imprisonment. Although the UK and Sweden are obliged under international law to not extradite individuals with refugee status to the country that persecutes them, they have refused to follow this universally recognised norm when it comes to Mr. Assange and the United States. He has not been charged with an offence in Sweden.

Reactions to the UK's failure to implement the decision without delay:

- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, reprimanded Sweden's rejection of the UNWGAD's findings on Assange, [telling](#) AFP that "**Human rights law, the treaty body law is binding law, it is not discretionary law**, it is not some passing fancy that a state can apply sometimes and not in others".
- The United Nations Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, issued a statement on 18 January 2017 [calling](#)

[for](#) "this abnormal and inhuman situation to end" and "urged the UK and Swedish Governments to strengthen the human rights system by giving effect" to the UNWGAD's findings and expressed concern that "neither Government has taken steps toward implementation and Mr Assange finds himself a refugee under the diplomatic protection of Ecuador." De Zayas also denounced Sweden and UK's refusal to comply with the UNWGAD's findings a year ago, [writing](#) that, "The international order depends on the consistent and uniform application of international law, and is undermined when States pick and choose. **An à la carte approach to human rights erodes the credibility of the entire system. It is important that countries that regularly engage in naming and shaming of other countries accept United Nations rulings when they themselves are implicated.** It is a matter of intellectual honesty."

- Human Rights Watch [denounced](#) "the deplorable rhetorical parries from the UK and Swedish governments" against the UNWGAD following the UN decision. HRW said the governments of Sweden and the UK have "severely damaged their own reputation for being so ready to dismiss upholding inconvenient human rights obligations and their credibility as global advocates for rights by refusing to respect the institution of asylum." Human Rights Watch director Kenneth Roth has made similar [remarks](#).
- Numerous lawyers' associations and human rights organisations have [raised](#) the UK's failure to implement the UNWGAD's Assange decision before the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process, which assesses the United Kingdom's compliance with its international human rights obligations over the past five years.
- States and NGOs have [intervened](#) at the UN Human Rights Council sessions to [denounce](#) the UK's disparaging remarks about the UNWGAD and called for the UK to implement the UN's decision.
- 500 high profile signatories [urged](#) the United Kingdom to comply with the UNWGAD Assange decision. The signatories include Nobel Peace Prize laureates and Academy Award winners.
- Members of the European Parliament urged EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, to take "immediate action and effective measures" in relation to the UK and Sweden for their non-compliance with the UNWGAD's decision (11 February 2016).

Reactions to the Sweden's failure to implement the decision without delay:

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protection of Ecuador." De Zayas also denounced Sweden and UK's refusal to comply with the UNWGAD's findings a year ago, [writing](#) that, "The international order depends on the consistent and uniform application of international law, and is undermined when States pick and choose. An à la carte approach to human rights erodes the credibility of the entire system." "It is important that countries that regularly engage in naming and shaming of other countries accept United Nations rulings when they themselves are implicated. It is a matter of intellectual honesty."

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- Almost 60 international organisations [denounced](#) Sweden's abusive treatment of Assange at Sweden's Universal Periodic Review in 2014, for the same reasons that the UNWGAD subsequently found he was unlawfully detained.

How did the United Kingdom react to the UNWGAD's decision?

The UK adopted a dual strategy in response to the UNWGAD's decision.

Publicly, the UK vociferously rejected the UN's findings and attempted to diminish the credibility of the Working Group. **It attempted to do so for example by claiming, falsely, that the UN experts were "laypersons" who didn't understand the law. The UK also claimed that the UN decision was "not binding" (the UN says it is). Certain elements of the UK media uncritically repeated the UK's position, without reporting the [position](#) of the UN:**

"The binding nature of [UNWGAD] opinions derives from the collaboration by States in the procedure [UK and Sweden acknowledged the authority of the WGAD by participating in the process and submitting their arguments to the body], the adversarial nature of its findings [the WGAD receives arguments from both sides to the dispute] and also the authority given to the WGAD by the UN Human Rights Council. The Opinions of the WGAD are also considered as authoritative by prominent international and regional judicial institutions, including the European Court of Human Rights."

Quietly however, the UK filed an appeal to submit additional arguments that it hoped would persuade the UNWGAD to reverse its decision on Assange's unlawful detention. On 29 November 2016 the UN rejected the UK's application. The UN's decision on Assange's arbitrary detention therefore stands.

The UK and Sweden were given two weeks' advance notice of the Assange decision prior to the UNWGAD's 5th of February announcement of its decision. **This head start allowed the UK to coordinate its public relations strategy with Sweden head of the announcement of their defeat, as documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act [show](#).**

How did Sweden react to the UNWGAD decision?

Unlike the United Kingdom, **the Swedish government did not attempt to reverse the UNWGAD's decision, and thus accepted it in practice.**

Like the UK, Sweden claims that the UNWGAD's decision is "not binding".

The UN's position is that the decision is binding, and issued guidance to editors explaining [why](#): "The binding nature of [UNWGAD] opinions derives from the collaboration by States in the procedure [UK and Sweden acknowledged the authority of the WGAD by participating in the process and submitting their arguments to the body], the adversarial nature of its findings [the WGAD receives arguments from both sides to the dispute] and also the authority given to the WGAD by the UN Human Rights Council. **The Opinions of the WGAD are also considered as authoritative by prominent international and regional judicial institutions, including the European Court of Human Rights.**"

The UN Human Rights Committee, the body that monitors compliance with the ICCPR (which Sweden was found to be in violation of by the UNWGAD in relation to Assange), raised the Assange case repeatedly during its closed session with Swedish officials in March 2016. The Swedish government has used the separation of powers as a pretext for why Sweden has failed to implement the UNWGAD's decision. **The Human Rights Committee responded that Sweden's explanations as to why it was failing to comply with the UNWGAD's decision on Assange were "[unsatisfactory](#)".**

The Swedish prosecutor, Marianne Ny, whose reprehensible management of the "preliminary investigation" has resulted in Sweden being in breach of its international legal obligations according to the UNWGAD's [findings](#), told the Swedish courts that "there is no obligation for Sweden to follow the opinion of the Working Group and that Julian Assange's state of health and living conditions at the Embassy shall not be given any importance".

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**Julian Assange says Obama was
a 'wolf in sheepskin' but Trump is a 'wolf in wolf's skin'**

India Ashok

International Business Times

February 6, 2017

As the world braces itself for the third week of Donald Trump's presidency, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange reportedly opened up about his views on the course of the 2016 US presidential election, the role WikiLeaks played in Hillary Clinton's unexpected defeat and the Trump administration.

Dressed in a blue sweater, wrinkled green trousers and red sneakers, Assange spoke to Santiago O'Donnell from the Buenos Aires-based newspaper *Página/12*, from the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has lived under asylum since 2012. Assange spoke on a range of topics, including the much adored embassy cat as well as WikiLeaks' future.

Commenting on Trump's public image, Assange in his latest interview said: "The fact that he is a misogynist and a racist we have all seen. He has exhibited such behaviour. How much of that was sincere and how much was it to ingratiate itself with the white Republican base I do not know."

Assange likened Barack Obama and his administration to a "wolf in sheepskin", adding that Trump and his administration, in comparison, are a "wolf in wolf's skin". He said: "It is easier to deal with a wolf that is not disguised."

When asked about Trump's immigration ban and plans to build a wall at the Mexican border, Assange responded: "The wall already exists. Where there is no constructed wall, there are natural boundaries, such as deserts or rivers."

Assange said Trump's wall has a "symbolic meaning" but is not practical. "But if Latin America perceives that the United States is rejecting the region, the consequence will be that Latin America will reject the United States," he added.

Assange has previously reiterated that WikiLeaks' publication of Clinton documents was not intended to favour Trump and that its source of the damning materials was not Russia. It is a stance that the whistleblower continues to maintain, despite numerous allegations [*and zero evidence –A.B.*].

He said: "We did not publish it to favour Trump. We publish it for our own reasons. Look at it from WikiLeaks' perspective. If we have access to important information to understand how the Clinton network operates in Washington and within the Democratic Party, it is because we have assured our sources that we will publish that information in the most appropriate manner and in the context in which it may have the greatest impact. We thought we were sacrificing. **I did not think the establishment was going to let Trump win.**"

Assange also claimed that WikiLeaks would continue publishing material pertaining to the US government, regardless of which administration remains in power. He pointed out that the transparency platform had previously also published documents from George W Bush's Republican government and will "continue" with its publication with the Trump administration as well.

Assange indicated that WikiLeaks' publication during the election may have disrupted Clinton's "intricate network" in Washington.

He said: "The destruction or marginalisation of the Clinton network in Washington can be seen in the sharp fall of large donations to the Clinton Foundation and the closure of the Clinton Global Initiative. It was a network of influential traffic in which Hillary Clinton was the one that trafficked while Bill Clinton ruled in the White House."

When asked about his offer to give himself up to the US government, in exchange for Chelsea Manning's freedom, Assange indicated that he stood by his previous statement. He claimed that he would deliver on his offer if the US government respected his rights.

He claimed that he wanted to "start a dialogue with the Department of Justice" and that they would "continue negotiations" once Jeff Sessions takes office. He added it was now the US government's turn to make a move.

"We believe that they should close the case against WikiLeaks, which threatens the freedom of the press. As it is being prepared, the WikiLeaks trial would be in Alexandria, Virginia, where there is the largest concentration of CIA contractors nationwide and these would form the potential jurors. There are still things to talk about," he said.

The much adored embassy cat, which even has its own Twitter account with over 27,000 followers, has been Assange's companion for over a year now.

Speaking about the cat's influence on his life, Assange said: "He arrived newborn a year ago and is already an adult cat. The cat has become a superstar. It is one of the most famous cats in the world. He looks out the window and the paparazzi take pictures of him. We thought it would be a good addition to the embassy and that the women who work here would like to have a kitten, but ended up wanting it too much and set up a kind of competition to take care of it."

Despite the widespread popularity both Assange and WikiLeaks gained during the US election, the future of both remains uncertain. He recently renewed his plea to the UK and Swedish governments to "restore" his freedom.

"I call on the UK and Sweden to do the right thing and restore my liberty," he said, the BBC reported. "These two states signed treaties to recognise the UN and its human rights mechanisms."

"This refusal to respect the umpire's decision comes at a terrible cost," he added. "Other states can now illegally detain Swedish and UK citizens with effective impunity and the UN human rights system more broadly is imperilled."

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/julian-assange-says-obama-wolf-062305943.html>

Ecuador presidential hopeful promises to evict Julian Assange from embassy

*Jonathan Watts
The Guardian
9 February 2017*

Julian Assange will be given a month's notice to leave the Ecuadorian embassy if the country's main opposition candidate wins the presidency in next week's election.

In an interview with the Guardian, Guillermo Lasso, of the rightwing Creo-Suma alliance, said it was time for the WikiLeaks founder to move on because his asylum was expensive and no longer justified.

"The Ecuadorian people have been paying a cost that we should not have to bear," he said during an interview in Quito. "We will cordially ask Señor Assange to leave within 30 days of assuming a mandate."

That possibility is still some way off. In the most recent poll, Lasso is seven points behind the ruling party candidate Lenín Moreno, but the former banker has been gaining ground ahead of the first round of voting on 19 February and is widely tipped to force a runoff.

Even if there is no change in power in Quito, however, it seems increasingly likely that Assange will soon be moving from the cramped embassy in Knightsbridge that has been his refuge for more than four and a half years.

Although the current government has maintained its position of solidarity, all involved have grown increasingly frustrated with a situation that Ecuador's top diplomat described as "something out of a John le Carré novel".

"Our staff have been through a lot. There is a human cost," said the foreign minister, Guillaume Long. "This is probably the most watched embassy on the planet."

British police and intelligence have kept the embassy under close surveillance since Ecuador granted asylum in June 2012 to prevent Assange's extradition to Sweden for questioning about a sexual assault accusation.

The South American country accepts the WikiLeaks leader's argument that the Swedish extradition request was a ruse aimed at eventually getting him into US

jurisdiction, where he said he would face political persecution and mistreatment similar to that suffered by whistleblower Chelsea Manning.

Since then, he has not left the building, which has given him less scope for movement than that of many convicted prisoners.

“It’s a very precarious position,” Long said. “In terms of his physical comfort we have done all we can ... But there is no access to an outside space. There is no patio or garden so he has mostly spent four and a half years on the first floor of a building in London, where there is not much light, especially in winter.”

Assange occupies one of four office rooms in the embassy. Although he has described a family-like relationship with the staff and gets frequent visits from celebrity supporters, tensions occasionally emerge.

During the US presidential election, the foreign ministry temporarily cut its guest’s internet access after WikiLeaks acted as a conduit for leaked emails from the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton’s campaign adviser. This suspension followed verbal warnings.

“We wanted to be clear that our sovereign space was not being used for interference in the election of another country,” Long explained.

The foreign minister expressed sympathy for Assange, but also frustration at the slow pace of judicial negotiations with Sweden **and the punitive stance of the UK government, which has cut many bilateral ties and is suspected of a hand in the unusually frequent breakdowns of the embassy’s telephone and broadband systems.**

But after a long standstill, things have picked up pace. Last November, Assange was interviewed in the Ecuadorian embassy in the presence of a Swedish prosecutor.

In January — after Barack Obama’s decision to release Manning — Assange restated his willingness to face justice in the US if his rights were respected.

For the Ecuadorian foreign minister, the goodbye cannot come too soon. “We would like the next step to be tomorrow,” he said and called for the Swedish courts to accelerate matters. “We hope they are as swift as possible because this has been going on for far too long.”

www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/09/ecuador-julian-assange-embassy-notice-eviction

WikiLeaks ‘will not respond to pressure’ from Ecuador’s presidential candidates

RT

21 Feb. 2017

Julian Assange has hit back at Ecuadorian presidential candidate Lenin Moreno for saying that the WikiLeaks founder should reduce his attempts to influence the politics of countries with which Ecuador has friendly relations.

In a tweet, Assange said he's open to discussions with Moreno and his rival candidate Guillermo Lasso but WikiLeaks "will not respond to pressure".

Assange, who is sheltered in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, is facing an uncertain future after the country's presidential election. Lasso, who has voiced his opposition to Assange and pledged to evict him from the embassy, may no longer be a threat according to the polls, but Moreno has spoken to RT of his own concerns over the WikiLeaks founder.

"One thing that is clear is that Assange will have to reduce meddling in the policies of the nations we have friendly relations with," Moreno told RT Spanish.

Moreno cited "the way [Assange] meddled with the election campaign in the United States" as something "one shouldn't do" while at the embassy.

"If you invite me to your place, I shouldn't say bad things about your friends. If you give me shelter and I enjoy your hospitality, I should also show you respect," the candidate said, adding that conditions would be set for Assange if he wishes to remain at the embassy.

Assange's tweeted comment that WikiLeaks publishes material online from the EU relates to the WikiLeaks servers, which are hosted in Sweden and a number of undisclosed locations. When the embassy was without internet in October Assange said WikiLeaks would not be affected as it does not publish from Ecuador.

At the time he said he was sympathetic to Ecuador, claiming it faced a dilemma of having the US interfere with its elections if it appeared to interfere with America's elections.

<https://www.rt.com/news/378112-wikileaks-ecuador-pressure-assange>

"Julian Assange förhördes i november -- fullständigt obegripligt att åklagaren ännu inte fattat beslut"

*Rolf Hillegren
Dagens Juridik
2017-02-23*

Julian Assange är sedan 2010 misstänkt för våldtäkt i Sverige och han är sedan dess häktad i sin frånvaro. Han greps i London i december 2010.

Sedan han därefter utan framgång överklagat begäran om utlämning till Sverige lyckades han i juni 2012 ta sin tillflykt till Ecuadors ambassad i London. I augusti samma år beviljades han politisk asyl i Ecuador.

Överåklagaren Marianne Ny, som är förundersökningsledare i målet, borde då ha insett att möjligheten att få Assange till Sverige torde ha upphört då han vägrar att lämna ambassaden.

Till saken hör att fallet är ett solklart avskrivningsärende som skrevs av redan 2010 av en erfaren åklagare och därvid skulle det ha stannat om inte Marianne Ny i september samma år beslutat att återuppta förundersökningen.

Marianne Ny har dock hela tiden envist hävdade att Assange som förhörts i Sverige 2010 måste höras ytterligare samt att förhören måste ske i Sverige. Men i maj 2015 ändrade hon sig och begärde tillstånd från Ecuador att få förhöra Assange på ambassaden.

Skälet till denna helomvändning är att hon eljest riskerade att häktningsbeslutet skulle hävas av Svea hovrätt eller Högsta Domstolen på grund av den passivitet hon visat i fallet.

Efter visst administrativt krångel från Ecuadors sida *[och/eller från Sveriges sida --A.B.]* kunde förhör äntligen hållas i november 2016 på Ecuadors ambassad i London.

Det hade varit rimligt att åklagaren därefter hade fattat ett beslut inom några få dagar. Hon har tre alternativ att välja på och något av dessa borde ha valts redan 2010.

Alternativen är att förundersökningen läggs ned med någon av följande motiveringar: Den misstänkte har lämnat landet och förväntas inte återvända. Anledning förekommer ej till antagande att brott förövats. Brotten kan inte styrkas.

Sedan finns det ett fjärde alternativ. Åklagaren skulle mot bättre vetande och gängse yrkesetik kunna hävda att förundersökningen måste fortsätta. Resultatet av ett sådant beslut skulle bli att Assange stannar kvar på ambassaden till 2020 då brottet preskriberas.

Den sedan flera år pågående rättsskandalen skulle i så fall fortgå i ytterligare tre år.

Det är fullständigt obegripligt att åklagaren ännu inte fattat något beslut med anledning av det förhör som hållits i London. På Riksåklagarens hemsida finns en anteckning daterad den 5 januari 2017 som upplyser om att en "rapport från förhöret" har överlämnats från Ecuador.

Vidare uppges att rapporten omfattar flera hundra sidor och att översättningsarbetet beräknas ta flera veckor.

Att en rapport från ett onödigt förhör kan vara så omfattande förefaller ytterst märkligt. Man behöver inte vara konspiratoriskt lagd för att misstänka att åklagaren vill ge sken av att hon står inför ett svårt avgörande. Men så är inte fallet. Låt oss leka med följande tankar.

Sedan Assange greps i London 2010 utlämnades han till Sverige. Svensk domstol prövade häktningsbeslutet och beslutade att det skulle kvarstå. Vidare beslutade domstolen att åklagaren fick en vecka på sig för att väcka åtal. Sedan åklagaren förhört Assange beslutade hon efter två dagar att lägga ned förundersökningen och häva häktningsbeslutet.

Alternativt: Åklagaren väckte åtal och huvudförhandling hölls en vecka senare varefter domstolen samma dag eller något senare ogillade åtalet och hävde häktningen av

Assange då den fann att åtalet inte var styrkt. **Några ytterligare alternativ har aldrig funnits då bevisning saknas.**

Jämförelsen mellan vad som skulle hänt om fallet följt normala rutiner och behandlats enligt gällande regler för frihetsberövade och den situation som i stället rått sedan 2010 är tveklöst av stort intresse.

Det är visserligen Assange själv som orsakat att han hamnat i en situation som i praktiken är väsentligt värre än om han lagförts i Sverige och man kan tycka vad man vill om Assange som person och hans agerande. **Men det väsentliga i detta sammanhang är att han inte har några som helst skyldigheter att medverka i utredningen.**

Åklagaren har däremot en skyldighet att driva förundersökningen så skyndsamt som omständigheterna medger. Ingen lär kunna påstå att så har skett.

Handläggningen av utredningen är så illa skött att det är svårt att frigöra sig från tanken -- om än bisarr -- att åklagaren bestämt sig för att lämna ett rejält bidrag till den samling som redan finns av svenska rättsskandaler. För det kan väl inte vara så illa att en överåklagare kan vara inkompetent?

Minst lika svårt är det att förstå varför även Riksåklagaren förhållit sig passiv genom åren -- i synnerhet som utredningen väckt internationell uppmärksamhet och dragit löje över Sverige och svenskt rättsväsende.

Kommentarer

Berra Borrare tors, 2017-02-23 14:52

Finns det ingen ansvarsnämnd som kan agera mot misskötsamma åklagare som Ny? Varför tar hennes chef inte ifrån henne assangeärendet?

Ali Reza tors, 2017-02-23 17:06

Cynismen och taktiserandet vet inga gränser i detta fall. Åklagaren sitter och väntar på att Assange skall ge upp och låta sig utlämnas till USA, för det har kommit sådana signaler. **Annars väcker de gärna åtal om ett par år eller mer för svenska domstolar älskar att döma i gamla skåpmatsfall, ju äldre desto bättre.** Att eventuella bevis är iskalla efter alla år struntar man i för det behövs inga bevis i dessa fall.

AR sön, 2017-02-26 19:58

Riktigt så enkelt som kammaråklagaren vill ge sken av är det inte. Ärendet handlar bara om politik och prestige, om Sveriges förhållande till USA.

Det krävs mindre styrka i bevisningen för att häkta någon än att fälla någon till ansvar för brott.

När Assange häktades, stod målsägandens utsaga oemotsagd eftersom Assange då ännu inte hade hörts om misstankarna. *[Han förhöordes av polisen efter några dagar. -- A.B.]* När så nu sent omsider skett, kvarstår inte längre skälen (utredningshäktning) för häktning, och häktningsbeslutet bör hävas. Jag kan inte tänka mig att åklagaren har några bevis som räcker för att väcka åtal. Enbart målsägandens påstående räcker inte på långa vägar. Men det vore en stor prestigeförlust för åklagaren att lägga ned åtalet nu. Jag tror inte hon förmår göra det, hon lider nog av separationsångest och kan nog inte släppa det efter att det följt henne som en svart katt under alla år. Dessutom är det

en milstolpe i hennes karriär och även om ett eventuellt åtal sannolikt skulle ogillas så skulle hon ändå bli ihågkommen som juristen som försökte och var nära att fånga och fälla JA, vilket inte ens självaste USA och hela dess säkerhetstjänst lyckats med. Ny har med rätta utsatts för tonvis av kritik, att lägga ned ärendet skulle kunna ses som att kritikerna hade rätt hela tiden. Sverige har utsatts för massor av påtryckningar av USA så rättsväsendet vet vad som förväntas av det. Nys roll är att till varje pris leverera ett åtal som leder till en fällande dom. Med eller utan bevis. Det finns massor av jurister som gladeligen agerar springpojkar och springflickor åt USA. I samma stund som JA skulle frigges från ett ev. fängelsestraff som avtjänats i Sverige, skulle HD i plenum med fullsutten rätt för att skaffa legitimitet åt beslutet, sannolikt fatta beslut om att utlämna honom till USA. Skulle man mot förmodan neka att lämna ut honom, så skulle han istället kidnappas av amerikanska agenter och föras till USA....

Andreas lör, 2017-02-25 01:51

Är det inte samma Ny som tidigare hävdade att häktning/rättsprocess skulle kunna användas mot män i avskräckande syfte även när det inte finns förutsättningar för dom?

Ove lör, 2017-02-25 10:43

Ungefär. Här kan man läsa hur hon menar att mannen ska straffas även om han inte är skyldig till något.

"Först då mannen frihetsberövas och kvinnan i lugn och ro hinner få lite perspektiv på sin tillvaro, får hon en chans att upptäcka hur hon egentligen behandlas".

"Marianne Ny menar att lagföringen har god effekt som skydd för kvinnan, även i de fall gärningsmannen åtalas men inte döms."

<http://www.domstol.se/Publikationer/Rapporter/Kvinnofridslagen.pdf>

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Brita Behövs fre, 2017-02-24 02:10

Alltså. Jag har ingen uppfattning om åklagaren ska åtala eller inte. Men jag vet att det var frånvaron av slutförhör som avhöll åkl att väcka åtal på den omfattande häktningspromemorian, som innehåller förhör med f d pojkvänner m fl. Jag vet också att åkl inte kunde påräkna något erkännande i slutförhöret och att erkännande inte heller förekom. Nu vet åkl vad JA framför i slutförhöret och behöver inte vänta på någon översättning för att väcka åtal. Inte heller för att som alternativ lägga ner förundersökningen och begära att rätten häver häktningen. För den skriften till rätten krävs ingen översättning. Inte för åtal heller. **Här finns det skäl att förmoda att åkl hoppas att det politiska landskapet i landet ifråga kommer att förändras inom kort så att JA sonika slängs ut från ambassaden**, för att kunna besluta i åtalsfrågan utan att behöva schavottera offentligt. F ö har jag hört att den intensiva bevakningen av ambassaden har upphört för en tid sen, men det är ingen garanti.

pip fre, 2017-02-24 20:08

Men vi kan kanske vara överens om att det innebär en konsekvens för en människa att vara anklagad för brott. Att en brottsanklagelse kan förstås påverka såväl privatliv som yrkesliv. Därmed bör och skall en anklagelse hanteras skyndsamt....

pip lör, 2017-02-25 23:34

... Jag ser allvarligt på att någon riktar brottsanklagelser mot någon och då misslyckas åklagare och polis med att föra ärendet framåt.

Ansvarat ligger ju hos dessa oavsett hur den brottsmisstänkte betar sig eller agerar på egen hand. Håller du inte med om det?

Det finns väl ingen vinst för Assange att underlätta ett åtal mot sig?

Han har väl rätt i att känna sig hotad att bli utlämnad till USA om det är så han känner. Du vet kanske inte allt Assange vet. Låt det stå för honom och låt ansvarig åklagare visa den beslutsamhet som åligger åklagare i brottsmål. Målet ska föras framåt vad som än sker....

Samtidigt som förhör hölls vid Ecuador ambassad gick man ut på radion och berättade att engelsk polis hade rätt att gripa Assange, eftersom arresteringsordern låg kvar, men lyssnade man till Per E Samuelsson, Assanges svenska ombud, sa han precis tvärtom.

Han menade att om Assange fullföljde förhöret utan sitt svenska ombud kunde arresteringsordern inte ligga kvar. Hans råd till Assange var därför att genomföra förhöret, om jag uppfattat saken rätt....

pip sön, 2017-02-26 09:36

... Hade garantier funnits som verkligen garanterade Assange samma skydd och rättigheter som alla andra som anklagas för brott i Sverige så hade väl fallet inte sett ut som det gör.

Hur svårt kan det vara att ställa sådana garantier och varför ens inte genast göra det? Står inte Sverige fritt? Bestämmer inte Sverige själv över vilka man utlämnar eller ej?

Just avsaknaden av garantier för att rättsväsendet synes stå och väga mellan lojalitet med sin befolkning och sin juridik mot andra utrikiska intressen....

Alex tors, 2017-02-23 22:53

Det allra mest befängda i historien är att gärningarna som Assange ska ha begått -- om man läser de läckta handlingarna, bland annat målsägandeförhör -- helt solklart inte är brottsliga som våldtäkt. Det övergår fullständigt mitt förstånd hur han kan ha omhäktats så många gånger på den grunden.

Att ha sex utan kondom när partnern tidigare krävt kondom men till slut ger med sig är inte våldtäkt. Möjligtvis sexuellt ofredande. Att samlagen varit frivilliga -- förutom att JA en av gångerna lurats angående om han hade kondom eller inte -- är ostridigt.

Att väcka någon med sexuella handlingar är inte heller våldtäkt om man har rimlig anledning att tro att personen vill det. Under samma natt har JA och kvinnan haft sex flera gånger där ena parten väckt den andra, vilket gör att JA såklart även den sista gången haft anledning att tro att hon ville det. En stor brist i målsägandeförhören i detta fall är att man inte överhuvudtaget frågat om vem som inlett de tidigare samlagen när ena parten sovit -- är det Assange så kan han ju åtalas för flera fall av våldtäkt (!). Är det kvinnan så har ju hon själv gjort sig skyldig till våldtäkt mot Assange och borde också häktas -- enligt samma sjuka logik. Men förhørsledaren frågar alltså inte överhuvudtaget om vem som inlett samlagen de tidigare gångerna, vilket är mycket märkligt.

När jag kom till stycket "Övergreppet" i ett av förhören **fick jag läsa flera gånger för jag förstod först inte vad som menades vara ett övergrepp.** Sen förstod jag att handlingen med kondomen eller handlingen med att väcka personen med samlag avsågs, oklart vilket av det. Att detta inte är våldtäkt, ens enligt svensk lag, är uppenbart.

Kammaråklagare tors, 2017-02-23 22:59

Alex. Svenska domstolar -- upp till Högsta Domstolen -- har ju bedömt att sannolika skäl för våldtäkt, mindre grovt brott, föreligger. I det ligger i att de bedömt att OM det

gått till som målsäganden påstått så skulle det vara en våldtäkt. Hade de tyckt att det som påstås inte skulle varit en våldtäkt så skulle han aldrig blivit häktad. Du är fri att tycka att det inte borde vara straffbart naturligtvis. Men du har fel i huruvida det ÄR straffbart i Sverige....

Brita Behövs fre, 2017-02-24 02:31

Det är åtminstone för mig en djärv tolkning att påstå att domstolarna funnit att målsägandens uppgifter skulle objektivt sett utgöra våldtäkt eftersom målsäganden befunnit sig i ett hjälplöst tillstånd, när målsäganden själv inte sagt annat än att hon inte varit mer än bara halvsovande. Tydiligen inte ens ett fall av "frozen fright".

Alex fre, 2017-02-24 04:32

Fast att hon sov och blev väckt med sex är uppenbarligen inte våldtäkt. I så fall har det begåtts ytterligare en rad våldtäkter samma natt -- men eftersom förhørsledaren inte frågat vem som väckt vem med sex de gångerna så vet vi inte vem som begått brotten.

Det finns anledning att tro att målsäganden själv väckt Assange med samlag de gångerna. Dels att man undviker att fråga en sådan sak, dels det faktum att målsäganden var drivande i att de skulle ha sex till en början, talar för det. Men att inte fråga en sån sak är ytterst märkligt, det är ju uppenbart samma handling som det brott man utreder men man bryr sig inte om att fråga? Varför?

Missförstå mig inte, jag är inget fan av Assange som jag anser vara en del i den ryska propagandamaskinen. Av förhören framgår också att han kan vara ett svin mot kvinnor -- inte på något olagligt sätt, men han har behandlat dessa två kvinnor på ett sätt som luktar lite mansgris. Det framgår av förhören. En sån sak saknar emellertid all betydelse i bedömningen såklart. Jag tycker att detta är en rättsskandal (precis som åklagaren som skriver denna artikel) och jag vill alltså vara tydlig med att jag inte är någon foliehatt eller något fan av Assange. Att brottet inte skulle vara våldtäkt har ju också den åklagare som fattat det första beslutet innan Marianne Ny tog över ansett, inte sant?

Allt det jag påstår finns att läsa i förhören, se efter själva! Jag skojar inte, **de har väckt varandra med sex flera gånger -- varför är det bara den allra sista gången som skulle vara våldtäkt?** Pga det med kondomen? Befängtt.

pip fre, 2017-02-24 10:11

Ja det är en intressant fråga detta med kondom eller ej. Kondom skyddar ju mot såväl graviditet som överförbara könssjukdomar, något inget annat preventivmedel gör. De skyddar i sin tur enbart mot graviditet.

Vilket gör att alla samlag för alla som har sex måste ske med kondom om det är garantier för icke överförbara könssjukdomar som står för själva begreppet våldtäkt. Det ställer ju helt nya krav på samtliga våldtäktsmål.

Pelle fre, 2017-02-24 17:05

"Fast att hon sov och blev väckt med sex är uppenbarligen inte våldtäkt."

Det kan det mycket väl vara, beroende på omständigheterna. Att en person går med på sex vid tidpunkt T1 innebär inte att det är OK vid tidpunkt T2, beroende på omständigheter etc. **Det är en vanlig missuppfattning att det inte kan vara våldtäkt för att frivillighet har förekommit innan.** Frivilligheten kan också vara förbehållet vissa ramar, som i detta fall att det skulle användas kondom. Bryter man mot krav på kondom utan att detta är överenskommet så kan man knappast kalla det frivilligt längre, dvs potentiell våldtäkt.

pip fre, 2017-02-24 20:15

Men det inbegriper väl att kvinnan inte ändrar uppfattning igen och går med på samlag utan kondom. Det är ju vad som ska bevisas. Vad var kvinnans inställning och hur är detta styrkt i hennes agerande under själva samlaget?...

Hans Bergerholm fre, 2017-02-24 23:26

Är det sant att det inte är möjligt att i "förväg" garantera Julian Assange att inte utlämnas till USA? Orsaken till att Ecuador vägrat lämna ut Assange till Sverige under 4,5 år är ju att Sverige inte velat garantera att han inte utlämnas vidare till USA och att Ecuador bedömt att han i USA riskerar att behandlas inhumant och inte där kan räkna med en opartisk rättegång.

På Åklagarmyndighetens hemsida kan man läsa: "Varje utlämningsfall ska bedömas för sig, utifrån de omständigheter som gäller i det enskilda fallet. Av det skälet kan den svenska regeringen inte i förväg ge en garanti om att inte utlämna Assange till USA"

Ärendet har blivit ett s.k. Moment 22. Assange kommer inte till Sverige om han riskerar att utlämnas till USA. Sverige fattar inte beslut om utlämning till USA om inte Assange är Sverige.

Vad jag minns ställdes frågan på ett tidigt stadium. Kan Sverige garantera Julian att inte utlämnas till USA? **Carl Bildt gjorde en Carl Bildtare dvs. omformade frågan och sedan svarade på den nya frågan.** Den nya frågan blev kan Carl Bildt garantera Julian att inte utlämnas till USA? Det borde han inte göra. I en demokrati bör det finnas möjlighet att kunna överklaga ett beslut och om regeringen börjar med att fatta ett beslut går det inte att överklaga.

Men som jag ser det verkar det som Carl gjorde det han sa att han inte fick göra. Han fattade beslutet att Julian inte kan garanteras att inte utlämnas. Ett beslut som jag misstänker han gärna fattade.

Men frågan som jag undrar över är ursprungsfrågan. Kan Sverige garantera att Assange inte utlämnas till USA?

Varför kan inte en Svensk minister helt enkelt fråga motsvarande minister i USA om man i USA känner till något brott som Assange borde stå till svars för i USA.

Tre svars alternativ:

- 1) I USA känner man inte till något brott som Julian skulle kunna bli utlämnad från Sverige för och USA vill inte längre stå i vägen för en våldtäktsrättegång i Sverige. Därför garanterar USA att man inte kommer att begära Julian utlämnad om han kommer hit. Sverige bör kunna garantera att Julian inte behöver utlämnas till USA.
- 2) USA kommer att begära Julian utlämnad om han kommer hit. Följdfråga, vilket brott skulle USA önska honom utlämnad för. När man i Sverige vet det skulle det kunna överlämnas till riksåklagaren enl. Lag (1957:668) om utlämning för brott. Enligt 15§ Förfarandet ska sedan Åklagarmyndigheten utreda förutsättningarna för utlämning för att sedan enl. 18 § Högsta domstolen prövar, huruvida utlämning kan beviljas.
- 3) Inget svar inkommer från USA. Frågan ställs igen med tillägget att om Sverige inte fått svar inom en månad så kommer man i Sverige utgå ifrån att USA inte önskar få Assange utlämnad och man därför kommer garantera Assange att han inte kommer utlämnas.

Det är ju trots allt i Sverige som beslutet om utlämning till USA ska fattas inte i USA liksom det inte gick för Sverige att överklaga Ecuadors asylbeslut. Det var ett beslut som Ecuador skulle fatta.

Så frågan blir. Finns det någon paragraf i någon svensk lag som förbjuder justitiedepartementet i Sverige att på eget initiativ utreda förutsättningarna för utlämning av JA till USA?

Har inte hittat någon sådan paragraf och **ställt denna fråga till Justitiedepartementet, Åklagarmyndigheten och till ett 10 tal kända jurister utan att få något svar.** Så frågan är om någon annan känner till någon sådan paragraf. Eller någon annan orsak till varför Julian och Ecuador inte kan få ett vettigt svar på denna fråga?

Det är ju skillnad om regeringen inte hjälpt till att avsluta detta ärende därför att det skulle bryta mot någon lagparagraf eller om man bara inte önskat engagera sig.

Musse lör, 2017-02-25 00:48

Möjligt är det såklart. Däremot ser det väl illa att lova det och sedan bryta mot det. Dessutom är ju USA nöjda med hur det är nu, så knähunden blir struken över huvudet och både hon och husse är nöjda.

Numera även att Sverige genom förfarandet bryter mot Assange mänskliga rättigheter genom att utsätta honom för ett godtyckligt frihetsberövande och sedan vägra rätta sig efter den internationella domstolens beslut.

Andra terrorismisstänkta har ju hängts upp i köttkrokar på CIA.s flygplan i Bromma, utomrättsligt; utan föregående beslut. Det var väl det man hade tänkts sig med Assange från början, att han skulle försvinna helt enkelt. (det hela avslöjade genom att en av poliserna som deltog vid en av tortyrsessionerna tyckte att det hela var moraliskt tvivelaktigt)....

[http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2017/02/julian-assange-forhordes-i-november-fullstandigt-obegripligt-att-aklagaren-annu-inte-fattat-](http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2017/02/julian-assange-forhordes-i-november-fullstandigt-obegripligt-att-aklagaren-annu-inte-fattat)

Julian Assange: 'I won Trump the election'

Julian Assange in front of the Melbourne Town Hall pipe organ.

*Nicholas James
Green Left Weekly (Australia)
March 25, 2017*

[Note: The headline of this article is misleading in that, unlike the following text, it does not clarify that Assange's comment was uttered in jest. -A.B.]

When Julian Assange appeared in front of the Melbourne Town Hall pipe organ, the pipes shimmered, nearly whistled; leaky, ready to burst. Pastel white as he was beamed in live from London, Assange looked surprisingly well.

The pipe setting became more allegoric as he spoke of his latest alarming leak: The Pied Piper theory. The reference is not to Assange leading his followers into the unknown. But more on that madcap theory later.

Lecture and Q&A specialist company ThinkInc, toured Assange across Australia under the banner of "No more secrets: No more lies".

The title implies there's a lot for Assange to clear-up. But "no regrets" is Assange's motto: he says there is nothing to make clear.

For more than four years while in the Ecuadoran Embassy in London, Assange has been mind-bombing and leaking on Syria, Nigerian oil companies, Tunisian overlords and Hillary Clinton. Even as he talks, in complex monologs littered with expletives, he is clandestinely leaking on the French presidential election. Assange believes the leaks over the past ten years have been “perfect — metadata proves this”.

Alas, nothing is perfect. Subjective belief in the perfect truth, whatever the cost, is what makes Assange so utterly frictional. Some on the left are now cautious of Assange. The right wants to kill him. But some still love him.

Assange believes the outcomes of leaks are “always secondary considerations” and if he did not leak during the US election, truth would have been the first casualty.

Sarcastically, on the subject of the US election, he says “I won Trump the election, obviously”, to deathly silence from the sold out audience. Sensing the audience tautness, Assange begins to explain the Democratic National Committee’s Pied Piper strategy.

It is public knowledge that “the DNC knocked off socialist Bernie Sanders”, but it is little known that Democratic Party email leaks reveal the Clinton campaign played a crazy double game, elevating Trump into the spotlight and White House.

DNC emails outlined the agenda: “We don’t want to marginalise the more extreme candidates, but make them more ‘Pied Piper’ candidates who represent the mainstream of the Republican Party. Pied Piper candidates include, but aren’t limited to Ted Cruz, Donald Trump, Ben Carson. We need to be elevating the Pied Piper candidates ... and tell the press to take them seriously.”

Afterthoughts from Assange on the US election, are cerebral.[???] For example, he didn’t expect Trump to win, but attributes the win to Clinton’s over reliance on identity politics.

Clinton’s campaign propelled the “white class acknowledging their whiteness and class existence for the first time in decades. She labelled the other candidates ‘deplorable’. But Clinton was the candidate who lost to Trump — one of the worst candidates in history.”

While “Trump lied and Hilary lied”, a section of the US population believed Trump was “emotionally truer”. Assange happily summarised the Democratic Party’s hypocrisy when supporting WikiLeaks leaking information on the George W Bush administration (Iraq War) and later attacking WikiLeaks for leaking on Barak Obama and Clinton.

In another life, Assange could have been a first-rate political analyst or an exceptional counter-intelligence agent. One gets the feeling that the real WikiLeaks confrontation is with the CIA and NSA. **Trump won't pardon him, he says: “You have to be realistic about who controls the White House. There’s a disproportionate influence over the White House from Defense, CIA, and NSA, as seen by the Flynn affair.”**

Military contracts are in limbo, especially “the \$1 billion Syria destabilisation fund”. The military and intelligence complexes are at war with the Trump administration, and “this is unprecedented”.

Right now the American empire is the least of Assange's problems. Ecuador's presidential election is close and the right-wing opposition wants Assange out of the embassy.

Locked in the Ecuadorian Embassy for more than four years, the fight for his freedom is beyond Kafkaesque. The Swedish case was never prosecuted and is now a moot point and "probably [the right wing candidate] Lasso will win" but the Geneva Convention may still protect Assange.

"As a radical left state, Ecuador has done some great things. They have renegotiated foreign oil contracts and distributed 80% of the money. Ecuador is like family to me."

If asked to leave a hostile embassy, would Australia help? Assange says the Australian state is "completely useless" and "schizophrenic". "Australia doesn't exist as a state, doesn't have a language, wiped out a race, the Aboriginals [sic] don't have a voice. It doesn't have a diplomatic head and instead subordinates its foreign policy to the US."

Assange equally mocks the British class system, saying it is "weak". For all the millions spent on technology the "hopeless" British intelligence services surrounding the embassy, cannot stop the infamous Australian. Assange gleefully says: "We got Edward Snowden from Hong Kong to Russia. Right under the noses of the intelligence community."

Millions of pounds in security, Prism-NSA control of the global internet and internet blackouts can seemingly not stop Wikileaks receiving, and publishing, a mountain of leaks every day. The spy bureaucracy cannot compete with a man who seems to be all-knowing. "Think about the bureaucracy as second rate analysts in the state, in 1980s buildings, with 1980 infrastructure. They are utterly hopeless."

It's a catch me if you can attitude, which will no doubt continue to infuriate Washington and London.

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/julian-assange-%E2%80%99i-won-trump-election%E2%80%99>

Pamela Anderson om sin nära relation till Julian Assange

Pamela Andersson om Assange: "Han är väldigt sexig"

Ikonen Pamela Anderson— för de flesta känd från 90-talsserien Baywatch— ryktas ha en romans med Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange. Men när hon får frågor om deras relation i SVT:s Skavlan ger hon bara kryptiska svar.

Pamela Anderson är högaktuell som Vivienne Westwoods nya ansikte och även med filmen Baywatch the movie.

Andersson har också skapat rubriker genom att fem gånger de senaste fyra månaderna ha besökt Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange på Ecuadors ambassad i London, där han har levt sedan fyra år tillbaka.

I SVT:s Skavlan får Anderson frågor om sin relation med Assange — stämmer ryktena om att de har en romans?

Stjärnan vill inte ge några raka svar på frågan, men säger:

– Han är väldigt sexig.

Men dejtar ni?

– Han sitter inspärrad, så det vore svårt.

Pamela Anderson har skrivit på sin blogg om det hon känner för Julian Assange, och kallat honom "en av mina favoritpersoner".

– Han har försökt rädda världen genom att utbilda den. Det är en romantisk kamp och jag älskar honom för att han gör det, skriver hon.

Hon skriver också att Assange "förföljts" av amerikanska regeringen för att han "blottat dem"

– Han kan vara en av de mest kända flyktingar i vår tid. Att vara känd för att ha blivit förföljd är inte en maktposition utan något som gör en sårbar. Jag är orolig för honom, skriver Anderson.

Filmstjärnan ska ha haft kontakt med Julian Assange sedan 2014, då hon ska ha kontaktat honom för att få Assange att stödja hennes välgörenhetsorganisation som hjälper kvinnor som utsatts för sexuella övergrepp.

Julian Assange utreds fortfarande för två misstänkta våldtäkter i Sverige.

Pamela Anderson har också kommenterat detta och sagt att hon hyser tilltro till att Sverige inte kommer utlämna Assange till USA.

– **Det här är ett bra tillfälle för Sverige att visa hur starka de är, skriver hon.**

Freja Salö o. Johanna Eklundh

SVT

31 mars 2017

Assange 'cordially invites' Ecuador's Lasso to leave country within 30 days

RT

3 April 2017

Julian Assange has "cordially" invited the losing presidential candidate to "leave Ecuador within 30 days" using similar language as Guillermo Lasso, who promised to expel the WikiLeaks founder from the Ecuadorean embassy in London should he win.

In the run-up to Ecuador's presidential elections, conservative candidate Lasso promised that he "will cordially ask Senor Assange to leave" within 30 days of assuming office, should he be elected. The pro-business candidate said the country's London embassy "isn't a hotel" and that Ecuador is in no position to finance the Australian's stay there.

In a cheeky response on Sunday — after preliminary results in the second round of Ecuador’s presidential election showed that Lasso is poised to lose — the WikiLeaks founder responded using the same language.

“I cordially invite Lasso to leave Ecuador within 30 days (with or without his tax haven millions),” Assange tweeted, referring to the revelations made shortly before the vote.

Last week Ecuadorean media exposed conservative candidate’s financial dealings, accusing Lasso of facilitating capital flights from Ecuador and rallying the country’s business sector against the leftist Rafael Correa.

According to reports, Lasso had engaged the US Embassy in 2007 by briefing the American ambassador on the fight against the incumbent president Rafael Correa. Washington supported the country’s opposition and big business in their effort to oust the left-wing government, according to Assange’s organization.

Meanwhile Lasso is unwilling to concede to the leftist Lenin Moreno, who is leading him by two points with over 95 percent of the votes counted. Lasso claimed his own victory based on early exit poll results, and vowed to “defend the will of the people” and push for a recount of the official results. He also urged his supporters to get out on the streets and protest.

“Let us act peacefully but firmly. You have to go to the streets to say: DO NOT STEAL MY VOTE because we want a CHANGE in Ecuador,” he tweeted.

<https://www.rt.com/news/383169-assange-lasso-ecuador-elections/>

Julian Assange warned to keep out of Ecuador's politics by new president

The Guardian
5 April 2017

Ecuador’s president-elect, Lenín Moreno, has warned Julian Assange not to meddle in the country’s politics after the WikiLeaks founder taunted a rival candidate following his loss.

Moreno’s election victory on Sunday was a relief for Assange, who has been holed up in Ecuador’s London embassy since 2012 to avoid arrest.

The socialist president-elect’s conservative rival, Guillermo Lasso, had vowed to kick Assange out of the embassy.

But Moreno had some stern words after Assange took to Twitter to celebrate Lasso’s loss.

“Mr Julian Assange must respect the condition [of asylum] he is in and not meddle in Ecuadoran politics,” Moreno said at a news conference.

As results showed Lasso losing on election night, Assange turned around the rightwing candidate's threat to expel him within 30 days.

"I cordially invite Lasso to leave Ecuador within 30 days [with or without his tax haven millions]," Assange tweeted — a reference to allegations the ex-banker has money stashed in offshore accounts.

Assange fled to the embassy to avoid arrest and extradition to Sweden, where he faces a rape allegation.

The 45-year-old Australian denies the allegation and says he fears Sweden would send him to the United States to face trial for leaking hundreds of thousands of secret US military and diplomatic documents in 2010.

Ecuador's outgoing president, Rafael Correa, a fiery critic of the US, granted Assange asylum and Moreno has vowed to uphold it.

Assange's case has returned to the spotlight since WikiLeaks was accused of meddling in the 2016 US election by releasing a damaging trove of hacked emails from presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign and her Democratic party.

That created an awkward situation for the Ecuadorean government, which responded by temporarily restricting Assange's internet access.

'Everyone deserves love': Pamela Anderson opens up about 'affair' with Julian Assange

RT
8 April 2017

Former Baywatch actress Pamela Anderson has revealed all about her relationship with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, saying "everyone deserves love".

Anderson told People magazine that she "loves" Assange for his "romantic struggle" to "free the world."

Assange is currently holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, to escape prosecution in Sweden over sexual offense allegations.

Anderson, who has been spotted visiting Assange at the embassy on numerous occasions, said: "I understand that our 'affair' and the curiosity surrounding that might bring some attention to his situation.

"That's fine, but I'd rather not go into private details. Let's just say everyone deserves love."

Although she was not clear on the nature of her relationship with Assange, she told the magazine that it is "challenging."

She is nonetheless fond of spending time with him because of the discussions they share.

"We talk about the world," she said. "He's a very good teacher.

"Julian is one of my favorite people. He is a refugee. He might be the most famous refugee of our time -- famous for being persecuted."

Anderson went on to say she is worried about Assange's "wellbeing."

"I'm very moody. I wouldn't say I'm a happy person," said Anderson.

"I'm tormented and lovesick always. It's hard to find relief sometimes.

"I'm trying to not feel lonely. But, I hurt a lot about so many things.

"I'm a romantic -- it makes my stomach hurt," she told the magazine.

In an interview on RT's 'Going Underground' show, Anderson claimed she believes and "knows from experience" that Assange is innocent.

She has expressed her intent to start campaigning for those falsely accused of rape.

"Sweden has these very progressive laws against sexual crimes. It's almost too progressive, it's almost paralyzing.

"I'm going to actually start campaigning for men who have been victims of being accused of rape when they haven't actually done anything," she told RT.

Anderson on Wednesday tweeted she was leaving the embassy and that "we are all #julianassange."

She said recently that she likes to brighten Assange's life with a little "glamor."

"He's living in dire circumstances so I like to bring a little help, and a smile, and some glamor.

"It's so rare that he has someone to come and visit him and bring him things, and I want to be able to do that for him."

The former actress said she was first introduced to Assange in 2014 by designer Vivienne Westwood. She has been spotted visiting him at the embassy ever since, including on one recent occasion where she was seen bringing him vegan cheeseburgers.

Earlier this year, Assange was quoted as saying that Anderson is "an attractive person with an attractive personality."

"She's no idiot at all. Psychologically she's very savvy," he added, according to NME.

<https://www.rt.com/uk/383929-pamela-anderson-assange-wikileaks/>

Julian Assange is A Political Prisoner Who Has Exposed Government Crimes and Atrocities

*Mark Weisbrot
CEPR Blog
April 12, 2017*

Julian Assange is a political prisoner. He has never been charged with a crime. Everyone who recognizes his name should know this, and if they don't it is only because the largest media outlets have misreported or not reported the basic facts of his detention. This in itself is a searing indictment of the media that Assange and WikiLeaks have struggled to reform. It also puts to shame all of the Western governments, political leaders, and journalists who claim to care about human rights and civil liberties but remain silent — or worse — about one of the world's most famous prisoners of conscience.

In 2015 the United Nations Working Group on arbitrary detention found that the governments of the UK and Sweden have arbitrarily detained Assange. They ordered his release and compensation.

He is imprisoned in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where the government of Ecuador has granted him political asylum. He cannot leave because if he does, he will be extradited to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning in a criminal case in which no charges have been brought. But the real threat is that Sweden would extradite him to the United States, where a grand jury would likely indict him (if they have not already prepared a sealed indictment, which is considered likely). He would be imprisoned pending trial and could face life in prison or even the death penalty. The Swedish government, in particular, has shown no interest in resolving the case for which they had wanted to question Assange — it took them more than four years to finally decide to question him in London — but rather have chosen to keep him imprisoned.

What has been Julian Assange's real crime, that these three governments (US, UK, and Sweden) have collaborated to keep him from seeing the outside world? His crime, and that of WikiLeaks, has been the practice of journalism, and particularly in defense of human rights and civil liberties. That is why he has received so many journalism awards, including The Economist New Media Award (2008), the 2009 Amnesty International UK Media Award, the 2011 Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism (UK), and many others.

Assange and WikiLeaks' real offense was to expose the crimes of the most powerful people in the world. Thanks to WikiLeaks, millions saw the classified video of the US military gunning down eighteen people in Iraq, including two Reuters employees, in July of 2007. In July 2010, WikiLeaks published the Afghan War Diary, which included more than 75,000 previously secret reports from the US military in Afghanistan. The Iraq War Logs, which recorded over 66,000 civilian deaths in Iraq, were also released by WikiLeaks, and exposed the widespread use of torture by Iraqi forces. The files indicate that the US may have known about this torture when it was turning over thousands of prisoners to Iraqi custody.

The thousands of diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks in November 2010 — in collaboration with major news outlets including The New York Times and The Guardian — also revealed human rights abuses, corruption, and other crimes by various governments. WikiLeaks also developed a methodology for protecting whistleblowers who expose abuses and crimes. Human rights advocates throughout the world have used WikiLeaks documents to challenge governments and defend their citizens in court and in the realm of public opinion.

It is not surprising that the most powerful people in the world, especially in the United States, would want to silence and punish someone who exposes their crimes and atrocities. What is surprising, or should be, is that they could get so much help in doing so.

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/04/12/julian-assange-political-prisoner-who-has-exposed-government-crimes-and-atrocities>

Trump's CIA Director Pompeo, Targeting WikiLeaks, Explicitly Threatens Speech and Press Freedoms

Glenn Greenwald
The Intercept
2017-04-14

In February, after Donald Trump tweeted that the U.S. media were the “enemy of the people,” the targets of his insult exploded with indignation, devoting wall-to-wall media coverage to what they depicted as a grave assault on press freedoms more befitting of a tyranny.

By stark and disturbing contrast, the media reaction yesterday was far more muted, even welcoming, when Trump's CIA Director, Michael Pompeo, actually and explicitly vowed to target freedoms of speech and press in a blistering, threatening speech he delivered to the D.C. think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies.

What made Pompeo's overt threats of repression so palatable to many was that they were not directed at CNN, the New York Times or other beloved-in-D.C. outlets, but rather at WikiLeaks, more marginalized publishers of information, and various leakers and whistleblowers, including Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.

Trump's CIA Director stood up in public and explicitly threatened to target free speech rights and press freedoms, and **it was almost impossible to find even a single U.S. mainstream journalist expressing objections or alarm**, because the targets Pompeo chose in this instance are ones they dislike — much the way that many are willing to overlook or even sanction free speech repression if the targeted ideas or speakers are sufficiently unpopular.

Decreeing (with no evidence) that WikiLeaks is “a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia” a belief that has become gospel in establishment Democratic Party circles — Pompeo proclaimed that “we have to recognize that we can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us.” He also argued that while WikiLeaks “pretended that

America's First Amendment freedoms shield them from justice," but: "they may have believed that, but they are wrong."

He then issued this remarkable threat: "To give them the space to **crush us with misappropriated secrets** is a perversion of what our great Constitution stands for. It ends now." At no point did Pompeo specify what steps the CIA intended to take to ensure that the "space" to publish secrets "ends now."

Before delving into the chilling implications of the CIA Director's threats, let's take note of an incredibly revealing irony in what he said. This episode is worth examining because it perfectly illustrates the core fraud of U.S. propaganda.

In vilifying WikiLeaks, Pompeo pronounced himself "quite confident that had Assange been around in the 1930s and 40s and 50s, he would have found himself on the wrong side of history." His rationale: "**Assange and his ilk make common cause with dictators today.**"

But the Mike Pompeo who accused Assange of "making common cause with dictators" is the very same Mike Pompeo who — just eight weeks ago — placed one of the CIA's most cherished awards in the hands of one of the world's most savage tyrants, who also happens to be one of the U.S. Government's closest allies. Pompeo traveled to Riyadh and literally embraced and honored the Saudi royal next-in-line to the throne.

This nauseating event — widely covered by the international press yet almost entirely ignored by the U.S. media — was celebrated by the Saudi-owned outlet Al Arabiya: "The Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, received a medal on Friday from the CIA The medal, named after George Tenet, was handed to him by CIA Director Micheal Pompeo after the Crown Prince received him in Riyadh on Friday in the presence of Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman al-Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense."

The description of this Pompeo/Saudi award ceremony was first reported by the official Saudi Press Agency, which published the above photographs. It gushed: "In a press statement to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), following the reception, the Crown Prince expressed appreciation of the CIA for bestowing on him such a grace, laying assertion that this medal is a fruit of endeavors and instructions of the leaders of the kingdom, notably the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, bravery of security men and cooperation of all walks of the community to combat terrorism."

Then there's the venue Pompeo chose: the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). As the New York Times reported in 2014, **the CSIS — like so many of D.C.'s most prestigious think tanks — is itself funded by dictators.**

In particular, the United Arab Emirates has become "a major supporter" of the group, having "quietly provided a donation of more than \$1 million to help build the center's gleaming new glass and steel headquarters not far from the White House." Other CISIS donors include the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Kazakhstan. In return, UAE officials are treated like great statesmen at CSIS.

This is all independent of the fact that Pompeo's boss, President Trump, just hosted at the White House and lavished praise on one of the world's most repressive tyrants (and closest allies of the U.S. Government), Egyptian leader Abdel Fatah al-Sissi. **And the government of which Pompeo is a part sends arms, money and all kinds of other support to dictators across the planet.**

So how could Mike Pompeo — fresh off embracing and honoring Saudi tyrants, standing in a building funded by the world's most repressive regimes, headed by an agency that for decades supported despots and death squads — possibly maintain a straight face as he accuses others of “making common cause with dictators”? How does this oozing, glaring, obvious act of projection not immediately trigger fits of scornful laughter from U.S. journalists and policy makers?

The reason is because this is a central and long-standing propaganda tactic of the U.S. Government, aided by a media that largely ignores it. They predicate their foreign policy and projection of power on hugging, supporting and propping up the world's worst tyrants, all while heralding themselves as defenders of freedom and democracy and castigating their enemies as the real supporters of dictators.

Try to find mainstream media accounts in the U.S. of Pompeo's trip to Riyadh and bestowing a top CIA honor on a Saudi despot. It's easy to find accounts of this episode in international outlets, but very difficult to find ones from CNN or the Washington Post. Or try to find instances where mainstream media figures point out what should be the unbearable irony of listening to the same U.S. Government officials accuse others of supporting dictators while nobody does more to prop up tyrants than themselves.

This is the dictatorship-embracing reality of the U.S. Government that remains largely hidden from its population. That's why Trump's CIA Director— of all people — can stand in a dictator-funded think tank in the middle of Washington, having just recovered from his jet lag in flying to pay homage to Saudi tyrants, and vilify WikiLeaks and “its ilk” of “making common cause with dictators” — all without the U.S. media taking note of the intense inanity of it.

But it is Pompeo's threatening language about free speech and press freedoms that ought to be causing serious alarm for journalists, regardless of what one thinks of WikiLeaks. Even more extreme than the explicit attacks in his prepared remarks is what the CIA Director said in the question-and-answer session that followed. He was asked about WikiLeaks by the unidentified questioner, who queried of “the need to limit the lateral movements such as by using our First Amendment rights. How do you plan to accomplish that?” This was Pompeo's answer:

A little less Constitutional law and a lot more of a philosophical understanding. **Julian Assange has no First Amendment privileges. He is not a U.S. citizen.** What I was speaking to is an understanding that these are not reporters doing good work to try to keep the American Government on us. These are actively recruiting agents to steal American secrets with the sole intent of destroying the American way of life.

That is fundamentally different than a First Amendment activity as I understand them. This is what I was getting to. **We have had administrations before that have been too squeamish about going after these people, after some concept of this**

right to publish. Nobody has the right to actively engage in the theft of secrets from America without the intent to do harm to it.

Given how menacing and extreme this statement is, it is remarkable — and genuinely frightening — that it received so little notice, let alone condemnation, from the **U.S. press corps, most of which covered Pompeo’s speech by trumpeting his claim that WikiLeaks is an agent of an enemy power, or noting the irony that Trump had praised WikiLeaks and Pompeo himself had positively tweeted about their revelations.**

Pompeo’s remarks deserve far greater scrutiny than this. To begin with, the notion that WikiLeaks has no free press rights because Assange is a foreigner is both wrong and dangerous. When I worked at the Guardian, my editors were all non-Americans. Would it therefore have been constitutionally permissible for the U.S. Government to shut down that paper and imprison its editors on the ground that they enjoy no constitutional protections? Obviously not. Moreover, what rational person would possibly be comfortable with having this determination — who is and is not a “real journalist” — made by the CIA?

But the most menacing aspect is the attempt to criminalize the publication of classified information. For years, mainstream U.S. media outlets — including ones that despise WikiLeaks — nonetheless understood that prosecuting WikiLeaks for publishing secrets would pose a grave threat to press freedoms for themselves. Even the Washington Post Editorial Page — at the height of the controversy over WikiLeaks’ publishing of diplomatic cables in 2010 — published an editorial headlined “Don’t Charge WikiLeaks”:

Such prosecutions are a bad idea. The government has no business indicting someone who is not a spy and who is not legally bound to keep its secrets. Doing so would criminalize the exchange of information and put at risk responsible media organizations that vet and verify material and take seriously the protection of sources and methods when lives or national security are endangered.

The Obama administration, in 2010, explored theories for how it could prosecute WikiLeaks, and even convened a Grand Jury to investigate. But it ultimately concluded that doing so would be impossible without directly threatening First Amendment press freedoms for everyone. As former Obama DOJ spokesman Matthew Miller yesterday said of Pompeo’s threats: “DOJ knows it can’t win a case against someone just for publishing secrets.”

But back in 2010, the Obama DOJ briefly flirted with, but then abandoned, the possibility that it could get around this problem by alleging that WikiLeaks did more than merely publish secrets, that it actively collaborated with its source (Chelsea Manning) on what documents to take. As the New York Times’ Charlie Savage reported then: “a government official familiar with the investigation said that treating WikiLeaks different from newspapers might be facilitated if investigators found any evidence that Mr. Assange aided the leaker, who is believed to be a low-level Army intelligence analyst — for example, by directing him to look for certain things and providing technological assistance.”

Ultimately, though, no evidence was found that this happened. And, beyond that, many in the DOJ concluded — rightly so — that even this “collaboration” theory of

criminalization would endanger press freedoms because **most investigative journalists collaborate with their sources**. As Northwestern Journalism Professor Dan Kennedy explained in the Guardian:

The problem is that there is no meaningful distinction to be made. How did the Guardian, equally, not “collude” with WikiLeaks in obtaining the cables? How did the New York Times not “collude” with the Guardian when the Guardian gave the Times a copy following Assange’s decision to cut the Times out of the latest document dump?

For that matter, I don’t see how any news organisation can be said not to have colluded with a source when it receives leaked documents. **Didn’t the Times collude with Daniel Ellsberg when it received the Pentagon Papers from him?** Yes, there are differences. Ellsberg had finished making copies long before he began working with the Times, whereas Assange may have goaded Manning. But does that really matter?

The dangers to all media outlets from this theory should have been crystal clear when Joe Lieberman and former Bush Attorney General Mike Mukasey argued that the New York Times itself should be prosecuted for publishing and reporting on WikiLeaks’ secret documents — on the grounds that no meaningful distinction could be made between the NYT and WikiLeaks.

But criminalizing WikiLeaks’ publication of documents is clearly part of what Pompeo is now planning. That’s what he meant when he argued that “administrations before have been too squeamish about going after these people, after some concept of this right to publish”: he was criticizing the Obama DOJ for not prosecuting WikiLeaks for publishing secrets. And this is why Pompeo yesterday claimed — with no evidence — that WikiLeaks “directed Chelsea Manning in her theft of specific secret information.” He clearly intends to pursue prosecution of WikiLeaks and Assange for publishing classified information.

It has long been a dream of the far right, as well as hawkish Obama followers, to prosecute journalists and outlets that publish secret information based on this theory. As **Newsweek noted in 2011: “Sarah Palin urged that Assange be ‘pursued with the same urgency we pursue Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders,’ and The Weekly Standard’s William Kristol wants the U.S. to ‘use our various assets to harass, snatch or neutralize Julian Assange and his collaborators.’”**

This same “collaboration” theory that Pompeo is advocating is what various Obama loyalists, such as MSNBC’s Joy Reid, spent months hyping in order to justify the prosecution of the journalists (such as myself) who reported the Snowden materials: that we did not merely report them but “collaborated” with our source. Her theory then became the basis for her NBC colleague David Gregory asking if I should be prosecuted on the ground that I “aided and abetted” Snowden.

This — the “collaboration” theory propounded back then by Bill Kristol and Joe Lieberman and Joy Reid, and now by Mike Pompeo — is the mentality of people who do not understand, who do not practice, and who hate journalism, at least when it exposes the bad acts of the leaders they revere. Just as is true of free speech abridgments, if you cheer for it and endorse it because the people targeted in the first instance are ones you dislike, then you are institutionalizing these abridgments and

will be unable to resist them when they begin to be applied to people you do like (or to yourselves).

WikiLeaks now has few friends in Washington: the right has long hated it for publishing secrets about Bush-era war crimes, while Democrats now despise them for its perceived role in helping defeat Hillary Clinton by exposing the secret corruption of the DNC. But the level of affection for WikiLeaks should have no bearing on how one responds to these press freedom threats from Donald Trump's CIA Director. Criminalizing the publication of classified documents is wrong in itself, and has the obvious potential to spread far beyond their initial target.

People who depict themselves as part of an anti-authoritarian #Resistance — let alone those who practice journalism — should be the first ones standing up to object to these creepy threats. The implications of Pompeo's threats are far more consequential than the question of who one likes or does not like.

<https://theintercept.com/2017/04/14/trumps-cia-director-pompeo-targeting-wikileaks-explicitly-threatens-speech-and-press-freedoms/>

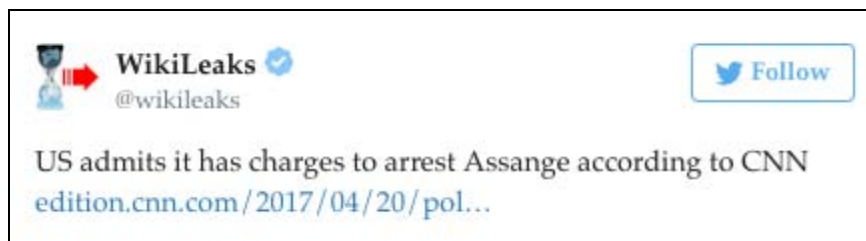
As Reports of Assange Arrest Warrant Emerge, Who Will Defend WikiLeaks?

'Once WikiLeaks is prosecuted, it will make it much easier for the Trump admin to go after other news orgs too.'

Jon Queally, staff writer
Common Dreams
April 20, 2017

The Trump administration in the United States has prepared criminal charges in order to arrest Julian Assange, founder and publisher of the media outlet WikiLeaks, CNN reported on Thursday.

Citing "U.S. officials familiar with the matter," CNN reports the Justice Department "investigation of Assange and WikiLeaks dates to at least 2010" — which is around the time when WikiLeaks first gained international attention after it published thousands of leaked classified documents, including footage of military helicopter attack on civilians in Iraq. U.S. Army Private Chelsea Manning was ultimately convicted for being the source of those leaks and is still serving a sentence in a U.S. military prison.



Though U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Thursday said that arresting Assange was a "priority," nobody in the government has yet gone public with the filing of

official charges or the issuance of an arrest warrant. A lawyer representing Assange said neither he nor his client has been notified of any charges.

"We've had no communication with the Department of Justice and they have not indicated to me that they have brought any charges against Mr. Assange," attorney Barry Pollack told CNN. "They've been unwilling to have any discussion at all, despite our repeated requests, that they let us know what Mr. Assange's status is in any pending investigations. There's no reason why WikiLeaks should be treated differently from any other publisher."

Assange has long believed the U.S. maintains a sealed indictment against him, the key reason he has remained under asylum protection at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

Last week, CIA Director Mike Pompeo stirred condemnation from free speech and journalistic watchdogs by threatening Assange and describing WikiLeaks as a "hostile non-state intelligence agency."

In response to Thursday's reporting, Trevor Timm, executive director of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, said charges against the WikiLeaks' publisher would send a chilling message and called on journalists and other media outlets to denounce any such move:

If the reporting is accurate, it remains unclear exactly how the U.S. would hope to take Assange into custody. As journalist Glenn Greenwald noted:



BBC: 2017-04-21

Julian Assange's arrest a 'priority' for US attorney general

The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, says arresting Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is a "priority".

Mr Assange has been confined to London's Ecuadorian embassy, where he has asylum, for almost five years.

Asked about the possibility of his arrest, Mr Sessions said: "We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail."

Earlier reports had suggested US authorities were preparing charges.

Wikileaks, which was founded by Mr Assange, has been involved in several high-profile releases of classified US information.

"This is a matter that's gone beyond anything I'm aware of," Mr Sessions told reporters. "We have professionals that have been in the security business of the United States for many years that are shocked by the number of leaks and some of them are quite serious.

"So yes, it is a priority."

The Washington Post and other US media outlets report that federal prosecutors have been considering filing charges against Assange and other members of Wikileaks, citing anonymous sources.

But aside from Mr Sessions' brief comment, there has been no official confirmation from the US justice department about impending charges.

The move to prosecute Mr Assange would represent a significant departure from previous policy under President Barack Obama, when the justice department concluded it would be difficult to bring charges.

Wikileaks was praised by President Donald Trump for its work during the election campaign, when it released hacked emails belonging to a Hillary Clinton aide.

Mrs Clinton later claimed they were a factor in her losing the election.

US intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia was behind the hack, and used Wikileaks to harm the chances of Mrs Clinton and favour Mr Trump.

Mr Assange said the release was not intended to affect the election.

But now, the Trump administration has taken a dim view of Wikileaks' activities. In March, Wikileaks released information on hacking tools it said were used by the CIA.

Last week, CIA Director Mike Pompeo described it as a "hostile" intelligence service abetted by Russia, and Mr Assange as a "fraud".

"It's time to call out WikiLeaks for what it really is -- a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia," said Mr Pompeo.

The Justice Department has been investigating Mr Assange since his website posted thousands of embarrassing diplomatic cables stolen by a US Army soldier, now known as Chelsea Manning.

Mr Assange was granted asylum by Ecuador in June 2012 to prevent his extradition to Sweden on sexual assault charges -- which he feared would then lead to his extradition to the United States.

He remains confined to the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where police have said he will be arrested if he leaves the building.

DN: 2017-04-21

Jeff Sessions: Julian Assange är en prioritet

Att gripa Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange är en "prioritet" för USA, enligt justitieminister Jeff Sessions.

Hans uttalande kommer samtidigt som medier rapporterar att USA utreder Assange, som 2012 tog sin tillflykt till Ecuadors ambassad i London.

– Vi kommer att anstränga oss ytterligare och vi har redan intensifierat våra insatser gällande alla läckor, sade Sessions under en presskonferens.

Sessions sade att den mängd av känsligt material som Wikileaks har läckt saknar motsvarighet.

– Det här är någonting jag aldrig tidigare stött på. Vi har yrkesverksamma som har arbetat med USA:s säkerhetsverksamhet i många år som är chockade över antalet läckor, och några av dem är ganska allvarliga.

– När utredningen är klar kommer vi att försöka sätta några personer i fängelse, sade han.

TT

As US prioritises Julian Assange arrest, UK hints Sweden comes first

If WikiLeaks founder were to leave Ecuadorian embassy, two countries would have competing extradition claims

*Alan Travis, Esther Addley and David Smith
The Guardian
21 April 2017*

Sweden's existing warrant to extradite Julian Assange over a sexual assault allegation would be the first consideration for the British government if the Australian were to leave the Ecuadorean embassy, Home Office sources have indicated.

The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said on Friday that the arrest of the WikiLeaks founder was now a "priority". US federal prosecutors were understood to be considering bringing charges against Assange over a number of the website's publications since 2010, US media reported, which could potentially lead to a second extradition request for Assange from Washington.

Were that to happen, the question of which warrant would then take priority -- from Sweden or the US -- would then come into play.

However the British authorities stressed the UK had an existing legal obligation to extradite Assange to Sweden under the European arrest warrant. The Home Office

never confirms whether an extradition request has been made or received until the person in question has been arrested, the source indicated — this is currently impossible while Assange remains in the embassy, where he was granted asylum in 2012.

Extradition law is notoriously complex, with requests to the UK from outside the EU governed by the Extradition Act 2003. It states that in the event of competing warrants from two countries, **the home secretary would have to decide which took precedence**, based on factors including the relative seriousness of the offences, the date the requests were received, and whether the person had been accused or convicted.

The government would not be able to take into account political or human rights issues, however, which would be for the courts to decide.

The US authorities cannot touch Assange while he remains in the embassy seeking to avoid an arrest warrant on rape allegations in Sweden. Ecuador's incoming president, the socialist Lenín Moreno, has promised not to extradite him.

Barry Pollack, Assange's lawyer, denied any knowledge of any imminent prosecution. "We've had no communication with the Department of Justice and they have not indicated to me that they have brought any charges against Mr Assange," he told CNN. "They've been unwilling to have any discussion at all, despite our repeated requests that they let us know what Mr Assange's status is in any pending investigations. There's no reason why WikiLeaks should be treated differently from any other publisher."

US authorities have been investigating Assange and WikiLeaks since at least 2010, when the website released, in cooperation with publications including the Guardian, more than a quarter of a million classified cables from US embassies, which were leaked by US army whistleblower Chelsea Manning.

Asked whether it was a priority for the justice department to arrest Assange "once and for all", Sessions told a press conference in El Paso, Texas: "We are going to step up our effort and already are stepping up our efforts on all leaks. This is a matter that's gone beyond anything I'm aware of. We have professionals that have been in the security business of the United States for many years that are shocked by the number of leaks and some of them are quite serious."

He added: "So yes, it is a priority. We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail."

A WikiLeaks prosecution would endanger the future of US journalism

Every newspaper worth its salt has published classified information, and who believes the Trump administration, with its press hatred, would stop there?

*Trevor Timm
The Guardian
21 April 2017*

In an unprecedented and dangerous move that threatens the press freedom rights of all journalists, the US Justice Department has indicated it is preparing to charge WikiLeaks with a crime and may attempt to arrest its founder Julian Assange. The charges may stem from the publication of US State Department cables in 2010 and their more recent disclosure of CIA hacking tools.

Whether you like or dislike WikiLeaks — especially if you dislike them — it's important to understand just how dangerous this potential prosecution is to the future of journalism in the United States. Newspapers publish classified information all the time, and any prosecution of WikiLeaks puts journalists of all stripes at risk of a similar fate. Even WikiLeaks' harshest critics need to denounce this potential move as a grave threat to the first amendment.

People may not realize it, but **not a week goes by without classified information on the front pages of the New York Times, Washington Post or Wall Street Journal. Without the right to publish secret information, as New York Times reporter Max Frankel put it more than 40 years ago in the landmark Pentagon Papers case: "There could be no adequate diplomatic, military and political reporting of the kind our people take for granted, either abroad or in Washington and there could be no mature system of communication between the government and the people."**

There is no better example of this than the current reporting being done on the Trump administration: investigations that constantly require journalists to publish information that government considers classified. Whether it's the resignation of controversial national security adviser Michael Flynn, the Trump administration's plans for ramping up war across the globe, or the possibility it will bring back torture — the American people would be far worse off if none of this information came to light.

It's easy to see what the response to these potential charges will be from some WikiLeaks critics. There is certainly a portion of the American public that holds an animus towards the organization due to the Clinton emails it published in the lead up to the presidential election and are eager to see the organization and Assange punished. "Julian Assange isn't a journalist" or "he's not an American citizen", will be the claims, in an attempt to distance him from other news organizations.

This is incredibly shortsighted. Whatever criticism you want to level at WikiLeaks for its editorial judgment, there is no doubt that it publishes significant information that many people consider newsworthy. Yes, the organization has angered two successive administrations because much of what it publishes is considered "secret", but so has every paper worth its salt in this country at one time or another.

Just because you may think WikiLeaks may have bad opinions, that it is more antagonistic, partisan or abrasive than traditional news organizations, does not mean that our free press should be put at risk with this vengeful and deeply misguided prosecution. (By the way, **first amendment rights are not just afforded to US citizens, they are universal to anyone who falls under US jurisdiction — citizen or not —** contrary to what the CIA director thinks.) And does anyone really think the Trump administration — with its avowed hatred for the press — is really going to stop at WikiLeaks?

Republican and Trump supporter Peter King immediately went on CNN on Thursday and declared he was glad the Justice Department had apparently "found a way to go

after” WikiLeaks. This is the same Peter King, who on multiple occasions in the last decade, has called for reporters to be prosecuted. During the Bush administration, he said New York Times reporters should be jailed under the Espionage Act. Then, under the Obama administration, he said the same thing about then-Guardian journalist Glenn Greenwald for his reporting on the Snowden documents. This is the kind of reporter who will be next in line if the Justice Department succeeds in their alleged plans.

It was just a few weeks ago that Trump called the New York Times and other mainstream news organizations “the enemy of the American people”. He has constantly decried their critical reporting of his statements as “fake news”, he threatened to sue news organizations or journalists at least a dozen times during the campaign, and openly questioned whether laws should be changed to make them easier to go after in court. Don’t think for a moment that his administration wouldn’t immediately turn around and use any precedent set by a WikiLeaks prosecution to go after the next newspaper that publishes a critical story.

If the Trump Justice Department follows through on its threat, make no mistake: next time it won’t be a publisher you don’t like, it will be the newspaper that Trump doesn’t like — likely the one you read every day. So stick up for WikiLeaks’ rights — or the New York Times, Washington Post or Guardian could be next.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/21/wikileaks-prosecution-endanger-future-journalism>

Advokaten: Amerikanskt åtal mot Assange kan vara slutet på svensk häktning

*Maria Zuiderveld
TT/SVT
21 april 2017*

Ett amerikanskt åtal mot Wikileaks grundare Julian Assange kan innebära att det svenska häktningsbeslutet hävs. Det tror hans svenska advokater.

USA prioriterar nu ett gripande av Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange, enligt justitieminister Jeff Sessions. Uttalandet kommer samtidigt som medier rapporterar att USA utreder Assange, som 2012 tog sin tillflykt till Ecuadors ambassad i London.

— Vi kommer att anstränga oss ytterligare och vi har redan intensifierat våra insatser gällande alla läckor, sade Jeff Sessions under en presskonferens på torsdagen.

Den australiske tidigare datahackaren har bott på Ecuadors ambassad i London sedan juni 2012 för att undvika utlämning till Sverige, där han är misstänkt för våldtäkt i augusti 2010.

Enligt Assanges svenska advokater innebär USA:s besked att det svenska häktningsbeslutet måste upphävas.

— **Den svenska åklagaren har inte velat gå med på att det föreligger ett önskemål från USA om att gripa Assange.** Men nu måste det stå klart för hela världen att Julian Assange inte i första hand gömmer sig för den svenska rättvisan, utan för att han riskerar ett långvarigt fängelsestraff i USA, säger advokat Per E Samuelsson till SVT Nyheter.

Men den svenska åklagarmyndigheten avfärdar helt resonemanget om att ett amerikanskt åtal skulle göra att den svenska förundersökningen mot Assange läggs ner.

– **Det påverkar inte den svenska rättsprocessen alls, det har inte med varandra att göra, säger Karin Rosander,** informationsdirektör på Åklagarmyndigheten.

Översättningen av den rapport som skrevs efter förhör som hölls av en ecuadoriansk åklagare på ambassaden i London i november förra året, är till stora delar klar. Åklagaren ska nu analysera innehållet i rapporten, skriver Åklagarmyndigheten på sin hemsida.

Julian Assange meddelade tidigare i år att han skulle gå med på att utlämnas till USA, om dåvarande presidenten, Barack Obama, benådade den tidigare soldaten Chelsea Manning som avtjänar ett fängelsestraff för att ha läckt hemliga militära uppgifter.

När den avgående presidenten sedan kortade straffet meddelade Assange att han är "öppen för förhandlingar" när det gäller de amerikanska brottsmisstankarna mot honom. Manning, som dömdes till fängelse i 35 år, släpps i maj efter att ha suttit av sju år.

Assange har hela tiden vägrat att återvända till Sverige för att höras om den misstänkta våldtäkten med argumentet att han då riskerar utlämning till USA — där han retat upp Washington genom Wikileaks publiceringar av tusentals militära och diplomatiska dokument, som läcktes av Manning.

Först i november 2016 förhöordes Assange om den misstänkta våldtäkten i Sverige. Förhöret skedde på Ecuadors ambassad och genomfördes av ecuadoriansk åklagare. Förhöret ska vara översatt till svenska men den svenska åklagarmyndigheten har ännu inte meddelat hur man tänker gå vidare med fallet.

Assange har hela tiden nekat till våldtäkten och till ett nu preskriberat misstänkt sexualbrott mot en annan kvinna i Sverige under samma period.

Candidate Trump: 'I Love Wikileaks.' **President Trump: 'Arrest Assange!'**

*Rep. Ron Paul
Ron Paul Institute
24 April 2017*

"I love Wikileaks," candidate Donald Trump said on October 10th on the campaign trail. He praised the organization for reporting on the darker side of the Hillary Clinton campaign. It was information likely leaked by a whistleblower from within the Clinton campaign to Wikileaks.

Back then he praised Wikileaks for promoting transparency, but candidate Trump looks less like President Trump every day. The candidate praised whistleblowers and Wikileaks often on the campaign trail. In fact, candidate Trump loved Wikileaks so much he **mentioned the organization more than 140 times in the final month of the campaign** alone! Now, as President, it seems Trump wants Wikileaks founder Julian Assange sent to prison.

Last week CNN reported, citing anonymous “intelligence community” sources, that the Trump Administration’s Justice Department was seeking the arrest of Assange and had found a way to charge the Wikileaks founder for publishing classified information without charging other media outlets such as the New York Times and Washington Post for publishing the same information.

It might have been tempting to write off the CNN report as “fake news,” as is much of their reporting, but for the fact President Trump said in an interview on Friday that issuing an arrest warrant for Julian Assange would be, “OK with me.”

Trump’s condemnation of Wikileaks came just a day after his CIA Director, Michael Pompeo, attacked Wikileaks as a “hostile intelligence service.” Pompeo accused Assange of being “a fraud — a coward hiding behind a screen.”

Pompeo’s word choice was no accident. By accusing Wikileaks of being a “hostile intelligence service” rather than a publisher of information on illegal and abusive government practices leaked by whistleblowers, he signaled that the organization has no First Amendment rights. **Like many in Washington, he does not understand that the First Amendment is a limitation on government rather than a granting of rights to citizens.** Pompeo was declaring war on Wikileaks.

But not that long ago Pompeo also cited Wikileaks as an important source of information. In July he drew attention to the Wikileaks release of information damaging to the Clinton campaign, writing, “Need further proof that the fix was in from President Obama on down?”

There is a word for this sudden about-face on Wikileaks and the transparency it provides us into the operations of the prominent and powerful: hypocrisy.

The Trump Administration’s declaration of war on whistleblowers and Wikileaks is one of the greatest disappointments in these first 100 days. Donald Trump rode into the White House with promises that he would “drain the swamp,” meaning that he would overturn the apple carts of Washington’s vested interests. By unleashing those same vested interests on those who hold them in check — the whistleblowers and those who publish their revelations — he has turned his back on those who elected him.

Julian Assange, along with the whistleblowers who reveal to us the evil that is being done in our name, are heroes. They deserve our respect and admiration, not a prison cell. If we allow this president to declare war on those who tell the truth, we have only ourselves to blame.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/candidate-trump-i-love-wikileaks-president-trump-arrest-assange/5586849>

CIA chief Pompeo 'declares war on free speech' — Assange

RT

26 April 2017

Julian Assange has accused Mike Pompeo of declaring war on free speech while seeking vengeance for the exposure of CIA's dirty secrets and backtracking on his earlier stated admiration of WikiLeaks' work until it turned against his personally.

"The 'Pompeo doctrine' articulated in his speech ensnares all serious news and investigative human rights organizations, from ProPublica to Amnesty International to Human Rights Watch," Julian Assange wrote in an **opinion column published in the Washington Post**, responding to the CIA chief's remarks earlier this month.

Speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on April 13, Pompeo went on the warpath against WikiLeaks — the whistleblowing website — accusing its editor of being on the "wrong side of history" and seeking to harm America, freedom, and democracy.

Firing back at the CIA director, Assange explained that Pompeo is distracting attention and seeking vengeance for the release of the Vault 7 series of documents that WikiLeaks began to publish on March 7. The documents detail the activities and capabilities of the CIA to perform electronic surveillance and conduct cyber warfare.

"All this speech to stifle speech comes in reaction to the first publication in the start of WikiLeaks' 'Vault 7' series," Assange wrote, adding that "when the director of the CIA, an unelected public servant, publicly demonizes a publisher such as WikiLeaks as a 'fraud,' 'coward' and 'enemy,' it puts all journalists on notice, or should."

Assange also stressed that Pompeo's labeling of WikiLeaks as a "non-state hostile intelligence service," lacks any facts and called it a "dagger" aimed at the US constitutional right "to receive honest information about their government."

Calling WikiLeaks an intelligence agency would be "as absurd as the suggestion that the CIA is a media outlet. Both journalists and intelligence agencies cultivate and protect sources, collect information and write reports, but the similarities end there," Assange added.

Assange also directly addressed Pompeo's comments that he (Assange) and "his ilk make common cause with dictators." Calling the CIA Director's comment ironic, Assange noted that the agency's pursuit to silence US government opponents places him in line with dictatorial regimes.

"Pompeo finds himself in the unsavory company of Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey (257,934 documents published by WikiLeaks); Bashar al-Assad of Syria (2.3 million documents); and the dictatorship in Saudi Arabia (122,609 documents), to name just a few who have tried and failed to censor WikiLeaks," Assange wrote in the Washington Post.

The Australian, who has taken refuge from US prosecution in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, reminded readers that Pompeo was once a WikiLeaks fan.

“Pompeo liked WikiLeaks when he perceived it was publishing material revealing the shortcomings of his political rivals. It was only when our publications touched Pompeo’s rice bowl that WikiLeaks became his target,” Assange said.

TT/SVT: 3 maj 2017

Vill att Sverige häver häktning av Assange

Julian Assanges advokat har i dag lämnat in ett yrkande till Stockholms tingsrätt om att häktningen av hans klient omedelbart ska upphävas. Det viktigaste skälet till detta är enligt advokat Per E Samuelson att USA numera öppet deklarerat att man har för avsikt att fängsla Julian Assange.

– Man måste göra en ny bedömning av häktningsfrågan med utgångspunkt att det finns en reell risk att USA vill ha honom utlämnad, säger Per E Samuelson till TT.

Enligt Samuelson skulle en hävd häktning inte betyda att målet mot Assange rörande våldtäkt skulle behöva läggas ner.

– Om åklagaren vill fortsätta med sin förundersökning och väcka åtal går det alldeles utmärkt. Skillnaden är att det ger Assange möjlighet att lämna Ecuadors ambassad och ta sig till Ecuador. Den stora skillnaden är att Sverige avstår från att begränsa hans rörelsefrihet och ger honom den tillbaka.

Den 45-åriga australiern blev efter ett Sverigebesök i augusti 2010 misstänkt för sexualbrott mot två kvinnor, i Stockholm och Enköping. Efter diverse rättsliga turer gav Ecuador honom asyl på sin ambassad i London.

Assange brands Clinton ‘butcher of Libya’ & requests Sweden scrap detention order

RT

3 May 2017

Julian Assange has fired back at Hillary Clinton, branding her the “butcher of Libya” in a scathing response to the former presidential candidate's labeling of WikiLeaks as “Russian WikiLeaks”.

The editor of the whistle-blowing website shared his agitated response in a tweet Wednesday, a day after Clinton claimed that her loss to Donald Trump in last year’s presidential election was caused by the actions of FBI Director James Comey and WikiLeaks.

Clinton claimed to take “absolute personal responsibility” for her loss, adding that she “was on the way to winning until a combination of Jim Comey’s letter, on October 28, and **Russian WikiLeaks** raised doubts in the minds of people who were inclined to vote for me, but got scared off.”

Assange hit back at the claim, describing it as a lie and calling Clinton the “butcher of Libya.”

On Wednesday a lawyer for Assange said a request had been filed with a Swedish court to rescind a detention order against him, claiming it should be granted on the grounds that it was now evident the US wants to arrest the WikiLeaks editor.

Assange has been in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden, fearing a handover to the US to face prosecution for WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of classified military and diplomatic cables.

Per Samuelson said rescinding the order would not hamper the Swedish prosecutor's investigation into allegations of rape filed against Assange. The lawyer claimed they could continue with the investigation with Assange in Ecuador.

"If they want to charge him and go to trial, that can happen just as well with him at liberty in Ecuador since that's the only place he can be," Samuelson said, reported Reuters.

A previous request was rejected by Sweden's Supreme Court on the grounds that Assange was unlikely to be handed over to the US by Sweden, claims Samuelson.

"Given that the US is obviously hunting him now, he has to make use of his political asylum and it is Sweden's duty to make sure that Sweden is no longer a reason for that fact he has to stay in the embassy," Samuelson said.

Last month sources in the Department of Justice told the CNN and the Washington Post that charges were being prepared against Assange.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions told reporters that his arrest was a "priority," describing documents revealed by WikiLeaks as "quite serious."

"We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail."

CIA Director Mike Pompeo, whose organization has become the subject of WikiLeaks #Vault7 series of leaks, said he would be pursuing Assange.

The #Vault7 leak, which WikiLeaks claims originated from the CIA center in Langley, Virginia, has revealed sordid details of alleged CIA hacking techniques, including the ability to spy via Smart TVs and hide traces of their hacks.

Comey Says Only Reason Assange Not 'Apprehended Yet': He's Out of Reach

"Who wants the FBI and CIA Directors to be the arbiters of what is and is not real 'journalism'?"

*Jon Queally
Common Dreams
May 3, 2017*

Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, FBI director James Comey said that while he wouldn't "confirm whether or not there are charges" pending

against the WikiLeaks founder and publisher Julian Assange, the reason he "hasn't been apprehended is because he's inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London."

While speculation has long been that the U.S. government has a sealed indictment against Assange, the government refuses to openly say whether or not criminal charges exist against the man whose media organization has published troves of classified material, much of which has exposed secrets that paint the global superpower — and many of its top political leaders — in a negative light.

In his remarks Wednesday, Comey argued that WikiLeaks — "an important focus of [the FBI's] attention" — does not practice journalism like other "responsible" outlets, but instead acts as a "known outlet of foreign propaganda" that has harmed U.S. interests.

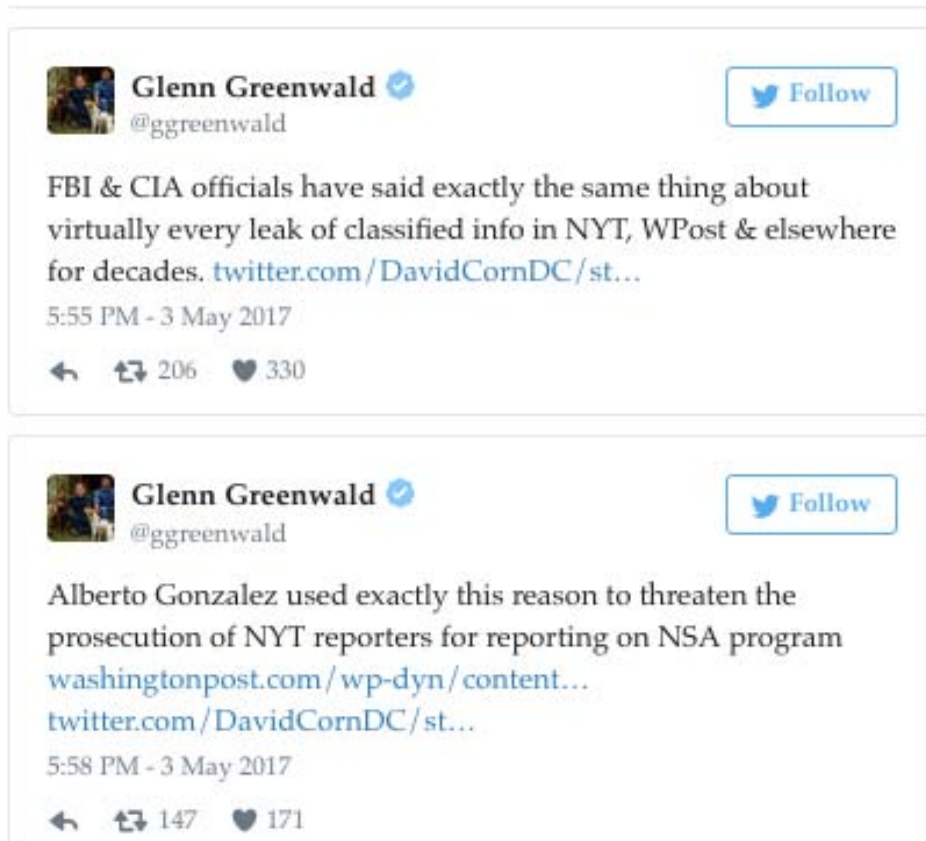
Last month, Common Dreams reported on rumblings within President Donald Trump's Justice Department that criminal charges were being prepared.

Despite the fact that major news outlets from around the world have consistently relied on the information provided by WikiLeaks over the years, Comey on Wednesday repeatedly described WikiLeaks as "intelligence porn" that serves no journalistic purpose.

"A huge portion of WikiLeaks has nothing to do with legitimate news-gathering and is simply about releasing classified information to damage the United States," Comey said. "American journalists do not do that."

Journalist Glenn Greenwald was among those immediately pushing back against such arguments:





The Constitutional Rubicon of an Assange Prosecution

Elizabeth Goitein
Just Security
 May 9, 2017

If you were tuning in and out of FBI Director James Comey's hearing before the House Intelligence Committee last Wednesday, you probably got an earful about Comey's public statements on Clinton's use of a private e-mail server, and you may have heard his staunch defense of Section 702 of FISA. But you might have missed the moment in which Comey and Senator Ben Sasse (R-NE) threatened to topple one of the longstanding pillars of journalistic freedom.

That moment came when Sasse asked Comey why Julian Assange has not been charged with a crime in connection with WikiLeaks' publication of classified information. (Sasse was at it again during yesterday's hearing on the Russia investigation, quizzing former DNI Clapper about Assange's actions.) After refusing to answer whether charges were pending, Comey effectively confirmed that they were: "He hasn't been apprehended because he's inside the Ecuadorian embassy in London." He also said that "WikiLeaks is an important focus of our attention."

No one has ever been prosecuted for publishing classified information obtained through a leak. Although some parts of the Espionage Act would appear, on their face, to allow prosecution in such cases, **Comedy acknowledged that "the Department of Justice's view has been [that] newsgathering and legitimate news reporting is not**

covered, is not going to be investigated or prosecuted as a criminal act.” The Department to date has drawn a clear line between government officials who leak classified information, and media outlets that publish it. **“Our focus is and should be on the leakers, not those [who] are obtaining it as part of legitimate newsgathering.”**

One might posit a distinction between those who passively receive classified information and those who actively solicit leaks, as WikiLeaks is reported to do. (Obama’s Department of Justice flirted with that approach: in an affidavit seeking to obtain e-mails between Fox reporter James Rosen and a State Department source who was under investigation for leaking classified information, the Department accused Rosen of conspiring to violate the Espionage Act.) But Comey was not making that distinction. Senator Sasse asked him whether “American journalists [who] court and solicit [classified] information” have violated the law, and Comey responded that the Department of Justice would not prosecute such activity.

So why, in Comey’s mind, is it permissible to bring charges against Assange? He explained his reasoning as follows: Publishing classified information “crosses a line when it moves from being about trying to educate a public and instead becomes just about **intelligence porn**, frankly. Just pushing out information about sources and methods without regard to interest, without regard to the First Amendment values that normally underlie press reporting.” That, to Comey, describes WikiLeaks’ behavior: “[I]n my view, a huge portion of WikiLeaks’ activities has nothing to do with legitimate newsgathering, informing the public, commenting on important controversies, but is simply about releasing classified information to damage the United States of America.”

In other words, the line Comey seeks to draw is not between leaking classified information and publishing it, but between publishing it for “good” reasons and publishing it for “bad” ones. Those who do the former are “journalists,” while those do the latter are not. And presumably, the Department of Justice gets to say which is which— at least when it comes to bringing a prosecution.

How will the government decide which outlets have an acceptable motivation? Comey didn’t go into detail, but he pointed to one indicator: “American journalists . . . will almost always call us before they publish classified information and say, is there anything about this that’s going to put lives in danger, that’s going to jeopardize government people, military people or—or innocent civilians anywhere in the world. And then they work with us to try and accomplish their important First Amendment goals while safeguarding those interests.”

In other words, media outlets that work in partnership with the U.S. government and are willing to self-censor based on official claims of national security are journalists. Those who conceive their role differently are not.

This exchange should send chills down the spine of every reporter and media representative. To be clear, I believe anyone who intends to publish classified information— assuming the information is not facially innocuous, as much classified information is— should consult with the executive branch in an effort to minimize harm. He or she should also exercise judgment and not publish potentially harmful information of negligible public interest. That is nothing more than morally responsible journalism. But acknowledging these professional obligations is a far cry from saying that the Department of Justice may prosecute someone who does not adhere to them.

To state the obvious, allowing the government to decide whether the intent behind a media disclosure is to “harm the United States” would throw open the door to viewpoint based discrimination. A reporter may well be opposed to certain U.S. government policies, or even to entire administrations, and have an intent to undermine them through her reporting. Regardless of whether that is model journalism, it is certainly protected under the First Amendment. Yet what a blogger considers to be opposition to a particular administration could easily be considered—or portrayed as— “intent to harm the United States” by an FBI agent.

That is not to say that journalists can print anything they want. The media’s First Amendment rights are no greater than those of any ordinary private citizen. They can be sued for libel, for instance. And if they knowingly print information that presents a “clear and present danger” to public safety— the equivalent of incitement, or of yelling “fire” in a crowded theater— they could presumably be prosecuted (although **no such prosecution has ever taken place**). But the threshold for prosecution must be much, much higher than a nebulous claim of potential national security harm. Moreover, as Steve Vladeck noted in a previous post, the existence of such a danger would not depend on the motive of the publisher. **Someone who hates the United States cannot be prosecuted for releasing documents if the New York Times could release the same documents with impunity.**

Officials who leak classified information are in a different position. As a condition of their employment, government employees may be subject to certain restrictions on speech and political activity that would be unconstitutional if applied to private citizens. **In general, an employee who signs a non-disclosure agreement in order to gain access to classified government information may be prosecuted for leaking that information.** Drawing the line between those who leak classified information and those who publish it thus makes constitutional sense in a way that drawing the line between “good” publishers and “bad” publishers does not.

If anything, a line between leakers and publishers may been drawn too far in the direction of non-disclosure. Not all restrictions on government employees’ speech are constitutionally permissible. For instance, a person cannot be prohibited from criticizing the government as a condition of government employment. Although the Obama administration prosecuted a record number of national security whistleblowers, there is a strong argument to be made that a government employee cannot constitutionally be required to forego disclosure of unlawful government conduct. Certainly, as a policy matter, such disclosures should not be prosecuted—or prosecutable.

Nonetheless, Comey seems determined to push the line in the other direction; and as a test case, he could not have done better than Julian Assange. Assange has enemies on all sides: conservatives hate him because he seems to revel in disclosing classified information, while liberals hate him for publishing Clinton campaign e-mails. At a minimum, one can certainly question whether he models responsible journalism. And in an era when no one’s personal information seems safe from being hacked and published and our Facebook feeds are dotted with “fake news,” it is tempting to impose criminal sanctions on those who publish information in a way society deems irresponsible.

But we should not kid ourselves about what that means. **Allowing the FBI to determine who is allowed to publish leaked information based on the bureau’s**

assessment of their patriotism would cross a constitutional Rubicon. If that giant step were to become a precedent, it could very well spell the end of independent, objective national security reporting.

- *Elizabeth (Liza) Goitein co-directs the Brennan Center for Justice's Liberty and National Security Program, which seeks to advance effective national security policies that respect constitutional values and the rule of law.*

<https://www.justsecurity.org/40672/constitutional-rubicon-assange-prosecution/>

Julian Assange: Ecuador 'concerned' over lack of progress

BBC

2017-05-14

Ecuador has voiced concern over the "serious lack of progress" by the Swedish government in dealing with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

It said there had been a "serious failure" by Sweden's prosecutor to complete an inquiry into sexual assault allegations dating back to 2010.

Mr Assange has been confined to the Ecuadorean embassy, where he has asylum, for nearly five years. He fears he will be extradited to the US if he leaves the building.

The Australian national is concerned the US may seek his arrest over Wikileaks' release of 500,000 secret military files on the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The sex assault accusations -- which Mr Assange denies -- relate to a visit he made to Stockholm to give a lecture in 2010.

He is accused of raping a woman, named in legal papers as SW, at her home in August that year. But Mr Assange says the sex was consensual and believes the allegations are politically motivated.

In December last year, Sweden's chief prosecutor travelled to London to question the Wikileaks founder for the first time over the case, although no details of the meeting were released.

In a letter sent to the Swedish government this week, the Ecuadorean authorities accused the chief prosecutor there of a "lack of initiative".

It also raised recent comments from members of US President Donald Trump's administration on the case, including CIA boss Mike Pompeo who described Wikileaks as a "hostile intelligence service", suggesting this constituted an "obvious risk" for Mr Assange.

Last month, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said arresting Mr Assange was a "priority". However, there was no official confirmation from the US justice department at the time about impending charges.

British police say he will be arrested if he leaves the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he is beyond the reach of the UK authorities.

Part of the Swedish investigations were dropped in 2015 because of a statute of limitations.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39914495>

Note: Assange is not “accused of raping” anyone.

See <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/murder.pdf>

Edward Snowden and others urge Trump to drop case against Assange

Snowden among more than 100 signatories to open letter to president calling for clemency for Julian Assange and other WikiLeaks staff members

Amanda Holpuch

The Guardian

15 May 2017

Edward Snowden and Noam Chomsky are among those calling on Donald Trump to drop the US government’s investigation into Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.

The pair — along with more than 100 other activists, journalists and government workers — have signed an open letter to the president that calls prosecuting WikiLeaks “a threat to all free journalism”. The letter asks the Department of Justice to drop plans to charge Assange and other WikiLeaks staff members.

“If the DoJ is able to convict a publisher for its journalistic work, all free journalism can be criminalised,” says the open letter, released on Monday by the Courage Foundation, a trust that raises funds for the legal defenses of whistleblowers, including Snowden. The group launched a campaign in support of WikiLeaks last month.

Trump praised WikiLeaks on the campaign trail, telling a Pennsylvania rally in October 2016: “I love WikiLeaks.” The organization had leaked Hillary Clinton’s emails.

Others in his administration, however, have not expressed the same enthusiasm. The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said last month that Assange’s arrest was a “priority” for the US. Sessions’ words prompted the open letter.

The letter to Trump reads: “It was a free and robust press that provided you with a platform on which to run for president. Defending a truly free press requires freedom from fear and favour and the support of journalists and citizens everywhere; for the kind of threat now facing WikiLeaks — and all publishers and journalists — is a step into the darkness.”

The signatories also include the musician PJ Harvey, the former British intelligence officer Annie Machon, the Australian senator Lee Rhiannon and the philosopher Slavoj Žižek.

US prosecutors have been investigating WikiLeaks since at least 2010, when it released more than 250m classified cables from US embassies around the world. The cables were passed to WikiLeaks by Chelsea Manning — a former US army intelligence analyst who is also backed by the Courage Foundation — and were published in cooperation with news organizations including the Guardian.

In April, Sessions was asked at a press conference in Texas whether it was a priority for the justice department to arrest Assange “once and for all”. He said: “We are going to step up our effort, and already are stepping up our efforts on all leaks. This is a matter that’s gone beyond anything I’m aware of. We have professionals that have been in the security business of the United States for many years that are shocked by the number of leaks, and some of them are quite serious.”

He added: “So yes, it is a priority. We’ve already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail.”

The US has not been able to prosecute Assange because he has been living in the Ecuadorian embassy in Britain since 2012. If he were to leave the embassy, British authorities have indicated they would have to first consider an existing extradition request from Sweden, where Assange is wanted on an allegation of rape, which he denies.

Julian Assange's New Book Blames 'Deeply Unpopular' Clinton For Her 2016 Loss

*Sam Dorman
Independent Journal Review
17 May 2017*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange contributed to a new book rebuking the reasons that former Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton gave for her 2016 loss.

Assange and his co-author, journalist Joe Lauria, placed blame for the nominee's loss squarely in her lap by largely drawing from Clinton's and her associates' own words. “How I Lost by Hillary Clinton,” based on its description, challenges the media and Democrats' alleged assumption that Clinton lost because of external factors like FBI investigations.

The book description reads:

Rarely blamed was the party’s decision to run a deeply unpopular candidate on an uninspiring platform.

At a time of widespread dissatisfaction with business-as-usual politics, the Democrats chose to field a quintessential insider. Her campaign dwelt little on policies, focusing overwhelmingly on the personality of her opponent.

That this strategy was a failure is an understatement. Losing an election to someone with as little competence or support from his own party as Donald Trump marked an extraordinary fiasco.

Assange only wrote the book's foreword while Lauria wrote the introduction and annotations. They included content from paid speeches Clinton gave at Goldman Sachs, excerpts from her public speeches, and her campaign chairman John Podesta's emails.

Clinton previously took personal responsibility for her loss to the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, but also blamed FBI Director James Comey, misogyny, and even WikiLeaks.

Assange tweeted a response on May 3 to Clinton's public complaint about WikiLeaks during a public interview aired on CNN:



Julian Assange
@JulianAssange



You can't blame WikiLeaks when what we leaked was your words and positions. Blame yourself.

5:32 PM - 3 May 2017

The book description also criticized the Democratic Party for not recognizing Clinton's role in her defeat, claiming "The refusal of the Democratic leadership to identify the real reasons for their defeat is not just a problem of history."

The description continues, "**If Democrats persevere with a politics that prioritizes well-off professionals rather than ordinary Americans, they will leave the field open to right wing populism for many years to come.**"

<http://ijr.com/2017/05/881286-julian-assanges-new-book-blames-deeply-unpopular-clinton-2016-loss/>

Wikileaks Attorneys Blast Citizenfour Maker Poitras

Four Wikileaks lawyers write that instead of providing an objective portrayal of her subject matter, Poitras has re-framed her story to turn her Wikileaks documentary Risk into a film by Laura Poitras about Laura Poitras, a rather late coming-of-age story about the filmmaker discovering that there is sexism in her social and professional circles.

Margaret Ratner Kunstler, Deborah Hrbek, Renata Avila and Melinda Taylor
Newsweek
2017-05-17

We are lawyers for WikiLeaks. We are speaking out because we believe that Laura Poitras's film Risk, released in U.S. theaters on May 5 this year, places our clients in legal jeopardy.

The film serves to undermine WikiLeaks just as the Trump administration has announced that it intends to prosecute its journalists, editors and associates.

Our first issue with Risk is that the film was edited in New York, where the raw footage can more easily be seized by the U.S. government. **By moving the editing location from Berlin to the U.S., Poitras has endangered our clients and reneged on written agreements with WikiLeaks that explicitly forbid her from editing the footage in the United States.**

Underscoring the menacing atmosphere, in April CIA Director Michael Pompeo dedicated his first speech to WikiLeaks and its staff, stating "They have pretended America's First Amendment freedom shields them from justice. They may have believed that, but they're wrong... Julian Assange has no First Amendment freedoms... It ends now."

Poitras has also violated her unambiguous promise to the subjects of the film that they would have an opportunity to review the film in advance and request changes, and that they could decline to appear if they or their lawyers felt that the movie put them at risk.

Had the filmmaker not agreed to these express conditions, WikiLeaks' staff would not have allowed themselves to be filmed in the first place. Despite repeated requests, neither the subjects of the film nor their attorneys were granted a prior viewing of the film that Poitras intended to release in the U.S..

When, along with the general public, we were finally able to view Risk, we were dismayed to discover that the film released in theaters is a different version, not only from that which premiered at Cannes the year before, but also from the version screened for Julian Assange and his UK counsel at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

The film viewed in the Embassy just one month prior to its U.S. release was shorn of all narration and omitted numerous new scenes, significantly changing its tenor. **That the "real" film contained these elements was concealed, preventing Assange from exercising his contractual rights.**

Prior to its initial U.S. release, seven of the participants submitted non-consent forms to the producers advising Poitras and her team that they did not want to appear in the film. Regardless, Poitras went ahead and released it.

To be clear: our objections are not about censorship. WikiLeaks remains an unwavering advocate for freedom of expression. This is about safety. It is about protecting journalistic sources. It is about personal and professional integrity, and honoring contractual obligations.

Our second major concern about Risk is the way the focus of the film has been radically altered from a broadly sympathetic portrayal of WikiLeaks' work and the attacks against its staff by the U.S. government to an ill-defined indictment of the "culture of sexism" online.

As career-long feminists, activists and human rights attorneys, we are acutely aware of the existence of sexist behavior (and racism, and classism) in virtually all institutions, including left-leaning organizations.

The difficulty we have with Poitras's film is that she foregrounds this issue to the exclusion of others, thereby undermining WikiLeaks' popular and political support at the very moment that it faces serious aggression from the Trump administration.

To convince the audience of her point about the prevalence of sexism, Poitras has marginalized and demeaned a number of women who work for WikiLeaks, choosing instead to give men most of the airtime and leaving scenes depicting the significant contributions of the women WikiLeaks journalists on the cutting room floor.

In their place, we now see an intense focus on women taking instructions and throwing off adoring looks. Sarah Harrison, for example, a brilliant journalist and winner of the Willy Brandt prize for "exceptional political courage," who at considerable personal risk helped Edward Snowden obtain political asylum, and who was accurately portrayed as having a central role in WikiLeaks work in the Cannes version, is now depicted as little more than a minion.

Exactly what caused this pivot is not entirely clear. No charges have been filed in the Swedish preliminary investigation of Assange, which existed long before the Cannes version of the film was released, and before Poitras even began filming WikiLeaks.

In 2016, the UN twice found that the investigation of Assange had been so flawed that his ongoing detention was illegal, arbitrary and that he should be immediately released. **Poitras has dramatic footage of this legal victory, but decided not to share it with her audience.**

The reason for the shift seems to be contained in the newly added voiceover, in which Poitras divulges that she was involved in an intimate relationship with one of the film's primary subjects, award-winning journalist Jacob Appelbaum.

Appelbaum appears prominently in Poitras' Citizenfour as well as in Risk. Although he does not work for WikiLeaks, Poitras conflates WikiLeaks with the organization he did work for, Tor, and makes him a central focus of the current version of Risk.

The Cannes premiere of Risk portrayed Appelbaum in a flattering light and Poitras did not disclose the nature of their relationship at that time. Now Poitras states, "I thought I could ignore the contradictions. I thought they were not part of the story. I was so wrong. They're becoming the story." **But if sexism is becoming the story, it is because Poitras has chosen to focus on it.**

Poitras was criticized after Cannes for appearing to be overly sympathetic to WikiLeaks. Instead of providing us with a more objective portrayal of her subject matter, she has re-framed her story to turn Risk into a film by Laura Poitras about Laura Poitras; a rather late coming-of-age story about the filmmaker discovering that there is sexism in her social and professional circles.

Instead of a documentary about the abuse of state power and WikiLeaks' important role in exposing it, the emphasis of the film is now to highlight hotly disputed claims about an ex-boyfriend.

We have to ask: Why choose this moment in history, when First Amendment and other fundamental rights are under attack, to undermine the credibility of an organization dedicated to government transparency and freedom of the press?

Poitras is certainly aware of the political and legal context in which the release of this film is taking place. Yet the release of Risk in its new iteration exposes her subjects to considerable legal jeopardy.

This is a grave matter. The charges under the U.S. Espionage Act of 1917 that the Trump administration is working up to unleash on Wikileaks personnel carry extremely serious penalties.

We find it hard to comprehend why Poitras, who played an important role in national security journalism, has chosen to allow a dubious quest for self-discovery to undermine people working courageously to protect press freedoms.

Risk might win attention for Poitras by pandering to tabloid narratives about its subjects, but it has done a great disservice to her fellow documentarians, and has profoundly betrayed her friends, her colleagues and her journalistic integrity.

<http://www.newsweek.com/wileaks-attorneys-blast-citizenfour-maker-poitras-610362>

Tidsfristen går ut — nu ska åklagaren lämna besked om Assange

Klockan 12 i dag går tidsfristen ut för åklagaren i Assangefallet. Då måste överåklagare Marianne Ny ha bestämt sig för hur hon ska gå vidare i den utdragna våldtäktsutredningen mot Wikileaksgrundaren.

Marianne Ny har kallat till presskonferens prick klockan tolv i polishuset i Stockholm för att meddela hur hon tänker gå vidare. Det internationella intresset är väldigt stort och presskonferensen kommer att hållas på både svenska och engelska.

I november var en svensk åklagare och polis i London för att förhöra Assange på Ecuadors ambassad där han bor sedan snart fem år. Förhören har sedan dess översatts och analyserats. Utredningen har vid flera tillfällen fått kritik för att den går för långsamt framåt.

Den här gången är det Assanges försvarare som begärt att häktningsbeslutet ska hävas. Tidigare har Svea Hovrätt uttryckt att det går för långsamt. Men också en arbetsgrupp från FN har kritiserat häktningen av Assange som fått konsekvensen att han är ut och är in sitter fast på ambassaden där han sökt asyl.

SVT Nyheter har varit i kontakt med Assanges försvarare Per E Samuelsson som inte vet vilket beslut åklagaren kommer att meddela i dag.

– Detta är en nyhet för mig också, säger han.

Det finns flera möjliga vägar för åklagaren Marianne Ny att ta i dag.

- Hon kan häva häktningen med motiveringen att Assange inte kan störa utredningen. Förhöret med honom är redan gjort och straffskalan för brottet gör att häktning inte är obligatorisk. Då skulle Assange ha möjlighet att lämna ambassaden.
- Hon kan låta häktningsbeslutet kvarstå och redovisa nya åtgärder hon tänker vidta i utredningen. Det skulle kunna röra sig om exempelvis nya förhör för att gå vidare med uppgifter som kom fram införhöret.
- Hon kan besluta att brott inte går att styrka och därför lägga ner förundersökningen.
- Hon kan också meddela att hon tänker väcka åtal mot Assange och att därför häktningsbeslutet ska vara kvar.

Ett 50-tal journalister kommer att vara där, varav hälften från utländsk media.

Turerna i fallet kring den våldtäktsmisstänkte visselblåsaren Julian Assange har varit många och krångliga. Det här har hänt i korthet:

24 augusti 2010. Julian Assange anhålls i sin frånvaro under ett besök i Sverige. Han misstänks för våldtäkt, sexuellt ofredande och olaga tvång. Fallet gäller två kvinnor Assange ska ha träffat.

25 augusti 2010. Anhållan hävs och brottrubriceringen ändras till ofredande.

1 september 2010. Förundersökningen återupptas och överåklagare Marianne Ny ändrar tillbaka rubriceringen till våldtäkt.

18 november 2010. Stockholms tingsrätt häktar Assange i sin frånvaro, på sannolika skäl misstänkt för våldtäkt, sexuellt ofredande och olaga tvång.

19 november 2010. Assange överklagar häktningen till Svea hovrätt samtidigt som han efterlyses internationellt.

7 december 2010. Assange grips i London av brittisk polis.

16 december 2010. En brittisk domstol beslutar att släppa Assange fri mot borgen. I ett tal efteråt säger han "att det känns skönt att känna Londons friska luft igen".

24 februari 2011. En brittisk domstol beslutar att Assange ska överlämnas till Sverige.

19 juni 2012. Assange lyckas ta sig till Ecuadors ambassad i London där han ansöker om politisk asyl.

13 mars 2015. Överåklagare Marianne Ny begär att få förhöra och dna-topsa Assange i London. Detta då flera av brotten han misstänks för preskriberas i augusti 2015. Assanges advokater välkomnar begäran.

19 januari 2017. Julian Assange upprepar att han är beredd att utlämnas till USA förutsatt att hans rättigheter garanteras, sedan USA:s avgående presidenten Barack Obama kortat straffet för visselblåsaren Chelsea Manning.

Christoffer Wendick
SVT
2017-05-18

Utredningen mot Assange läggs ned

Åklagarmyndigheten
2017-05-19

Överåklagare Marianne Ny har beslutat att lägga ned förundersökningen om misstänkt våldtäkt begången av Julian Assange. Skälet är det inte finns anledning att tro att beslutet att överlämna honom till Sverige kan verkställas inom överskådlig tid.

Vid en presskonferens i Stockholm den 19 maj redogjorde Marianne Ny för sitt beslut.

– Julian Assange tog för nästan fem år sedan sin tillflykt till Ecuadors ambassad i London, där han fortfarande befinner sig. Han har alltså undandragit sig alla försök för svenska och brittiska myndigheter att verkställa beslutet om att överlämna honom till Sverige enligt EU-reglerna om en europeisk arresteringsorder. Min bedömning är att överlämningen inte kan verkställas inom överskådlig tid, säger Marianne Ny.

Enligt lagen ska en brottsutredning ske skyndsamt. Vid den tidpunkt när en åklagare inte har möjlighet att vidta fler utredningsåtgärder är åklagaren skyldig att lägga ned förundersökningen.

– Alla möjligheter att för närvarande driva utredningen framåt är uttömda. För att kunna gå vidare skulle det krävas att Julian Assange formellt skulle delges misstanke om brottet. Det kan inte förväntas att vi skulle få bistånd av Ecuador med detta. Utredningen läggs därför ned.

– **Om han vid en senare tidpunkt skulle göra sig tillgänglig kan jag besluta att omedelbart återuppta förundersökningen.** Mitt beslut innebär att det för tillfället inte är meningsfullt att driva utredningen vidare, säger Marianne Ny.

Som en konsekvens av beslutet har åklagaren hävt häktningen och återkallat den europeiska arresteringsordern.

– Eftersom det under nuvarande omständigheter inte är möjligt att driva utredningen framåt framstår det inte längre som proportionerligt att Julian Assange ska vara fortsatt häktad. Det innebär också att det inte finns förutsättningar att fortsätta förundersökningen, säger Marianne Ny.

<https://www.aklagare.se/nyheter-press/pressmeddelanden/?newsId=7748BBE8C90BAF32>

Swedish prosecutors drop Julian Assange rape investigation

Sweden's director of public prosecution says she has decided to discontinue the investigation into WikiLeaks founder

Esther Addley and Alan Travis
The Guardian
19 May 2017

Swedish prosecutors have dropped their preliminary investigation into an allegation of rape against the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, bringing an end to a seven-year legal standoff.

The decision was taken after prosecutors concluded that “at this point, **all possibilities to conduct the investigation** are exhausted”, Sweden’s director of public prosecutions, Marianne Ny, said on Friday.

“In order to proceed with the case, Julian Assange would have to be formally notified of the criminal suspicions against him. We cannot expect to receive assistance from Ecuador regarding this. **Therefore** the investigation is discontinued.

“If he, at a later date, makes himself available, I will be able to decide to resume the investigation immediately.”

The WikiLeaks founder sought asylum in Ecuador’s embassy in London in 2012 after losing court battles to avoid extradition to Sweden over the claims, which he denies.

Separate allegations of sexual assault, made by a second Swedish woman, were dropped by Swedish authorities in 2015 after the statute of limitations expired.

Shortly after the announcement on Friday morning, an image of Assange smiling was posted to his Twitter account.

Later he tweeted again: **“Detained for 7 years without charge while my children grew up and my name was slandered. I do not forgive or forget.”**

However, a lawyer representing the woman who made the allegation of rape described the decision as a “scandal”.

“It is a scandal that a suspected rapist can escape justice and thereby avoid the courts,” Elisabeth Massi Fritz told Agence France-Presse in an email. “My client is shocked and no decision to [end the case] can make her change [her view] that Assange exposed her to rape.”

With the threat of extradition to Sweden removed, the 45-year-old Australian could potentially opt to leave the embassy.

However, Assange’s lawyers have repeatedly said he will not do so without assurances that he will not face extradition to the US over possible espionage charges linked to WikiLeaks’ publishing activities— the basis on which Ecuador granted him asylum.

The Metropolitan police in London said Assange would also face immediate arrest for breaching his bail conditions; a warrant was issued when he failed to attend a magistrates court after entering the embassy.

“The Metropolitan police service is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the embassy,” the statement said.

It added: “Whilst Mr Assange was wanted on a European arrest warrant (EAW) for an extremely serious offence, the MPS response reflected the serious nature of that crime. Now that the situation has changed and the Swedish authorities have discontinued their investigation into that matter, Mr Assange remains wanted for a much less serious offence. The MPS will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offence.”

Per Samuelson, Assange's Swedish lawyer, told reporters the decision represented a total victory.

"This is one of the happiest days of my legal career. The decision was taken because he was interrogated in November 2016 and could give a good explanation of what happened ... This is obviously about consensual sex between two adults."

Ecuador's foreign minister, Guillaume Long, also welcomed the decision, adding that he "regrets that the Swedish prosecutor delayed more than four years in carrying out this interview. Given that the European arrest warrant no longer holds, **Ecuador will now be intensifying its diplomatic efforts with the UK so that Julian Assange can gain safe passage, in order to enjoy his asylum in Ecuador.**"

But Claes Borgström, the lawyer who originally represented Assange's two accusers but is no longer involved in the case, said he found the decision regretful. He told the Guardian: "I understand why the prosecutors have dropped the case now. Such a long time has passed. But I regret that Julian Assange was not brought to the Swedish court of law to answer the allegations against him.

"All the time since he left Sweden it has been in his hands. He decided to avoid the arms of justice. He didn't want to come to court. He didn't want to answer the allegations, so he decided to escape."

The EAW against Assange was formally withdrawn at Westminster magistrates court on Friday morning, the Crown Prosecution Service confirmed. The UK Home Office said the decision to drop the rape investigation was a matter for the Swedish authorities, and not one in which the British government had any involvement.

Reuters reported in March that a long-running US grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks had been expanded to include recent leaks of CIA documents, a move that Assange's lawyers said strengthened the grounds for his asylum claim.

Assange was interviewed by Sweden's deputy public prosecutor, Ingrid Isgren, in the embassy in November, following a lengthy diplomatic and legal impasse between the Swedish and Ecuadorian authorities.

Friday's announcement in Sweden followed the Swedish government receiving a letter from the government of Ecuador which accused the prosecutor of "serious failure", including a "lack of initiative" to complete inquiries.

The letter raised questions about developments in the US since the election of Donald Trump as president, including a speech by the CIA director, Mike Pompeo, describing WikiLeaks as a "hostile intelligence service" and a threat to US national security.

Public declarations such as this constituted an "obvious risk" for Assange, the letter said.

The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said last month that arresting Assange was a priority. There are no charges against him, although media reports have suggested the US justice department is considering how to bring them.

“We’ve already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, **we will seek to put some people in jail,” Sessions said.**

Asked at a Conservative party campaign event in Edinburgh if the UK would now support a request to extradite Assange to the US, Theresa May said: “We look at extradition requests on a case-by-case basis.”

The prime minister added: “In relation to Julian Assange, any decision that is taken about UK action in relation to him were he to leave the Ecuadorian embassy would be an operational matter for the police.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/may/19/swedish-prosecutors-drop-julian-assange-investigation>

Trump and Assange's friendship may come to a quick halt as US charges loom

The president and WikiLeaks founder were partners not more than four months ago, but now the US may charge him for publishing classified material

*Tom McCarthy
The Guardian
19 May 2017*

A threat by the Donald Trump administration last month to imprison WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange might, from Assange’s perspective, seem ungrateful.

It was WikiLeaks that published a steady drip of awkward emails stolen from Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman in the run-up to the November election. It was WikiLeaks that exposed plotting inside the Democratic National Committee to ruin the candidacy of Bernie Sanders. And it was WikiLeaks that Trump associates such as Roger Stone touted as the force that would finish off Clinton.

“I love WikiLeaks,” Trump himself said at a Pennsylvania rally a month before the election, brandishing a printout of a Clinton campaign email, to cheers from the crowd.

So favored was Assange inside the Trump orbit that Fox News host Sean Hannity, an extreme Trump backer, traveled to London after the election to conduct a three-part interview with Assange inside the Ecuadorian embassy.

Trump and Assange were, not four months ago, more than friendly allies. They were undeclared partners.

But now, with Swedish prosecutors having closed an investigation of rape allegations against Assange, the stated intention of the United States to charge him or his associates for crimes relating to the publication of classified material once again looms as perhaps the greatest threat to Assange’s freedom.

The Trump team revealed its 180-degree turn on the Assange question last month, with CIA director Mike Pompeo— who celebrated WikiLeaks during the presidential

campaign— calling the group a “hostile intelligence service” and attorney general Jeff Sessions saying that prosecuting WikiLeaks was “a priority”.

“So yes, it is a priority,” Sessions said. “We’ve already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail.”

The White House had not commented on the development in the Assange case by midday Friday. It was unclear what steps the justice department had taken against Assange or whether the US had requested his extradition from Britain.

In some ways, the twist in Assange’s fate presents a problem to US prosecutors, who are under new pressure to state their case, which includes grappling with thorny first amendment and jurisdictional issues.

David Leigh, the former investigations editor of the Guardian and the author of a book on WikiLeaks, said on Friday that Sessions’ tough talk on Assange was “all just noise”.

“The fact is that there is no official extradition request that has been made known from the US to the UK to get hold of Julian Assange,” Leigh told the BBC in an interview. “The Obama administration had probably dropped the idea of arresting and extraditing Assange.”

WikiLeaks has a long track record of publishing classified military material. In 2010 alone, the group published an estimated 90,000 documents relating to the war in Afghanistan, 400,000 documents related to the Iraq war and 250,000 leaked state department cables.

Perhaps the most famous material in those leaks was footage of a US helicopter firing on and killing Iraqi civilians in 2007. The source for that material was Army private Chelsea Manning, then Bradley, who was released after seven years of imprisonment on Wednesday morning following Barack Obama’s forgiveness of part of her sentence on Espionage Act charges.

Given the Manning release, there is an uncanniness about the timing of the closure of the Swedish investigation of Assange, and the prospect, however complicated, that he may go free after five years of detention in the embassy. WikiLeaks tweeted in January: “If Obama grants Manning clemency Assange will agree to US extradition despite clear unconstitutionality of DoJ case.”

After Obama commuted Manning’s sentence in January, a lawyer for Assange retreated on that dare, saying that the US president’s action was “well short of what he [Assange] sought.”

It is also the case that the special counsel investigation of alleged Russian interference in the last US presidential election announced Wednesday could fuel the US desire or ability to prosecute the WikiLeaks founder.

The US government formally accused Russia in October of hacking the DNC emails, which WikiLeaks then published. A statement by intelligence agencies at the time explicitly linked WikiLeaks and “Russian-directed” hacking efforts *[but provided no evidence --A.B.]*.

Roger Stone, the on-again, off-again Trump adviser, boasted in early March that he had a “perfectly legal back channel” to Assange. Stone also appears to have been a focus of an FBI investigation of Russian tampering in the election, judging by pointed questions directed at former bureau director James Comey in testimony before the House intelligence committee in late March.

“Do you know Stone tweeted confidence that Assange would educate Americans? And then WikiLeaks started publishing Podesta’s emails?” ranking member Adam Schiff asked Comey.

“No comment,” Comey replied.

After the hearing, Republican senator John McCain said that “obviously” Stone should testify before Congress about what went on behind the scenes during the election. “I think he and others need to be questioned,” McCain said.

Stone, never one to shirk the spotlight, volunteered to testify. “I have had no contacts or collusions with the Russians,” he said. As for ranking member Schiff?

“Largely full of Schiff,” Stone said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/may/19/trump-assange-friendship-us-charges-classified-wikileaks>

Can Julian Assange now walk free? What happens next

A potential UK arrest and US extradition still loom over the WikiLeaks founder after Sweden dropped its rape inquiry

*Matthew Weaver
The Guardian
19 May 2017*

What has happened to Julian Assange?

Swedish prosecutors have dropped their rape investigation into the WikiLeaks founder. Marianne Ny, Sweden’s director of public prosecutions, said she had decided to discontinue the inquiry into the allegation dating from 2010, when the country issued a European arrest warrant for him.

Why has the investigation been dropped?

Ny said Sweden had exhausted the possibilities for investigating the allegations and were therefore obliged under Swedish law to discontinue the inquiry. But, she said, it **could be reopened if Assange returns to Sweden before the statute of limitations ends in 2020**. She also confirmed that Sweden had withdrawn its request for a European arrest warrant against him. Another allegation of sexual assault made by a second Swedish woman was dropped by Swedish authorities in 2015 after the statute of limitations expired. The UK government said on Friday it had no involvement in Sweden’s decision to drop the investigation.

Does this mean Assange can walk out of the Ecuadorian embassy in London?

No, because he still faces arrest over breaching UK bail conditions, and the possibility of extradition to the US. Assange sought refuge in Ecuador's embassy in London in 2012, after UK courts ruled that Sweden's extradition request was lawful. Assange has always said he believes he faces extradition to the US because WikiLeaks published classified information. But the Metropolitan police have maintained that Assange would be arrested if he left the embassy.

That position has not changed. Scotland Yard said on Friday that it is still obliged to execute a warrant issued by Westminster magistrates court for the arrest of Assange after his breach of bail conditions in June 2012. It said in a statement:

"While Mr Assange was wanted on a European arrest warrant for an extremely serious offence, the MPS response reflected the serious nature of that crime. Now that the situation has changed and the Swedish authorities have discontinued their investigation into that matter, Mr Assange remains wanted for a much less serious offence. The MPS will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offence. The priority for the MPS must continue to be arresting those who are currently wanted in the capital in connection with serious violent or sexual offences for the protection of Londoners."

The offence of breaching bail carries a maximum sentence of one year in prison.

Does the US want Assange to be extradited?

Almost certainly, but the Home Office never confirms whether an extradition request has been made or received until the person in question has been arrested. Last month, the US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said the arrest of Assange was a "priority" after the CIA director, Mike Pompeo, described WikiLeaks as a "hostile intelligence service" and a threat to US national security.

US federal prosecutors are understood to be considering bringing charges against Assange over a number of the website's publications since 2010. This could potentially lead to an extradition request for Assange. "We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail," Sessions said.

Has the European arrest warrant against Assange been lifted?

Yes. The Crown Prosecution Service said that the European Arrest Warrant was discharged on Friday at Westminster Magistrates' Court after the Swedish investigation was dropped.

Has Assange been questioned by Swedish prosecutors?

Yes, this took place at the embassy last November in the presence of Sweden's chief prosecutor, Ingrid Isgren. Assange later released his full testimony to Swedish prosecutors, maintaining that he was "entirely innocent" of the allegation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/may/19/what-has-happened-to-julian-assange-key-questions-answered>

Julian Assange's future far from clear despite dropping of Sweden inquiry

The WikiLeaks founder could find that life is no easier after Swedish prosecutors dropped their investigation into him

*Jon Henley and Tom McCarthy
The Guardian
19 May 2017*

Swedish prosecutors may have decided to drop their investigation into an allegation of rape against Julian Assange, but the future for the WikiLeaks founder is far from clear— and may even be more precarious.

Marianne Ny, Sweden's director of public prosecutions, said on Friday that the inquiry into the allegation dating from 2010 was being discontinued and the European arrest warrant the country had issued recalled.

She said Sweden had "exhausted the possibilities" for investigating the allegations against Assange and there was no reason to believe the 45-year-old Australian would be brought to Sweden in the foreseeable future.

But the decision does not make life any easier for Assange, who has been living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012 after claiming asylum to avoid extradition to Sweden and from there, he feared, to the US.

If he steps outside the embassy, he risks at the very least a fine. The Metropolitan police has said that an arrest warrant remains open for Assange after he breached his bail conditions by failing to appear in court five years ago to accept extradition.

The UK courts could hear the case quickly and have a range of options including a minor fine. **But the process could last many months and a judge may decide to impose the maximum penalty: a prison sentence of up to one year.**

Once the bail offence has been dealt with, it might be possible for Assange to leave the UK for Ecuador, whose foreign minister, Guillaume Long, said on Friday that London "must now grant safe passage" to the former hacker.

On the other hand, leaving the Ecuadorian embassy without safe passage could expose Assange to a renewed risk of extradition. **The legal commentator David Allen Green suggested that if he was arrested, Sweden could resume its case.**

He tweeted that the case being dropped was "to stop expending resources" when there was "no clear path to extradition", but if Assange "went into British custody, then the Swedes may well revisit their decision ... as extradition is suddenly easier".

Ny stressed on Friday that the investigation could be reopened if Assange returned to Sweden before the statute of limitations on the rape allegation against him ends in August 2020.

The most alarming outcome from Assange's viewpoint is a possible extradition to the US, where he has long feared he would face trial for leaking tens of thousands of secret US military and diplomatic documents.

It is not known whether US officials have asked British police to arrest Assange because of a possible sealed indictment against him. The US justice department, White House and British government all declined to comment on that matter on Friday.

From Assange's perspective, the threat by Donald Trump's administration to imprison him might seem ungrateful: WikiLeaks published awkward emails stolen from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman in the runup to the November election. Assange's organisation also exposed plotting inside the Democratic National Committee to ruin the candidacy of Bernie Sanders and was touted by Trump associates such as Roger Stone as the force that would finish off Clinton.

"I love WikiLeaks," Trump himself said at a rally a month before his election as president. Sean Hannity, an extreme Trump backer, conducted a three-part Fox News interview with Assange inside the Ecuadorian embassy after the election.

But **Trump said last month he would support any decision to charge Assange** and the US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, has suggested that his arrest and prosecution could be an American priority.

"We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail," Sessions said last month. The CIA director, Mike Pompeo, has described WikiLeaks as a "hostile intelligence service" and a threat to US national security.

The Washington Post has reported that prosecutors have been drafting a memo that looks at charges against Assange and WikiLeaks members that possibly include conspiracy, theft of government property and violations of the Espionage Act.

WikiLeaks has a long track record of publishing classified military material. In 2010 alone, the group published an estimated 90,000 documents relating to the war in Afghanistan, 400,000 documents relating to the Iraq war, and 250,000 leaked state department cables.

Perhaps the most famous material in those leaks was footage of a US helicopter firing on and killing Iraqi civilians in 2007. The source for that material was army private Chelsea Manning, then Bradley, who was released after seven years of imprisonment on Wednesday morning.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/may/19/julian-assange-wikileaks-ecuadorian-embassy>

Julian Assange: Sweden drops investigation against Wikileaks founder based in Ecuador's London embassy

Scotland Yard says it will still arrest Mr Assange over skipping bail if he leaves embassy

*Lizzie Dearden
The Independent
19 May 2017*

Sweden has dropped its investigation against Julian Assange but the WikiLeaks founder could still be arrested by British police.

The country's director of public prosecutions, Marianne Ny, said the preliminary rape and sexual assault probe has been discontinued because of logistical.

Mr Assange reacted to the news by tweeting a photo of himself smiling inside the Ecuadorian Embassy where he has been living for almost five years.

"Detained for 7 years without charge by while my children grew up and my name was slandered," he wrote. "I do not forgive or forget."

Ecuador's government launched an appeal with the British Government to give Mr Assange safe passage to be granted asylum in the South American country.

His lawyer, Per Samuelson, claimed the end of the case was a "total victory", adding: "We finally were able to get the interview done and he could describe what really happened and also because we could show that the United States is hunting him, which we could not do before."

But the woman who accused Mr Assange of rape has said she was "shocked" by Sweden's decision to drop the seven-year investigation [*claimed her lawyer; the woman herself has not been heard from since 2010. --A.B.*].

A lawyer representing the woman, who met the WikiLeaks founder at a 2010 conference in Stockholm, said prosecutors should not have "given up the case" before it reached court and accused Mr Assange of deliberately obstructing the judicial process because he was "afraid".

"It is a scandal that a suspected rapist can disregard the judiciary and thus avoid trial," Elisabeth Fritz added.

"Proof of evidence in the case is available and that evidence should have been tried in court... the wait has been long."

The Australian activist repeatedly said he was "entirely innocent" of the allegations, which stemmed from a meeting with the claimant in August 2010.

The European arrest warrant issued for Mr Assange is being revoked, sparking speculation he would be leaving the London embassy.

But the Metropolitan Police swiftly confirmed it would still arrest the Australian over skipping bail when he sought asylum.

"Westminster Magistrates' Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Julian Assange following him failing to surrender to the court on the 29 June 2012," a statement said.

"The Metropolitan Police Service is **obliged [???**] to execute that warrant should he leave the Embassy."

A spokesperson for WikiLeaks claimed the British government "refuses to confirm or deny" whether it has received a US extradition request, adding: "Focus now moves to UK."

The Australian activist sought asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy while on bail in 2012, over fears the Swedish investigation would result in him being extradited to the US over leaked military documents and diplomatic cables.

The Ecuadorian government had sent Sweden a letter saying there had been a “serious failure” by the prosecutor, including a “lack of initiative” to complete inquiries.

It raised developments in the US since the election of Donald Trump as President, including a speech by CIA director Mike Pompeo describing WikiLeaks as a “hostile intelligence service”.

The letter argued that recent public declarations constituted an “obvious risk” for Mr Assange, who originally faced three sexual assault charges that he denied.

He was questioned by an Ecuadorian prosecutor with Swedish officials present inside the embassy in November, following a bilateral agreement that ended years of legal wrangling.

Prosecutors said the interview sparked further investigations but “no further measures remaining that are possible to take in order to further the investigation”.

Ms Ny said the investigation could have progressed if Mr Assange was “formally served notice of the crimes of which he is suspected”, adding: **“This was a measure which was to have been conducted during the interview in London but Mr Assange refused to make it possible.”** *[He refused because the implications of accepting the notice were unclear, and his Swedish lawyer was unable to explain because he had been excluded from the hearing, presumably by prosecutor Ny. –A.B.]*

She said the probe could be reopened if Mr Assange returns to Sweden before statute of limitations ends in August 2020, but the move appears highly unlikely.

“The decision to discontinue the investigation is not because we've been able to make a full assessment of the evidence, but because we didn't see possibilities to advance the investigation,” Ms Ny added. “So we won't make any statements on the issue of guilt.”

The UN had called on Swedish and British authorities to free Mr Assange from “arbitrary detention” in a report released last year, with the UK failing to overturn the findings on appeal.

“Now that all appeals are exhausted I expect that the UK and Sweden will comply with their international obligations and set me free,” Mr Assange said following the ruling.

“It is an obvious and grotesque injustice to detain someone for six years who hasn't even been charged with an offence.”

As the Swedish investigation continued in December 2010, Mr Assange was jailed in Wandsworth Prison in isolation for 10 days and then put under house arrest for 550 days under powers granted by an international arrest warrant.

Scotland Yard stood down the 24/7 police presence outside the Ecuadorian Embassy building in 2015 but pledged to make “every effort” to arrest Mr Assange if he left.

There had been controversy over the escalating cost of **the exercise, which was believed to be over £12 million.**

The investigation was dropped days after Chelsea Manning, who provided WikiLeaks with classified intelligence on Iraq and Afghanistan that shocked the world, was freed from prison.

The transgender former US intelligence analyst left Fort Leavenworth on Wednesday, months after Barack Obama commuted her 35-year sentence as one of his final acts as President.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/julian-assange-sweden-drop-charges-wikileaks-ecuador-embassy-london-sexaul-assault-rape-us-a7744181.html>

Sweden Withdraws Arrest Warrant for Julian Assange, but He Still Faces Serious Legal Jeopardy

Glenn Greenwald
The Intercept
2017-05-19

Swedish prosecutors announced this morning that they were terminating their 7-year-old sex crimes investigation into Julian Assange and withdrawing their August 20, 2010, arrest warrant for him. The chief prosecutor, Marianne Ny, said at a news conference this morning (pictured below) that investigators had reached no conclusion about his guilt or innocence, but instead were withdrawing the warrant because “all prospects of pursuing the investigation under present circumstances are exhausted” and it is therefore “no longer proportionate to maintain the arrest of Julian Assange in his absence.”



*Chief prosecutor Marianne Ny speaks during a press conference in Stockholm on Friday May 19, 2017. Sweden's top prosecutor said Friday she is dropping an investigation into a rape claim against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange after almost seven years.
(Maja Suslin/TT News Agency via AP)*

Almost five years ago — in June 2012 — the U.K. Supreme Court rejected Assange’s last legal challenge to Sweden’s extradition request. Days later, Assange entered the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, and two weeks later formally received asylum from the government of Ecuador. He has been in that small embassy ever since, under threat of immediate arrest from British police if he were to leave. For years, British police expended enormous sums to maintain a 24-hour presence outside the embassy, and though they reduced their presence in 2015, continued to make clear that he would be immediately arrested if he tried to leave.

In February of last year, a UN human rights panel formally concluded that the British government was violating Assange’s rights by “arbitrarily detaining” him, and it called for his release. But the U.K. government immediately rejected the UN finding and vowed to ignore it.

Ecuador’s rationale for granting asylum to Assange has often been overlooked. Ecuadorian officials, along with Assange’s supporters, have always insisted that they wanted the investigation in Sweden to proceed, and vowed that Assange would board the next plane to Stockholm if Sweden gave assurances that it would not extradite him to the U.S. to face charges relating to WikiLeaks’s publication of documents. **It was Sweden’s refusal to issue such guarantees — and Ecuador’s fears that Assange would end up being persecuted by the U.S. — that has been the basis for its asylum protections.**

After years of refusing Assange’s offers to interview him in the embassy, Swedish prosecutors finally agreed to do so last November. But the Swedes’ last hope for advancing the case seemed to evaporate last month, when the candidate of the ruling party in Ecuador, Lenin Moreno, won a narrow victory over his right-wing opponent, who had vowed to terminate Assange’s asylum.

With the new president signaling that Assange’s asylum would continue indefinitely, there was virtually nothing else for prosecutors to do. Upon hearing the news, Assange, on his Twitter account this morning, posted a smiling photograph of himself.

But that celebration obscures several ironies. The most glaring of which is that **the legal jeopardy Assange now faces is likely greater than ever.**

Almost immediately after the decision by Swedish prosecutors, British police announced that they would nonetheless arrest Assange if he tried to leave the embassy. Police said Assange was still wanted for the crime of “failing to surrender” — meaning that instead of turning himself in upon issuance of his 2012 arrest warrant, he obtained refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy. The British police also, however, noted that this alleged crime is “a much less serious offence” than the one that served as the basis for the original warrant, and that the police would therefore only “provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offence.”

That could perhaps imply that with a seriously reduced police presence, Assange could manage to leave the embassy without detection and apprehension. All relevant evidence, however, negates that assumption.

Just weeks ago, Donald Trump’s CIA director, Mike Pompeo, delivered an angry, threatening speech about WikiLeaks in which he argued, “We have to recognize that

we can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us.” The CIA director vowed to make good on this threat: “To give them the space to crush us with misappropriated secrets is a perversion of what our great Constitution stands for. It ends now.”

Days later, Attorney General Jeff Sessions strongly suggested that the Trump DOJ would seek to prosecute Assange and WikiLeaks on espionage charges in connection with the group’s publication of classified documents. Trump officials then began leaking to news outlets such as CNN that “U.S. authorities have prepared charges to seek the arrest of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.”

For years, the Obama DOJ had extensively considered the possibility of prosecuting WikiLeaks and Assange, even convening a grand jury that subpoenaed multiple witnesses. Though the Obama DOJ refused to say they had terminated that investigation — which is what caused Ecuador to continue to fear persecution — Obama officials strongly signaled that there was no way to prosecute WikiLeaks without also prosecuting news organizations that published the same documents, or at least creating a precedent that would endanger First Amendment press freedoms. As the Washington Post reported in 2013:

“The Justice Department has all but concluded it will not bring charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for publishing classified documents because government lawyers said they could not do so without also prosecuting U.S. news organizations and journalists, according to U.S. officials.”

That same article noted that “officials stressed that a formal decision has not been made, and a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks remains impaneled.” But it seemed that, under Obama, prosecution was highly unlikely. Indeed, last month, in response to my denunciation of Pompeo’s threat as endangering press freedoms, former Obama DOJ spokesperson Matthew Miller tweeted this:

@ggreenwald it's also hollow. DOJ knows it can't win a case against someone just for publishing secrets.

— Matthew Miller (@matthewamiller) April 13, 2017

But the Trump administration — at least if one believes its multiple statements and threats — appears unconstrained by those concerns. They appear determined to prosecute WikiLeaks, which has published numerous secret CIA hacking documents this year.

Press freedom groups, along with the ACLU and some journalists, such as the Washington Post’s Margaret Sullivan, have warned of the grave dangers such a prosecution would pose to media outlets around the world. But that seems an unlikely impediment to an administration that has made clear that they regard the press as an enemy.

Prosecuting Wikileaks would set a dangerous precedent that the Trump administration would surely use to target other news organizations.

<https://t.co/mlih1bcyR1>

— ACLU National (@ACLU) April 21, 2017

Indeed, Sessions himself refused to rule out the possibility that the prosecution of Assange could lead to the criminal prosecution of other news organizations that publish classified documents. Trump's leading candidate to replace James Comey as FBI director, Joe Lieberman, has long called for the prosecution not only of WikiLeaks but also possibly media outlets such as the New York Times that publish the same classified information. And anonymous sources recently claimed to the New York Times that when Trump met with Comey early on in his administration, the new U.S. president expressly inquired about the possibility of prosecuting news outlets.

The termination of the Swedish investigation is, in one sense, good news for Assange. But it is unlikely to change his inability to leave the embassy any time soon. If anything, given the apparent determination of the Trump administration to put him in a U.S. prison cell for the "crime" of publishing documents, his freedom appears further away than it has since 2010, when the Swedish case began.

<https://theintercept.com/2017/05/19/sweden-withdraws-arrest-warrant-for-julian-assange-but-he-still-faces-serious-legal-jeopardy/>

SVT: 2017-05-19

Åklagaren lägger ned utredningen mot Julian Assange

Överåklagare Marianne Ny lägger ned förundersökningen om våldtäkt mot Julian Assange.

Men **bevisläget är fortfarande lika starkt** och utredningen kan komma att återupptas om Wikileaksgrundaren återvänder till Sverige innan det misstänkta brottet preskriberas i augusti 2020.

På fredagen gick tidsfristen ut i Assangefallet och åklagaren Marianne Ny tvingades ge besked om hur hon skulle gå vidare i våldtäktsutredningen. Hon meddelade att utredningen läggs ned.

Enligt åklagaren är alla möjligheter att driva utredningen framåt nu uttömda.

Strax efter beskedet höll Marianne Ny en presskonferens i polishuset i Stockholm, där hon berättade att den europeiska arresteringsordern om att överlämna Assange till Sverige återkallas. Förundersökningen kan emellertid återupptas om Assange återvänder till Sverige innan det misstänkta brottet preskriberas i augusti 2020.

Hon poängterar att det inte är fastslaget om Assange är skyldig till våldtäkt eller inte. Utredningen läggs ned eftersom man bedömer att det inte går att föra den vidare, bland annat för att man inte har kunnat delge Assange en formell misstanke om brott.

– **Det var en åtgärd som skulle ha genomförts vid förhöret i London, men som Assange vägrade att medverka till. Det kan inte förväntas att vi skulle få bistånd av Ecuador till ett förnyat försök, säger Marianne Ny och menar att han inte hade kommit undan en formell delgivning om han befunnit sig i Sverige.**

Ny bedömer att bevisningen för våldtäkt fortfarande är lika stark, i nivå med den högre misstankegraden "på sannolika skäl", **men det är oklart om ärendet hade gått till åtal om förundersökningen hade kunnat fortsätta.**

Ny anser det inte osannolikt att åklagarmyndighetens hantering av ärendet kommer att granskas.

– Det är säkert någon som vill anmäla mig till JK (Justitiekanslern) och JO (Justitieombudsmannen).

Hon kan inte svara på om Assange kan ha rätt till skadestånd eftersom han varit häktad i sin frånvaro, utan säger att det är upp till Justitiekanslern att bedöma.

Ny menar att fallet är unikt eftersom den misstänkte tagit sin tillflykt till en ambassad i ett annat land. Samtidigt säger hon att fredagens beslut inte har något med de amerikanska myndigheternas agerande eller kostnader att göra.

Enligt Marianne Ny har utredningen tagit så lång tid eftersom Assange hållit sig undan de svenska myndigheterna.

– Jag vill inte lägga skuld eller ansvar på någon för detta. **Jag måste konstatera att huvudanledningen är att Julian Assange har hållit sig undan.**

Efter beskedet meddelade brittiska polisen att Assange kommer att gripas om han lämnar Ecuadors ambassad. De brittiska myndigheterna hävdar att han brutit mot borgensvillkoren när han lämnade sin husarrest och sökte politisk asyl hos Ecuador.

Det är oklart om Assange nu förs lämna ambassaden. Han hävdar att USA fortfarande jagar honom på grund av att Wikileaks publicerat tusentals hemliga militära och diplomatiska dokument.

Men hans advokat Per E Samuelson är hoppfull.

– Jag tror att det här är frågor som kommer att lösas ganska snabbt. Jag tror att han kommer att kunna lämna ambassaden. Risker är dock att USA begär honom utlämnad, säger han till SVT Nyheter.

• *Marit Sundberg*

SVT: 2017-05-19

Advokat: Assange söker asyl i Frankrike

Under fredagen kommenterade Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange beslutet att förundersökningen om våldtäkt i Sverige läggs ner. Enligt uppgifter från en av Assanges advokater kommer han nu söka politiskt asyl i Frankrike istället.

När Julian Assange klev ut på balkongen höjde han en knuten näve innan han kommenterade de senaste händelserna.

– Det här är en stor seger för mig och FN:s system för mänskliga rättigheter, säger Julian Assange.

Förundersökningen om misstänkt våldtäkt läggs ner eftersom överåklagaren Marianne Ny anser att alla möjligheter att driva utredningen framåt är uttömda.

– Sju år utan att åtal, medan mina barn växte upp utan mig, det är inget jag kan förlåta eller glömma, säger Julian Assange.

Enligt uppgifter från en av Assanges advokater, Juan Branco, kommer han nu söka asyl i Frankrike, rapporterar The Telegraph.

I juni 2012 ansökte Julian Assange om politiskt asyl i Ecuador och har sedan dess befunnit sig på ambassaden. Det eftersom att han riskerat att gripas av brittisk polis om han lämnat ambassaden.

– Jag vill tacka Ecuador för att de beviljade mig asyl, trots påtryckningar att inte göra det, säger Julian Assange.

Om asylrätten säger han:

– Vi har alla rätt att söka asyl, få asyl och njuta av asyl. Jag har den rättigheten, vi har alla den rättigheten.

Julian Assange berättar också att det här inte kommer att hindra Wikileaks arbete och att de i dag släpper material från CIA.

– Hoten mot mig, mina anställda och Wikileaks kommer inte tolereras och har inte tolererats. Våra publiceringar kommer fortsätta, säger Julian Assange.

• *Agnes Laurell*

SVT: 2017-05-19

Elisabeth Massi Fritz: Min klient är chockad

Advokat Elisabeth Massi Fritz, som företräder kvinnan som Julian Assange misstänks ha våldtagit, är mycket kritisk till att brottsutredningen läggs ned. Hennes klient väntade sig ett åtal.

– Hon är chockad över att det här beslutet kommer, säger hon.

På fredagen kom beskedet att förundersökningen mot Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange läggs ned, eftersom åklagaren anser att det inte går att driva utredningen vidare.

Advokat Elisabeth Massi Fritz är besviken. Det är fortfarande några år kvar innan preskriptionstiden för det misstänkta brottet går ut i augusti 2020 och hon anser att bevisen borde ha prövats i domstol.

– Det är en skandal att en misstänkt våldtäktman kan undanhålla sig rättsväsendet och slippa en rättslig prövning i domstol, säger hon till SVT Nyheter.

Samtidigt hävdar hon att Assange genomgående har dikterat villkoren i utredningen och vägrat samarbeta med polis och åklagare. Han har inte velat lämna dna-prov och undgått att bli formellt delgiven misstanke.

Elisabeth Massi Fritz anser att åklagaren borde ha försökt att utreda ärendet vidare och delge Assange misstanke med hjälp av de ecuadorianska myndigheterna.

Hennes klient hade väntat sig ett åtal.

– Hon är chockad över att det här beslutet kommer.

Enligt Elisabeth Massi Fritz har varit en plågsamt lång handläggningstid för kvinnan.

– Det hade kanske kunnat kortas ned om åklagarna hade fattat ett beslut att höras Assange på plats i London. Jag kan tycka att har man väntat i sju år på att den här förundersökningen ska gå framåt hade man kanske kunnat vänta lite till för att delge honom och kunna väcka åtal.

Lars-Erik Taubert

Marit Sundberg

SvD: 2017-05-19

Assange: "Det här är bara början på kriget"

"Så här betar sig inte civiliserade länder", säger Julian Assange om Sverige och EU. På balkongen utanför Ecuadors ambassad lovar han att det här bara är "början på kriget". Enligt advokaten planerar Assange att söka politisk asyl i Frankrike.

Journalisterna har sträckt sina mikrofoner mot balkongen i närmare en halvtimme. Den internationella presskåren har väntat utanför Ecuadors ambassad sedan förmiddagen.

På trottoarerna är det fullt av journalister och turister. Polisen är på plats för att se till att trafiken löper på gatan. Men bilarna saktar in och nyfikna ansikten blickar mot ambassaden.

"You're a very naughty boy", ropar en av Londons taxichaufförer mot balkongen.

I väntan på att Julian Assange ska tala dyker allt fler personer upp. Ett par demonstranter håller upp plakat. "Free press, free Assange".



Gardinerna dras åt sidan och folkmassan pressar sig närmare balkongen. Ett sus går genom presskåren och kamerornas slutare smattrar.

“Come on”, ropar en fotograf och Julian Assange stiger ut. Han håller upp en knuten näve och folkmassan utanför ambassaden applåderar.

– I dag är en viktig dag för mig, säger Assange.

– Jag har frihetsberövats i sju år utan att ha åtalats för ett brott. Jag har tillbringat fem år i ambassaden utan solljus. Det här är inget jag förlåter och inget jag glömmer.

Julian Assange riktar sin ilska mot EU.

– Jag hoppas att det här kommer att handla om mer än mig. **Utlämning utan åtal har normaliserats inom EU. I Sverige kan man häktas på obestämd tid utan åtal, det är inte så vi förväntar oss att civiliserade länder ska bete sig.**

Assange blickar ut över folkmassan och säger att det här bara är början.

– Nu börjar det verkliga kriget.

Han hoppas på en dialog med Storbritannien om sin asyl i Ecuador.

Redan på förmiddagen började folkmassan samlas utanför ambassaden.

Rita Misson och hennes son John Misson från Australien är på besök i London. De var på väg till Harrods som ligger ett stenkast från Ecuadors ambassad. Då de fick höra nyheten om att förundersökningen lagts ner bestämde de sig för att vänta utanför ambassaden i stället.

– Det verkar inte som om han tänker komma ut, säger Rita Misson.

Rita och John Misson har tillbringat två timmar utanför ambassaden. Assanges livsöde fascinerar dem.

– Tänk att han har suttit där i fem år. Det är ju som att ha suttit i ett lyxfängelse, säger Rita Misson.

Marketta Cemkerová från Tjeckien har stått utanför ambassaden i en timme. Också hon fascineras av Julian Assange.

– Jag gillar honom. Jag gillar hans mod och hans stöd för yttrandefriheten. Han borde få en rättvis rättegång.

En polisbil och ett par poliser är också på plats. Poliserna säger att de inte kan uttala sig om Assange, de är bara där för att hålla koll på trafiksäkerheten.

Scotland Yard har däremot bekräftat i ett uttalande att de tänker gripa Wikileaks-grundaren om han lämnar ambassaden. Enligt Londonpolisen kan Julian Assange ännu gripas därför att han bröt mot villkoren för sin borgen då han lämnade sin husarrest och ansökte om asyl i Ecuadors ambassad.

Julian Assange har tillbringat fem år i ambassaden. Polisen bevakade byggnaden dygnet runt mellan 2012 och 2015, men då det blev klart att det kostat myndigheterna drygt 136 miljoner kronor trappades bevakningen ner.

De brittiska myndigheterna har ännu inte bekräftat om de tagit emot en utlämningsbegäran av USA. Premiärminister Theresa May har hållit ärendet på avstånd. May, som är mitt uppe i valkampanjen inför parlamentsvalet i juni, har blivit känd för att svara undvikande på journalisternas frågor. Då det gäller Assange har hon sagt att det är ett ärende för polisen och att Storbritannien tar ställning till begäran om utlämning "fall för fall".



Ecuadors utrikesminister Guillaume Long har välkomnat beskedet från överåklagare Marianne Ny. Enligt honom kommer man nu att göra allt för att se till att Julian Assange ska få fri lejd till Ecuador.

– Ecuador kommer att intensifiera den diplomatiska diskussionen med Storbritannien för att se till att Julian Assange kan njuta av sin asyl i Ecuador, säger Long.

För många av de nyfikna besökarna utanför ambassaden är Julian Assange en fallen hjälte.

– Först trodde man att han var en vit riddare, men nu har man fått en annan bild av honom, **särskilt efter den där dokumentären om Wikileaks**, säger John Misson.

– Australien kommer knappast att ordna en välkomstkommitté om han kommer hem, säger Rita Misson.

Men utanför ambassaden finns också en annan syn. "Fake news", säger en äldre man som inte vill uppge sitt namn. Han har ingen lust att prata med journalister och har inget gott att säga om Sverige.

– Ni vet vad ni har gjort. Ni har hjälpt till att fånga en oskyldig man.

Julian Assange har planer på att söka politisk asyl i Frankrike, uppger hans advokat Juan Branco enligt The Telegraph.

• *Charlotta Buxton*

<https://www.svd.se/assange-om-sverige-inte-forvantat-av-en-civiliserad-stat/om/fallet-julian-assange>

SvD: 2017-05-19

Assange: Jag förlåter inte Sverige

Sex månader efter förhören med våldtäktsmisstänkte Julian Assange ger åklagarna i dag besked om man vill ha honom fortsatt häktad och om brottsutredningen fortsätter....

Per E Samuelson säger till TT att Assange har bett honom att undersöka möjligheterna att inleda en stämning mot svenska staten.

Det handlar inte om pengar utan om upprättelse, enligt Samuelson.

Aftonbladet: 2017-05-19

Åklagaren lägger ner utredningen mot Assange

Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange häktades 2010 i sin frånvaro av Stockholms tingsrätt, misstänkt för våldtäkt.

På fredagen beslöt åklagare att lägga ned förundersökningen i fallet Assange. Trots det verkar Wikileaksgrundaren inte helt nöjd.

– Jag kommer varken glömma eller förlåta, säger Julian Assange till AFP.

Efter Assanges besök i Sverige 2010 anmälde två svenska kvinnor [*Nej, det var en åklagare som anmälde. --A.B.*] honom för våldtäkt, olaga hot, ofredande och sexuellt ofredande.

Sen dess har Assange varit inblandad i komplicerade rättsprocesser i både Sverige och Storbritannien.

Svenska åklagare har vid upprepade tillfällen försökt få honom utlämnad till Sverige, utan resultat.

På fredagen beslutade överåklagare Marianne Ny att lägga ned förundersökningen om misstänkt våldtäkt.

Inte för att Assange skulle ha befunnits vara oskyldig – utan för att utredningen inte går att föra framåt när han håller sig undan.

– Jag har beslutat att häva häktningsordern mot Julian Assange. Jag har dragit tillbaka den internationella utlämningsordern att han ska utlämnas till Sverige. Och jag har valt att lägga ned förundersökningen, säger överåklagare Marianne Ny under en presskonferens.

Hon säger att anledningen till dagens beslut bland annat är att hennes bedömning är att överlämningen inte kan genomföras under en överskådlig tid.

– Jag vill inte lägga skuld någonstans, men huvudanledningen är att Julian Assange har hållit sig undan, säger Marianne Ny.

Sverige har vid upprepade tillfällen ansökt om att få förhöra Wikileaksgrundaren på Ecuadors ambassad i London där Assange har haft politisk asyl. [*Åklagaren har snarare gjort allt möjligt för att undvika förhöra honom. Och Assange har upprepade gånger förklarat varför han inte vågar lämna ambassaden. Varför nämns detta inte i denna artikel? --A.B.*]

I november 2016 kunde Wikileaksgrundaren till slut förhöras. Dock var det åklagare från Ecuador som ställde frågorna. De svenska åklagarna fick endast närvara vid förhöret som var belagt med sekretess. [*Allt enligt avtalet mellan Sverige och Ecuador. – A.B.*]

– Svenska åklagare och poliser var närvarande men vi hade ingen möjlighet att ha en aktiv roll i förhöret. Julian Assange måste få delgivning om brottet i Sverige för att kunna utlämnas, men det har inte funnits möjlighet till det, säger Marianne Ny.

Hon säger också att Julian Assange skulle komma till Sverige innan tiden för preskribering löper ut, kan förundersökningen återupptas.

Julian Assanges advokat Juan Branco säger till The Telegraph att Wikileaksgrundaren efter fredagens beslut planerar att söka asyl i Frankrike. **Och trots dagens för honom positiva besked, verkar Julian Assange inte helt nöjd.** [*Som av någon anledning verkar förvåna skribenten --A.B.*]

– Jag har suttit fängslad i sju år medan mina barn har vuxit upp och mitt namn har förtalats. Jag kommer varken glömma eller förlåta, skriver Assange på Twitter.

Claes Borgström var målsägandebiträde för en av kvinnorna som har anmält Julian Assange för brott i Sverige. Dock har dessa brott preskriberats. Borgström tycker att fredagens beslut är beklagligt.

– Julian Assange har begått ett övergrepp mot de här kvinnorna och han borde ha svarat inför svensk domstol. Han har ju hela tiden varit på sannolika skäl misstänkt för brotten. Istället har han levt ett slutet liv och det är ett beslut som han själv har tagit.

Eftersom att det inte blir någon rättegång, har han ingen möjlighet att bli rentvådd, säger Claes Borgström. [*Men det är ändå omöjligt då han "har begått ett övergrepp mot de här kvinnorna". --A.B.*]

Julian Assange kommer att gripas om han lämnar Ecuadors ambassad i London, uppger den brittiska polisen, eftersom han misstänks brutit mot brittiska borgensregler, enligt nyhetsbyrån Reuters.

Direkt efter att beslutet kommit från Stockholm skyndade Londonbaserade journalister från hela världen till ambassaden ett stenkast från lyxvaruhuset Harrod's. Vid 12-tiden svensk tid stod ett 20-tal fotografer utanför tegelbyggnaden och försökte hitta vinklar att komma innanför de grå gardinerna på. Turister på shoppingrunda, förbipasserande Londonbor och alla journalister frågar varandra samma sak; när kommer han ut?

Ett 40-tal tv-kameror står uppradade på trottoarerna kring ambassaden.

– Det är många fler än vad som brukar vara på Downing Street, säger en journalist.

En helikopter svävar då och då i luften ovanför det stora uppbådet. Poliserna är inte kallade för att gripa Assange, men skulle han komma ut genom dörren så förväntas han gripas.

Den brittiske juridikexperten Joshua Rozenberg är på plats utanför ambassaden. Kommer Assange ut nu kan han vänta sig ytterligare ett år i ett litet rum, menar Rozenberg.

– Döms han i de högre domstolarna kan han räkna med uppemot 12 månaders fängelse och döms han i någon annan domstol blir det max sex månader, säger den brittiske experten.

– Men jag tror att det kommer bli någon av de högre domstolarna eftersom han varit här i fem år och jag tror inte att han kommer att få gå mot borgen denna gång.

Rozenberg säger att rättsprocessen för borgensbrott tar mellan några veckor och en månad.

• *Alexandra Carlsson Tenitskaja*

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/1lpxG/aklagaren-lagger-ner-utredningen-mot-assange>

AB: 2017-05-19

Logiskt att utredningen om Assange läggs ner

Krönika: Oisin Cantwell

Det var klokt av åklagare att lägga ner utredningen mot Julian Assange.

Denna bisarra historia har pågått så länge att domstol förr eller senare ändå hade satt ner foten.

Jag satt på en presskonferens som de två bröderna som för 18 år sedan pekades ut som skyldiga till Kevins död anordnade då nyhetsflashen om Assange pep till i mobilen.

Två mindre positiva kapitel i berättelsen om det svenska rättsväsendet i modern tid.

En timme och en taxiresa senare trängdes jag i entrén till polishuset på kungsholmen med andra representanter för svenska riksmidier och journalister från Danmark, Storbritannien och Frankrike.

Åklagare **Marianne Ny inledde med en evighetsredogörelse för alla turer i ärendet** sedan Assange häktades i sin frånvaro av Stockholms tingsrätt i november 2010, en måttlig spännande tillbakablick som inte blev mer intressant av att hon talade i korta meningar för att ge tolk möjlighet att översätta till engelska.

Beslutet förklarade Ny med att hon inte tror att det går att komma längre med utredningen. Det förefaller vara en korrekt slutsats.

För att kunna fortsätta hade det krävts att Wikileaksgrundaren formellt delgavs misstanke om våldtäkt (de övriga brotten han har varit misstänkt för är preskriberade). Det ville åklagare Ingrid Isgren göra då hon förhörde Assange på Ecuadors ambassad i november förra året, men han vägrade gå med på det.

I Sverige går det dessbättre inte att konstra på det viset, men en förutsättning som Ecuador ställde för att svensk åklagare skulle få förhöra den misstänkte var att inga åtgärder fick vidtas mot dennes vilja.

Då utredningen läggs ner hävs häktningen och den europeiska arresteringsordern återkallas.

Assanges advokater utnyttjade givetvis besluten till att servera pressen **litanior** om "fullständig seger" och "frikännande".

De pratar strunt. Dagens beslut bygger inte på en bedömning i skuldfrågan. Assange har inte blivit friad. Sanningen är att han varken är dömd eller friad.

Det finns likheter med fallen Kevin och Assange. Som till exempel att åklagarnas insatser i lämnar en del övrigt att önska.

Att det inte sågs till att de misstänkta bröderna fick ett juridiskt ombud som tillvaratog deras intressen är skandalöst. Och att Assange-soppan har pågått så här länge imponerar inte.

Om inte våldtäktsutredningen lagts ner så hade domstol förr eller senare protesterat. Tingsrätt och hovrätt har i och för sig vid ett antal tillfällen gått med på fortsatt häktning, men med stigande irritation påpekat att detta inte kan pågå hur länge som helst.

Det var samma sak med förhören. Åklagaren vägrade länge att gå med på Assanges krav på att bli förhörd på ambassaden med den i och för sig rimliga motiveringen att misstänkta brottslingar inte ska diktera spelreglerna.

Att Ny ändrade sig beror på att hovrätt och högsta domstolen harklade sig och påpekade någonting så grundläggande som att rättegångsbalken stipulerar att åklagare har en skyldighet att driva förundersökning med skyndsamhet.

Nu är inte den här evighetsföljetongen enbart den svenska förundersökningsledarens fel. Det är till exempel svårt att förstå varför det behövde ta det brittiska domstolsväsendet ett år att komma fram till den slutsatsen att den misstänkte skulle utlämnas i enlighet med den europeiska arresteringsordern. självklara [*Parliamentet har beslutat att det inte är självklart. --A.B.*] Och då har jag inte ens nämnt Ecuadors sölighet. [*Kanske för att den inte fanns. --A.B.*]

Och medan de två bröderna inte är ansvariga för att de blev behandlade som de blev då Kevins död utreddes så har Assange i högsta grad själv bidragit till sin situation.

Ingen har tvingat in honom på ambassaden. Den här historien hade varit avklarad för länge sedan om **han** inte hade krånglat.

Nu är det som det är. Assange tycks bli kvar på ambassaden, då brittisk polis troligen griper honom för brott mot borgensreglerna om han promenerar ut på gatan.

Och två kvinnor som de senaste sex åren har utsatts för ansenliga mängder hot och hat kommer inte att få sin sak prövad.

Det finns inga vinnare i den här sorgliga historien.

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/kolumnister/a/E1A83/logiskt-att-utredningen-om-assange-laggs-ner>

DN: 2017-05-19

Advokaten: "Assange kommer att kunna lämna ambassaden"

Julian Assanges svenska advokat Per E Samuelson är nöjd med åklagarnas beslut om att lägga ner förundersökningen mot Assange.

– Ur svensk synpunkt är han nu en fri man. Sverige lägger inte längre inte något hinder i vägen, säger Per E Samuelson efter beskedet.

– Vi har vunnit målet. Förundersökningen är nedlagd, säger han till Ekot.

På frågan om hur åklagaren Marianne Ny ser på att Per E Samuelson ser den nedlagda utredningen som en seger svarar hon:

– Det är möjligt att han inte har läst hela beslutet. Sedan är det naturligtvis hans bedömning på hur han uppfattar beslutet, säger Marianne Ny.

På frågan hur Julian Assange har sett på den svenska häktningen säger Per E Samuelson att Assange ser det som en stor kränkning att han över huvud taget har behandlats på det här sättet.

Per E Samuelson har arbetat för att få häktningen hävd -- även om utredningen mot Wikileaksgrundaren Assange fortsätter -- med anledning av att han är brottsmisstänkt i USA. **Därmed har Sverige, enligt Samuelson, "en skyldighet att se till att han kan använda sin politiska asyl på ett anständigt sätt och inte bara inne på ambassaden".**

När nyheten om att utredningen läggs ned la Julian Assange ut en bild på sig själv på Twitter där han ler.

Det är dock inte fritt fram för Assange att lämna den ecuadorianska ambassaden där han bor och gå ut Londons gator. Brittisk polis kommer att gripa honom om han lämnar ambassaden, uppger Reuters. Det beskedet är inte speciellt oväntat, enligt Per E Samuelson.

– De har de hotat och skramlat med det här ganska länge. Vad det betyder återstår att se. Det kommer att lösa sig ganska snabbt, Julian Assange kommer på sikt att kunna lämna ambassaden, säger han.

• *Henning Eklund*

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/advokaten-assange-kommer-att-kunna-lamna-ambassaden/>

DN: 2017-05-19

Svenska åklagarna: FBI kontaktade oss om Assange

En person som sade sig företräda amerikanska FBI kontaktade i mars de svenska åklagarna i Assange-fallet. Enligt överåklagare Marianne Ny var kontakten oviktig för utredningen, och mejlen har raderats.

På fredagen berättade överåklagare Marianne Ny att utredningen mot Julian Assange läggs ned. Wikileaksgrundaren har sedan 2010 varit misstänkt för våldtäkt i Sverige, och befinner sig sedan fem år på Ecuadors ambassad i London. Även amerikanska myndigheter har varit på jakt efter Julian Assange och Donald Trumps justitieminister Jeff Sessions har sagt att gripandet av Assange är en prioritet.

På en pressträff förnekade Marianne Ny att hon utsatts för några internationella påtryckningar under den långa utredningen. Men hon säger att någon som sade sig företräda den amerikanska federala polisen, FBI, kontaktade hennes kollega chefsåklagare Ingrid Isgren i slutet av mars.

– Någon som uppgav sig komma från FBI kontaktade Ingrid Isgren per mejl och jag fick en kännedomskopia. Jag vet inte exakt vad det stod i mejlet, det var ganska kort, men vederbörande ville ha upplysningar i Assangeärendet. Eftersom det var en utomstående kom vi överens om att ge vederbörande samma besked som alla andra

får. Nämligen att ta del av den information som fanns på hemsidan, säger överåklagare Marianne Ny.

Vad var det för information som personen var intresserad av?

– **Vi uppfattade att det var för att få veta hur utredningen fortskred. Precis som journalister brukar fråga.** Så det var ganska naturligt att hänvisa till hemsidan där information som vi kunde lämna fanns.

Åklagarna har inte försäkrat sig om att personen verkligen arbetade för FBI, men ifrågasätter det inte heller.

– Det var nog en seriös kontakt. Vi har ingen anledning att tro något annat än att det var någon som företrädde FBI. Men vi kontrollerade det inte och hade inga personliga kontakter med vederbörande.

Marianne Ny och hennes kollega har raderat mejlen till och från personen. Enligt överåklagaren är det i linje med åklagarmyndighetens bestämmelser eftersom mejlen inte var av betydelse för utredningen. Hon betraktar inte kontakten som att amerikanska myndigheter lade sig i utredningen.

– Nej, jag uppfattar det inte som att man ville komma i kontakt med oss för att utöva påtryckningar. Utan det var någon som ville veta vad som händer, säger Marianne Ny.

Enligt henne är det den enda kontakten som åklagarna haft med amerikanska myndigheter i Assangeärendet.

Trots att Julian Assange nu alltså inte längre jagas av svenska myndigheter är det oklart om han vågar lämna ambassaden.

Hans advokat Melinda Taylor säger till TT att brittiska och amerikanska myndigheter "konsekvent vägrat bekräfta eller dementera" om det finns en begäran om utlämning till USA.

På en fråga från Reuters om Storbritannien kommer att utlämna Assange till USA svarar premiärminister Theresa May:

– Vi tittar på begäran om utlämningar när vi får dem och bedömer varje enskilt fall. ämnen

• *Mikael Delin*

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/svenska-aklagarna-fbi-kontaktade-oss-om-assange>

WikiLeaks' Julian Assange Declares Victory After Sweden Drops Rape Probe

F. Brinley Bruton, Mo Abbas and Corky Siemaszko
NBC News
May 19, 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange declared victory Friday after Swedish prosecutors dropped their seven-year rape investigation without charging him with a crime.

But because he is still wanted by British police for failing to appear in court, Assange's muted celebration took place on the balcony of the Ecuadorian Embassy, which has been his refuge for the past five years.

"While today was an important victory, an important vindication, the road is far from over," he said after waving to a small crowd of supporters. "The UK said it would arrest me regardless," he added, saying it was under intense pressure from the CIA to do so.

"My legal staff has contacted the United Kingdom authorities and we hope to engage in a dialogue about what is the best way forward," he said. "The legal conflict with the United States and the United Kingdom at a formal level continues."

Assange also vowed to continue publishing secret U.S. documents on WikiLeaks.

"Today we published material from the CIA," he said.

Assange also noted the release of Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who landed in prison after she leaked nearly 750,000 military files and cables to WikiLeaks. At the time she was a man named Bradley Manning.

"We managed to have him released 28 years early from his sentence," Assange said, still using the male pronoun.

It was President Barack Obama who commuted Manning's 35-year sentence after seven years behind bars.

Assange spoke after Marianne Ny, the chief prosecutor in Sweden, announced that she "has decided to discontinue the investigation regarding suspected rape" by Assange.

Ny stressed that she was not declaring Assange innocent, only that he no longer faces any charges in Sweden.

Assange, a 45-year-old Australian, became the target of Swedish authorities in 2010 after two women came forward accusing him of rape and sexual assault.

Assange denied the accusations and took refuge in the embassy in London two years later to escape extradition to Sweden. He has been there ever since, fearing that once he lands in Stockholm he'll be shipped to the U.S. to face justice for publishing secret documents on WikiLeaks.

Melinda Taylor, a member of Assange's legal team, welcomed the "wonderful news."

"Now all eyes are on the U.S. — that's the reason for his asylum," she told NBC News. "As long as the national security prosecution continues there continues to be a risk to him."

London's Metropolitan Police said Assange remains a wanted man.

"Westminster Magistrates' Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Julian Assange following him failing to surrender to the court on June 29, 2012," the force said in a statement. "The Metropolitan Police Service is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the embassy."

Within minutes of Ny's announcement, Assange tweeted a picture of himself.

Swedish officials withdrew a Europe-wide arrest warrant for Assange after coming to the conclusion that it would be impossible to bring him to Sweden, Ny said.

"He has tried to dodge all attempts to avoid Swedish and British legal authorities," she said at a press conference in Stockholm. "My assessment is the transfer cannot be carried out in a foreseeable future."

Ny warned that the investigation of the alleged sexual offenses could be reopened if Assange sets foot in Sweden before the statute of limitations expires in August 2020.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/julian-assange-sweden-drops-rape-investigation-wikileaks-founder-n761986>

The moral of the Assange story? Wait long enough, and bad stuff goes away

Captain WikiLeaks may be about to get out of pretend-jail. But he probably won't be driving off into the sunset with his celebrity friends just yet,

*Marina Hyde
The Guardian
19 May 2017*

"It's 2017 and the patriarchy's grip is as strong as ever." If, like many self-respecting bros, you are turned off by mentions of the word "patriarchy" — I know exactly what you mean. The only reason to take that one seriously was that it was uttered by a man hiding in an embassy to avoid a rape investigation. So it's the good kind!

The context of Julian Assange's remark was far-right candidate Marine Le Pen losing the French election. "First Hillary, now Marine," lamented a guy you should in no way judge to be an ironical maniac. "It's 2017 and the patriarchy's grip is as strong as ever."

Indeed, the fact that Swedish prosecutors have now dropped their rape investigation into Assange shows just how right the WikiLeaks founder continues to be about this matter, and how he remains a beacon of hope for other radical feminists seeking to wait out the efforts of justice in a diplomatic space with only the likes of Nigel Farage, Kathy Lette, John Pilger and Yoko Ono for occasional company. (In many ways, I always felt Assange's Ecuadorian embassy guest list was in itself an alternative form of justice. But is it scalable? Probably not.)

According to the official statement, the case has been taken as far as it can be without Assange appearing in court in Sweden, which — let's go out on a limb — feels slightly less likely than his appearing in the next series of *The Handmaid's Tale*. I think we all learned a really important lesson here, which is that if you wait a really long time and absolutely refuse to face up to them, bad things go away.

In fact, plenty of Assange supporters will think it would have been far better for the women who alleged they had been sexually assaulted by Julian to have taken that

classic approach, even if they wouldn't have been able to see it all the way through to the "bad things go away" phase.

But let's steer away from the sadface stories on this day of celebration. Before his typically disingenuous turn on the embassy balcony on Friday afternoon, Assange himself opted to tweet a T-shirted, easy-like-Sunday-morning photograph of himself grinning the relaxed smile that says: "Yes, I know this would look better with a Make America Great Again baseball hat. But shopping's been a little difficult lately!"

The image was promptly retweeted by his special lady caller, Pamela Anderson— and we shall have to see where this goes. The erstwhile Baywatch star recently published a prose poem titled *My Julian*, while both have given several interviews coyly declining— albeit at some length— to discuss the special nature of what they have together.

My instinct is that Assange could be getting ahead of himself a bit here. To examine the affected insouciance of the photo of himself he posted is to suspect Julian is daydreaming of Pamela coming to pick him up from the embassy in a classic Ford convertible with a pair of jeans to go with the T-shirt. Like the Levi's ad where Brad Pitt gets released from desert jail, picked up by a hot girl who brings him a pair of jeans, and they dry-hump to T. Rex for the benefit of his jailer and the consumer public, and all the jealous guys be hating on him.

And yet, be they? The Metropolitan police lost no time in confirming that Assange is still wanted for skipping bail in 2012, and will be arrested if he leaves the embassy.

Frankly, that might be the get-out — or rather, the stay-in — Pamela needs. This feels worse than all that business with her former husband, Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee. Psychologists often suggest that women who are drawn to **disturbingly unsuitable men** are the type who form relationships with those who are incarcerated, as it allows them to engage without placing themselves in danger.

Certainly, we know various high-profile prisoners do well with the ladies— Charles Bronson, for instance, can never move for visitors, penpals and/or fiancées. He used to have a website— you're not the only one with a website, Julian— where he posted the sexy photos they sent him. Though it seems to be down currently, possibly on account of the fact he recently got married again (inside) to a young lady who describes him as "the inspiration I have been waiting for my whole life".

Anyway. I can't help feeling Julian's image is not flattered by his news coming in the very week of the release of Chelsea Manning, who released the original vast trove of state secrets to WikiLeaks, and who he carelessly misgendered during the balcony scene. Chelsea's incarceration has been a little bit different to Julian's. For a start, she was actually incarcerated, as opposed to being on the run in a Knightsbridge embassy where celebrity visitors were given to delivering frequent care hampers from the nearest grocer (Harrods). Chelsea was once barred from the prison library, gym, and outdoor areas for 21 days for being caught with expired toothpaste and some magazines. And I think Julian once had some paté that went off a bit or something.

And while Chelsea continues to choose dignity, some legal experts speculate that Julian may still have to stay holed up until 2020 to allow all statutes of limitations to expire. But Captain WikiLeaks will get out of pretend-jail eventually. And when he does, we must hope that he doesn't go down that classic movie path of being lured into one last

job by a Mr Big— or a President Big, or whoever— that ends up doing for him, just when he thought he'd escaped.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/19/julian-assange-wikileaks-ecuadorian-embassy>

Assange "can't forgive or forget" after case dropped

Julian Assange emerges on embassy balcony to say he will not 'forgive or forget' as Swedish rape investigation is dropped

*James Rothwell; Victoria Ward; Helen Nianias
The Telegraph
19 MAY 2017*

- Sweden drops rape investigation against Julian Assange
- Assange spoke from the balcony of the Ecuadorian embassy in London
- Case was dropped due to a lack of progress -- prosecutors
- Met Police: Assange still wanted in UK for jumping bail

Julian Assange has said he will remain inside the Ecuadorian embassy in London in order to avoid extradition to the United States, despite being told he no longer faces a sex investigation by the Swedish authorities.

The WikiLeaks founder hailed the decision to discontinue the seven-year case against him as an "important victory", but said the "proper war was just commencing", after the Metropolitan Police said he would still be arrested if he stepped outside.

Assange, who has been holed up in the embassy since June 2012 is wanted by the British authorities after breaching bail conditions five years ago.

Addressing a crowd from the embassy's balcony in central London, Assange accused the UK authorities of ignoring international laws on asylum, a position he described as "untenable".

He said: "We have today won an important victory, but the road is far from over. **The proper war is just commencing.**"

"The claim that the UK has the right to arrest me for seeking asylum in a case where there have been no charges is simply untenable.

"My legal staff have contacted the UK authorities and we hope to engage in a dialogue about what is the best way forward."

But a spokesman for the Metropolitan Police explained there was still an outstanding warrant for his arrest over the breach of bail conditions and therefore he would be detained if he ventured out of the diplomatic building.

The maximum sentence for breaching bail is 12 months and legal sources said the courts might seek to make an example of him.

But Assange's greatest fear remains the possibility that he could still be extradited to the United States for his role in the publication of leaked classified material on the WikiLeaks website.

Last month, the American **Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, said that Assange's arrest remained a priority for his department and if convicted he could be jailed for up to 45 years.**

Prosecutors have reportedly been asked to outline possible charges against him and **officials in Washington have insisted the case remains ongoing.**

Last night the **UK Home Office refused to confirm or deny whether the United States had already submitted an arrest warrant for Assange.**

Asked if Britain would now support a request to extradite him to the United States, Prime Minister Theresa May said: "We look at extradition requests on a case-by-case basis. In relation to Julian Assange, any decision that is taken about UK action in relation to him were he to leave the Ecuadorian Embassy would be an operational matter for the police."

Outlining the current position a Scotland Yard spokesman said: "**Westminster Magistrates' Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Julian Assange following him failing to surrender to the court on June 29, 2012.**

"The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the Embassy.

"Whilst Mr Assange was wanted on a **European Arrest Warrant (EAW)** for an extremely serious offence, the MPS response reflected the serious nature of that crime.

"Now that the situation has changed and the Swedish authorities have discontinued their investigation into that matter, **Mr Assange remains wanted for a much less serious offence.** The MPS will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offence.

"The priority for the MPS must continue to be arresting those who are currently wanted in the capital in connection with serious violent or sexual offences for the protection of Londoners."

The Metropolitan Police stopped its round the clock presence outside the Embassy in October 2015 amid controversy over the escalating cost of the exercise -- believed to be more than £12 million.

A spokesman for the Ecuadorean government said it would now step up efforts to allow Assange to leave the embassy and take up an offer of asylum in its country.

He added: "To some extent the UK has been exploited by the process it entered with the EU when they agreed to extradition-- a forced position the UK has been put into and the first part of that is over."

Mr Assange said he would be "happy" to talk with U.S. Department of Justice despite their threats.

Mr Assange thanked the Ecuadorian embassy, as well as **his legal team for working hard and for "no money** and all the other people who have stood by me in this process."

He hailed today and "important victory" and "vindication" and said "the proper war is just commencing. The UK has says it will arrest me regardless".

* * *

4:40pm

Assange appears on balcony of Ecuadorian Embassy to address media and supporters
Mr Assange said: "Seven years of detention without charge-- imprisoned under house arrest and almost five years in this embassy without sunlight.

"Seven years without charge while my children grew up without me."

2:19pm

Mr Assange tweeted: Detained for 7 years without charge by while my children grew up and my name was slandered. I do not forgive or forget.....

12:51pm

Outside the embassy, the general chatter was drowned out by a flurry of camera clicks as the resident cat made a reappearance, this time without its tie, writes Victoria Ward. The cat has its own Twitter account @Embassycat, which declares that it lives with Assange and is interested in "counter purrveillance".

12:45pm

"It is a scandal that a suspected rapist can escape justice and thereby avoid the courts... my client is shocked and no decision to (end the case) can make her change that Assange exposed her to rape," said Elisabeth Fritz, who represents the alleged rape victim.

12:17pm

Victoria Ward is at the Ecuadorian embassy. She reports:
Scores of journalists from across the globe-- and a handful of curious tourists-- have gathered outside the Ecuadorian embassy in Hans Crescent, Knightsbridge, just a stone's throw from Harrod's.

Throngs of cameras are pointed at the first floor balcony at which Assange first appeared to make a public statement in August 2012, shortly after he was granted asylum.

In February 2015 he reappeared, this time to denounce the British government which had criticised the UN for claiming he was being held in "arbitrary detention".

It is not yet known whether Assange will step out into the sunshine once again to publicly savour his victory....

12:13pm

"If the Swedish authorities withdraw the domestic warrant against Mr Assange then this would also result in the European arrest warrant being withdrawn and the

extradition proceedings against Mr Assange would be discharged," says Edward Grange, an extraditions expert at Corker Binning.

"However, there still exists an extant arrest warrant issued for Mr Assange by Westminster Magistrates' Court for his failure to surrender to the court. Unless this is withdrawn, which is by no means a certainty just because the extradition proceedings are discharged, should Mr Assange step foot outside the Ecuadorian embassy he would be liable for arrest and, if arrested, would be likely to receive a custodial sentence for his deliberate failure to surrender.

"There is also the risk of the USA seeking Mr Assange's provisional arrest.

"In either circumstance, the news today that the Swedish prosecutor has discontinued her investigation, will not result in Mr Assange walking free from the Ecuadorian embassy."

11:21am

... In an interview in February 2016, psychologist Dr Jane McCartney said that the time Mr Assange has spent in the embassy has likely left him feeling isolated and depressed.

11:12am

A defence lawyer acting for Mr Assange has just issued a statement calling the decision to drop the rape investigation "a total victory for us."

10:55am

There has been no sign of Mr Assange so far today, but his cat has decided to make a brief appearance wearing a tie with hearts printed on it.

10:42am

According to a statement from the Met Police, Mr Assange still faces arrest for a lesser charge of jumping bail if he leaves the Ecuadorian embassy. Here is that statement in full:

Westminster Magistrates' Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Julian Assange following him failing to surrender to the court on the 29 June 2012. The Metropolitan Police Service is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the Embassy.

Whilst Mr Assange was wanted on a European Arrest Warrant (EAW) for an extremely serious offence, the MPS response reflected the serious nature of that crime. Now that the situation has changed and the Swedish authorities have discontinued their investigation into that matter, Mr Assange remains wanted for a much less serious offence. The MPS will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offence.

The MPS will not comment further on the operational plan.

The priority for the MPS must continue to be arresting those who are currently wanted in the Capital in connection with serious violent or sexual offences for the protection of Londoners....

10:27am

Friday's announcement means Mr Assange is no longer under any investigation in Sweden.

British police said before the announcement that Mr Assange is still wanted in Britain for jumping bail.

It is not clear if that may change now that the investigation has been dropped.

10:22am

Today's development follows a letter sent to the Swedish government by the government of Ecuador saying there had been a "serious failure" by the prosecutor, including a "lack of initiative" to complete inquiries.

The letter raised developments in the United States since the election of Donald Trump as President, including a speech by CIA director Mike Pompeo describing WikiLeaks as a "hostile intelligence service".

Recent public declarations such as this constitute an "obvious risk" for Mr Assange, said the letter.

10:20am

According to the New York Times, the US Justice Department was also reconsidering its own charges against Mr Assange, linked to his decision to leak highly classified information which it said posed a major threat to national security.

An unnamed official told the New York Times that prosecutors were skeptical as to whether they could pursue the most serious charge of espionage....

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/19/sweden-drops-julian-assange-rape-investigation/>

Julian Assange defiant after Swedes drop investigation: 'The war has just begun'

WikiLeaks founder describes end of rape allegations inquiry as 'important victory', but would still face arrest in London if he leaves embassy

*Esther Addley, Haroon Siddique and Alan Travis
The Guardian
20 May 2017*

Julian Assange has declared that "the proper war is just commencing" after Swedish prosecutors unexpectedly dropped their investigation into an allegation of rape against him, ending a torturous seven-year extradition battle that nevertheless leaves significant question marks over his future.

The 45-year-old WikiLeaks founder appeared on the balcony of the Ecuadorian embassy in London where he had sought asylum in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden, and said Friday's decision was "an important victory".

After raising a clenched fist in salute, however, he vowed that "threats" made by US officials that he could be arrested on espionage charges "will not be tolerated" and said his organisation was escalating its leaks of documents about the CIA.

Assange still faces arrest over breaching his bail conditions if he leaves the embassy, the Metropolitan police confirmed, and he fears the US will seek his extradition over WikiLeaks' publishing activities.

Sweden's director of public prosecutions, Marianne Ny, made the surprise announcement on Friday morning that the country's authorities would no longer pursue the investigation into a rape claim by a woman in Stockholm in 2010.

Ny's decision had not been taken because of any judgment regarding guilt or innocence, she said, but because prosecutors had concluded that "all prospects of pursuing the investigation under present circumstances are exhausted".

If Assange were to "make himself available" to the Swedish courts in future, however, "I will be able to decide to resume the investigation immediately," she added.

In his appearance on Friday afternoon, the Australian described the period since his initial arrest as a "terrible injustice" and said: "Seven years without charge while my children grew up without me: that is not something I can forgive. That is not something I can forget."

But Elisabeth Massi Fritz, the lawyer representing the woman who accused Assange of rape, said it was "a scandal that a suspected rapist can evade the law and therefore escape trial by court ... My client is in shock and the case being dropped won't change the fact that Assange has exposed her to a rape. I'm very critical of the decision to drop the case after running a preliminary investigation for so many years."

Assange appealed to Ecuador for asylum in July 2012 after losing successive UK court battles to avoid extradition to Sweden. An investigation into a separate claim of sexual assault, made by a second Swedish woman, was dropped by Swedish authorities in 2015 after the statute of limitations expired. Assange has always denied the allegations.

Standing before a small crowd of supporters and many more reporters and camera crews, Assange said: "While today was an important victory and an important vindication, the road is far from over. The proper war is just commencing.

"The UK has said it will arrest me regardless. Now the US CIA director [Mike] Pompeo and the US attorney general [Jeff Sessions] have said that I and other WikiLeaks staff have no rights and that my arrest and the arrest of other staff is a priority. That is not acceptable ... Our publications are proceeding at speed and that speed in relation to [recent high profile leaks about the CIA] is accelerating."

But he also attempted a more conciliatory tone, saying his legal staff "have contacted the UK authorities and we hope to engage in a dialogue about what is the best way forward".

He said the UK had been "exploited" to an extent by the EU and obliged to adopt the European arrest warrant system. Similarly, he said, "with the United States, while there have been extremely threatening remarks made, I am always happy to engage in a dialogue with the Department of Justice about what has occurred".

Sessions said last month that arresting Assange was a priority, adding: "We've already begun to step up our efforts and whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail." Separately, Pompeo described WikiLeaks as a "non-state hostile intelligence service".

No charges or extradition requests against Assange have been made public, but **British authorities have said they would not confirm or deny whether they had received such a request before the person in question had been arrested.**

Melinda Taylor, a member of Assange's core legal team, told the Guardian: "The reason why he entered the embassy in the first place was [the risk of] a national security prosecution [in the US], so since that still exists, the reasons for him entering remain in existence."

Asked if that meant that Assange would not leave the embassy without an assurance from the US that he would not be prosecuted, she said: "I can't say he will stay in there indefinitely, but I would hope that [events] won't force him to do so, that things will come to a head now that there's no longer a Swedish arrest warrant [and] the US will be forced to make its intentions clear."

Guillaume Long, Ecuador's foreign minister, welcomed the Swedish decision and said his country would now try to negotiate safe passage for Assange. "Given that the European arrest warrant no longer holds, Ecuador will now be intensifying its diplomatic efforts with the UK so that Julian Assange can gain safe passage, in order to enjoy his asylum in Ecuador."

He described the conduct of Swedish prosecutors as "wholly unacceptable ... which has led to unnecessary delays in progressing this case".

A Home Office spokesperson said the British government had no involvement in the decision to drop the investigation. The European arrest warrant against Assange was formally withdrawn at a London magistrates court on Friday morning.

Asked about Assange's situation, the prime minister, Theresa May, said any decision on whether to arrest him if he were to leave the embassy would be a matter for the police.

Sweden and Ecuador have been locked in a lengthy legal stalemate since Assange entered the embassy, with both sides blaming the other for delays. Prosecutors initially insisted that Assange would have to travel to Sweden to be interviewed, which he has consistently refused to do, citing possible onward extradition to the US.

They eventually agreed to question him in London after coming under increasing pressure in Sweden to move the case forward. Assange was interviewed in the embassy in November by Ingrid Isgren, the deputy chief prosecutor.

In his balcony speech, Assange noted that the Swedish decision came in the same week as "another very important victory ... even more important and more conclusive than we have had today, and that is the release of Chelsea Manning from prison".

Manning was convicted in 2013 of passing thousands of classified documents to WikiLeaks three years earlier, leading to the "Cablegate" releases for which Assange was initially sought by the US.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/may/19/julian-assange-signals-he-will-stay-in-ecuadorian-embassy>

SvD: 2017-05-20

Brittisk polis: Assange grips om han lämnar ambassaden

Efter nästan sju år — förundersökningen mot Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange, om misstänkt våldtäkt, läggs ned. Flera jurister riktar kritik mot utredningen och kallar den utdragna processen för oacceptabel. [Konstig rubriksättning i så fall. --A.B.]

”Även om i dag var en viktig seger, så är resan långtifrån över”. Det sa Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange under ett kort anförande från balkongen på Ecuadors ambassad i London, vid 18-tiden på fredagen.

Uttalandet kommer efter beskedet att överåklagaren Marianne Ny lägger ner förundersökningen om den våldtäkt som Assange misstänktes ha gjort sig skyldig till.

Assange menade också att han varit frihetsberövad i sju år.

Samtidigt är advokat Elisabeth Massi Fritz, som företräder kvinnan Assange var misstänkt för att ha våldtagit, djupt kritisk mot att utredningen läggs ned.

”Det är en skandal att en misstänkt våldtäktsman kan undanhålla sig rättsväsendet och därmed slippa prövning i domstol”, skriver hon i ett mejl till SvD.

Julian Assanges svenska advokat Per E Samuelson säger att beslutet att upphäva häktningen är en ”total seger för Julian Assange”.

Men brittisk polis meddelar att Assange kommer att gripas om han lämnar Ecuadors ambassad, enligt ett pressmeddelande från Metropolitan police.

I november 2016 förhöordes Assange på Ecuadors ambassad i London av en åklagare från Ecuador. Det översatta förhöret lämnades till de svenska utredarna i mitten av mars i år.

Per E Samuelson ser två förklaringar till varför utredningen nu läggs ned:

– Han lämnade en bra förklaring till vad som verkligen hände den där kvällen. Därmed kan inte åklagaren se fram emot en fällande dom.

– Det andra är att vi numera kan bevisa att USA jagar honom. Det kunde vi inte när Högsta domstolen prövade detta 2015.

Överåklagare Marianne Ny säger dock att USA inte påverkat beslutet att lägga ner förundersökningen. Beslutet ska i stället bygga på att utredarna inte ser någon praktisk möjlighet att driva fallet vidare. Detta eftersom det inte är praktiskt möjligt att väcka åtal mot Assange så länge han befinner sig på Ecuadors ambassad.

För att kunna väcka åtal måste den misstänkte få chans att ta del av hela förundersökningen och delges misstanke. Eftersom Ecuador bara gick med på åtgärder från de svenska åklagarna som Assange ställde upp på frivilligt kunde dessa åtgärder inte genomföras.

Marianne Ny kan inte svara på om hon hade väckt åtal om den möjligheten funnits.

– Det enda vi kan säkert säga är att det fortfarande hade funnits anledning att fortsätta utredningen om han hade befunnit sig här, säger Marianne Ny.

Förundersökningen kan öppnas igen om Assange skulle komma till Sverige innan brottet preskriberas år 2020.

Det har snart gått sju år sedan Assange besökte Sverige och blev anmäld för bland annat våldtäkt.

Assange har varit först anhållen och sedan häktad i sin frånvaro sedan september 2010. I över sex år har Julian Assange försökt undkomma att överlämnas från Storbritannien till Sverige. Drygt fyra av dem har han tillbringat på Ecuadors ambassad i London, där han har beviljats asyl.

På en fråga under fredagens pressträff om Marianne Ny ser anledning till självkritik för att utredningen inte kom längre svarade hon att utredarna stått vid många vägskalet och att många överväganden gjorts.

– Jag kan inte summera våra ansträngningar i dag på annat sätt än att vi gjort vad vi förmått med de medel som funnits till buds, säger Marianne Ny.

Två tunga svenska jurister riktar hård kritik mot hur utredningen har skötts. Advokatsamfundets ordförande Bengt Ivarsson anser att rättsprocessen pågått allt för länge.

– Det är oacceptabelt. Det är inte en merit för det svenska rättsväsendet.

Ivarsson får medhåll från rättsexperten och före detta överåklagare Sven-Erik Alhem:

– I den turbulens som nu finns i rättssäkerhetsfrågor i Sverige: Kevinfallet, Linnafallet och Quickfallet, så finns här naturligtvis någonting som kommer att användas av de som påstår att det finns en bristande rättssäkerhet i landet.

Alhem hördes i målet om Assange i London redan 2010 — och anser som Ivarsson — att Assange borde ha förhörts i ett tidigare skede.

– Inte i mina vildaste fantasier kunde jag drömma om att det skulle ta så här lång tid.

• *Karin Thurfjell o. Salomon Rogberg*

<https://www.svd.se/aklagare-vill-hava-haktningen-av-assange/om/fallet-julian-assange>

Assange future uncertain as US extradition threat still looms large

*RT
20 May 2017*

“The big question is the US warrant. The UK refused to give any indication if such a warrant exists,” Christophe Marchand, a Belgium-based member of Assange's legal team, told RT. “We want to know whether there is a US warrant, what is in there, whether we can fight against it then we'll assess what the next step is for Julian Assange.”

Representatives for Assange's legal team in Australia, Greg Barns and Julian Burnside, shared Marchand's frustration. “From the point of view of his adviser, the issue now remains the UK arrest warrant and the fact that the UK won't confirm or deny whether it has a request for extradition by the United States,” Barns said.

Barns called on the Australian government to help Assange to leave the UK, saying he will be contacting Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in the coming days to canvass for Assange's safe passage if he decides to leave the Ecuadorian Embassy.

“Now that the Swedish issue is dealt with, as an Australian citizen, he deserves the protection of the Australian government,” he said.

Though Sweden has dropped the charges, the Metropolitan Police have said that the WikiLeaks founder will still be arrested if he leaves the embassy, although he “remains wanted for a much less serious offence,” having failed to surrender to the British courts in 2012.

Assange's team are still wary of Swedish prosecutors, however. “As a criminal lawyer I've never seen such a gross abuse of justice by a prosecutor so I don't trust her in her statement,” Marchand said. “We don't trust the Swedish system to be strong enough to resist [the] demand [for] extradition to the United States.”

“The decision by the Swedish prosecutor only highlights the fact Mr. Assange has been unlawfully detained for years,” Barry Pollack, Assange's US-based attorney, told RT via email.

“At this point, it is more apparent than ever that the UK should provide Assange safe passage to Ecuador. Recent comments by the United States Attorney General and Director of the CIA demonstrate the obvious need of Assange for asylum. The UK has no legitimate basis to interfere with Ecuador's lawful decision,” he added.

<https://www.rt.com/news/389002-assange-extradition-threat-wikileaks/>

Julian Assange rape allegations: The story behind the saga

RT
20 May 2017

The seven-year Swedish preliminary investigation into rape allegations against Julian Assange has been brought to an end, prosecutors announced Friday.

Launched in 2006, WikiLeaks had garnered worldwide attention in early 2010 with its massive release of classified US military documents sourced by Chelsea Manning.

Assange won thousands of admirers, with many applauding his willingness to speak truth to power.

Yet the WikiLeaks co-founder gradually lost many of his allies. The rape allegations, stemming from a visit to Sweden in August 2010, played a major role in this and they are the reason Assange sought refuge in London's Ecuadorian Embassy in 2012 when a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Assange and his legal team offered to travel to Sweden for questioning if it could guarantee he would not be extradited to the US, where he's under investigation for his work with WikiLeaks. He also repeatedly offered to be questioned in London.

Swedish prosecutors refused to do so until November 2016, when Chief Prosecutor Ingrid Isgrén interviewed the WikiLeaks founder in the embassy.

Assange published his answers in December. The deadline for the Swedish prosecution to send a request to the Stockholm District Court in the Assange case was Friday, May 19.

Despite the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruling in February 2016 that Assange was "arbitrarily detained," and ordering his immediate release, the UK refused to implement the order and subsequently appealed the ruling. [That appeal was rejected. –A.B.]

Assange and his legal team have maintained his innocence over the rape allegations, publishing detailed accounts of the incidents, including text messages from the women involved in the allegations.

The crux of the rape allegations against Assange stem from two sexual encounters and the WikiLeaks' founder's reluctance to use condoms during them.

Assange had sex with two women, dubbed 'AA' and 'SW,' when he was in Sweden in 2010. The two women wanted Assange to get an STI test because they suspected he had unprotected sex with both of them.

The two women went to a police station to ascertain whether they could force Assange to take a HIV test, sparking an investigation that has plagued Assange for seven years.

Assange had what he described as "consensual" sex with 'SW' on August 16, 2010, after meeting her at a talk in Stockholm two days before. The two went to the cinema on the day they met, where they kissed.

"We had consensual sexual intercourse on four or five occasions," Assange said. "Her words, her expressions and her physical reactions made it clear to me that she encouraged and enjoyed our interactions."

According to SW's police interview, after the two had dozed off one night, "she awoke and felt him penetrating her." She asked if he was wearing a condom and said, "You better don't have HIV." 'SW' texted a friend on August 18 saying, "I was half asleep."

“He was already inside her and **she let him continue,**” the police interview reads. “She didn’t have the energy to tell him one more time. She had gone on and on about condoms all night long.”

On August 20, Assange spoke to ‘SW’ who said she was at the hospital and wanted him to meet her there to get tested for STIs, so that she wouldn’t have to worry while she was awaiting for her own results. “HIV, for instance, needs months to show up,” Assange explained.

He told her he couldn’t do that until the next day. “She said that it was normal in Sweden to go to the police to get advice about STDs and that if I didn’t come down to the hospital she would go to the police to ask whether I could be forced to get tested.”

After agreeing he would meet her the next day to be tested, Assange was surprised to find out he had later been accused of rape.

According to police records of SW’s phone seen by Assange’s lawyers, **‘SW’ wrote from the police station that she “did not want to put any charges on Julian Assange,” but that the police were “keen on getting their hands on him.”**

The next day she wrote she “did not want to accuse” Assange “for anything” and that it was the “police who made up the charges (sic).”

Assange stayed at AA’s home when he was in Stockholm, before he had sex with SW.

The two had sex, which ‘AA’ said was “so fast” and that Assange was rough and impatient. She said she wanted to reach for a condom but Assange wouldn’t let her. She told him she wanted him to wear a condom and then he let her reach for it, and wore it. [*i.e. he did not in fact prevent her from doing so. –A.B.*]

However, ‘AA’ said she didn’t see any semen in the condom and suspected Assange had broken it during sex.[???

Assange stayed with ‘AA’ for a few more nights and he attempted to come on to her again, including one incident where he rubbed his penis against her in the bed they shared, AA’s police interview says, but they had no further sexual relations.

‘AA’ said she went to the police largely to support ‘SW.’

“Anna states that she had consented to have sex with Assange, but that she would not have done so if she had known that he was not wearing a condom,”[???] the police interview reads. “Anna does not desire any contact with a crime victims service, but will get back to us if she feels the need.”

Assistant Prosecutor Maria Kjellstrand ordered Assange’s arrest after police reported the women’s visit. The two women were interviewed and Chief Prosecutor Eva Finne found SW’s case should be closed, and AA’s allegations of molestation would continue to be investigated. **“There is no suspicion of any crime whatsoever,”** she said.

Lawyer and politician Claes Borgstrom announced he was representing the two women and sought a new prosecutor, Marianne Ny.

Assange went to a police interview on August 30 and two days later, Ny announced she was reopening SW's case and expanding AA's case.

Assange's legal representative requested whether he could leave Sweden and, on September 15, the prosecutor said he was free to leave. Assange left Stockholm on September 27 [??] and his laptops were seized from the airport by Swedish intelligence.

Prosecutors asked to interview Assange on September 28, but at that stage Assange had left and the prosecutor ordered his arrest. Assange was working with the Guardian on the upcoming 'Iraq War Logs' release, and offered to come back on October 10 for an interview, but this was rejected for being too far into the future.

On November 30, two days after WikiLeaks began publishing Cablegate, US diplomatic cables, Swedish prosecutors requested Interpol issue a 'red alert' arrest warrant to 188 countries for a "preliminary investigation," and on December 2, a European Arrest Warrant was issued.

On December 7, Assange presented at a UK police station, and was arrested and placed in solitary confinement at Wandsworth prison. He was released after 10 days and placed on house arrest with an electronic tag. Assange challenged the arrest warrants in court but lost in the UK Supreme Court in 2012.

Assange applied for asylum at the Ecuadorian Embassy on June 19, 2012. Metropolitan Police say there is a British warrant for Assange's arrest after "failing to surrender to the court" in 2012, and the force "is obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the embassy."

It said Assange is now wanted for a "much less serious offense" than the original sex crimes claims, and police "will provide a level of resourcing which is proportionate to that offense."

<https://www.rt.com/news/388996-julian-assange-rape-allegations>

Assange case always had disturbing political background — Ecuadorian FM to RT

RT
20 May 2017

WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange has always been under political persecution without any real charges, the Ecuadorian foreign minister told RT, calling for a prompt decision by the UK to grant him safe passage.

Ecuador has always been convinced that Assange was holed up in their London embassy, not because of the Swedish investigation, but due to political persecution over the publications of WikiLeaks.

"We always had suspicions of possible political persecution against Assange and now we see that we were right," Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador Guillaume

Long said in an interview to RT Spanish on Saturday. “Ecuador was right, there was a much more disturbing political background.”

Long said that Ecuador was pleased to hear the news of Sweden dropping its inquiry into the Assange case, but it came too late, as there were no “charges against Assange and there are none now.”

He now hopes that Britain will allow Assange to go free, as there are only “minor charges that do not require any complicated procedures and can be settled with a suspended sentence.” He added that such cases are quickly dealt with in Britain “if there is a will for it.”

“What is now happening in Britain is the direct consequence of the case opened by Stockholm.”

“With the end of the case in Sweden, it is necessary to give him a safe passage from the United Kingdom so that he could leave the country,” Long said, stressing that the WikiLeaks co-founder “already has paid a very heavy penalty.”

Meanwhile, London’s Metropolitan Police said that Assange will still be arrested if he leaves the embassy. He remains wanted “for failing to surrender to the court” back in 2012.

Assange still is under the protection of the Ecuadorian Embassy, as there is a threat that he can be persecuted by the US due to his whistleblowing activity.

“They want to detain Assange, which confirms that we were right that there was political persecution against him because of his journalistic work,” Long said. He recalled that Trump wanted to arrest Assange, while CIA Director Mike Pompeo called WikiLeaks a “hostile intelligence service.” US authorities have been investigating Assange and WikiLeaks activities for around seven years, after the website released classified US data.

“We have seen in recent weeks that the United States suddenly begins talking of a trial against him, like the one over Chelsea Manning, who has luckily been freed,” he said.

The situation “did not bring anything good” to the UK, according to Long. Assange’s five-year stay in the embassy cost British citizens a hefty sum. The Ecuadorian Embassy was surrounded by security forces which cost £12 million (\$15.6 million) in just the first three years, making it roughly £11,000 a day, according to British media.

“They were caught between a rock and a hard place. The British have felt this cost on their own pockets,” the minister said in the interview.

Julian Assange entered London’s Ecuadorian Embassy in 2012, after a two-year home arrest for allegations of rape in Sweden. A UN panel stated in February 2016 that Assange had been arbitrarily detained, demanding the UK and Sweden set him free.

On Friday, the Swedish prosecutor dropped the case involving rape accusations against Assange. The WikiLeaks co-founder said he will not “forgive or forget” being “detained for 7 years without charge.”

<https://www.rt.com/news/389070-assange-case-political-ecuador/>

'WikiLeaks staff are in danger': Pilger, Kiriakou discuss Assange's ongoing legal battle

RT
20 May 2017

As Julian Assange enjoys "victory and vindication" following the closure of the Swedish prosecutors' investigation, both he and his supporters know the fight is far from over.

"I welcome the Swedish prosecutor's decision to end its investigation of Julian Assange," John Kiriakou, a former CIA Counterterrorism Officer and whistleblower told RT. "We should not celebrate yet, however."

"The governments of the United Kingdom and the United States have plotted against Mr. Assange for the past seven years, trying to silence him for his exposure of their crimes."

Kiriakou, who was the first to acknowledge the CIA's use of torture, spoke up because he believed the use of torture was "immoral, unethical and illegal." He served 30 months for violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act by confirming the name of an officer involved in the CIA's secret rendition program, and was released in 2015.

"The Swedish government has taken itself out of the equation," he continued. "But I believe that if Mr. Assange were to leave the Ecuadorean Embassy in London, he would still be arrested on trumped up national security charges and extradited to the United States, where he would find it utterly impossible to receive a fair hearing."

The Courage Foundation, an international organization supporting whistleblowers and truth tellers, has turned its focus to WikiLeaks and its staff, following the release of whistleblower Chelsea Manning on Wednesday.

Manning provided WikiLeaks with some of its most explosive revelations, including the 'Collateral Murder' video, the War Logs, State Department emails and decades of US embassy cables.

"What Chelsea [Manning] endured awaits another Courage Foundation beneficiary, Julian Assange, should he step outside the Ecuadorean embassy in London," investigative journalist John Pilger told RT earlier this week.

"Julian Assange **and the WikiLeaks staff** are in danger," Pilger continued. "WikiLeaks has been so successful in informing people all over the world of the surveillance and war state constructed by rapacious power that it is now fulfills the role of free journalism that the corporate media falsely claims for itself."

"The DOJ [Department of Justice] has been running an unprecedented and wide-ranging investigation into WikiLeaks for its publishing and sourcing work since 2010," the Courage Foundation explained. "It has involved paid informers, illegal interrogations in Europe and secret search warrants. Recently CIA Director Mike Pompeo called WikiLeaks a 'hostile intelligence service.'"

“Recent reports cite Cablegate, the Iraq and Afghan War Logs and Vault 7 publications as well as WikiLeaks’ work in getting NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden asylum, as key to the investigation,” the foundation added.

“Free journalism is, by definition, a threat to those forces that secretly order, control and blight people's lives,” Pilger said. “If Julian Assange was the editor of the New York Times doing his job as the US Constitution says he can, he would not be living in two small rooms, denied sunlight.”

“The difference is that Assange and the WikiLeaks staff are doing what journalists no longer do; they are the agents of people not power. They deserve our support.”

<https://www.rt.com/news/389019-assange-wikileaks-pilger-kiriakou>

Julian Assange's mother calls on Australian Prime Minister to help secure his release

Christine Assange asks Malcolm Turnbull to re-issue son's passport so he can move to Ecuador

*Niamh McIntyre
The Independent
2017-05-20*

Julian Assange’s mother has called on the Australian Prime Minister to help her son seek political asylum abroad.

Christine Assange said she was “very pleased” after Swedish authorities announced they were dropping a rape allegation against him.

But she told ABC Radio Brisbane: “I’m officially calling on Malcolm Turnbull to step in, act like a prime minister, and protect a citizen.

“I’d like him to take to task Sweden for what they’ve done breaching his human rights and lying to the media, and I would like him to pressure the UK Government to allow him safe passage to Ecuador.”

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/julian-assange-latest-mother-australian-prime-minister-malcolm-turnbull-release-ecuador-christine-a7746166.html>

It is a disgrace that Julian Assange has escaped due legal process

At least the founder of WikiLeaks has suffered the rough justice of imprisoning himself in the Ecuadorian embassy for five years

*Editorial
The Independent
2017-05-20*

Julian Assange is of course innocent unless he is proved guilty. But his refusal to put the allegations against him to the test [*He has never refused — on the contrary. --A.B.*] has done him no good at all. It is a disgrace that he has been able to avoid due judicial process. [*It is a disgrace that The Independent's editors distort the truth in this manner. --A.B.*] He has abused this country's respect for the rule of law, jumping bail and misusing our law on diplomatic immunity. [*The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and numerous other legal experts have found that the relevant law on diplomatic immunity has been violated by the U.K. and Swedish governments. --A.B.*]

He still stands accused of rape [*Not true. See <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/murder.pdf>*] in Sweden, an offence allegedly committed in 2010 and for which he is liable for prosecution until 2020, when the 10-year statute of limitations expires. Today, however, the Swedish prosecutor abandoned the attempt to extradite him, because there is no prospect that the government of Ecuador, in whose London embassy Mr Assange has sought refuge, will give him up. [*That is not what she said. --A.B.*]

It is not clear whether this will make any difference in practice to Mr Assange's position. Despite his defiant speech from the balcony today, he knows that if he leaves the embassy he would be arrested by the British police on the charge of failing to surrender to a court. What is clear, however, is that he is likely never to face trial for rape. [*Not least because that is not the suspected crime for which he was being investigated; see above. --A.B.*]

The insouciance with which his remaining supporters treat this serious charge is appalling. It is politically motivated, they allege. He would not face a fair trial, they say. When your political world view leads you to accuse the Swedish justice system of being an arm of a US conspiracy, you need to consider whether you have stepped through the looking glass into a paranoid parallel universe. [*No, it is based on documented facts about the past behaviour of the Swedish government. --A.B.*] (And if the conspiracy against St Julian were so powerful, why would the British authorities not have simply gone into the embassy and apprehended him?) [*That option was in fact discussed, but rejected — apparently out of concern for the damage to the U.K.'s image that would have resulted. --A.B.*]

In the absence of due legal process, it seems that a rough form of justice must suffice. Mr Assange has imprisoned himself for five years. [*No, it is the U.K. government that has prevented him from exercising his right to travel to Ecuador. --A.B.*] Apart from his most committed supporters, who believes his protestation that he has been “detained without charge”? [*Anyone who is familiar with the facts of the case. --AB.*] He is free to leave, but he must face the accusations against him. [*He has always been willing to face those accusations, but not to be turned over to the U.S. government. --A.B.*] His reputation has suffered. Once a hero of transparency, he is now regarded as deluded apologist for some of the more sinister forces in the world. [*By whom? --A.B.*] Many of the facts of the case that would have been heard in court have been aired. Most people have formed a view of his conduct, in some cases, both for and against, influenced by their view of his political activity. But when the best that your defenders can say is that you have been guilty of “bad sexual etiquette”, as George Galloway did, you are not in a good position. [*His defenders can say, and have said, a lot better than that. --A.B.*]

Once upon a time, WikiLeaks, the subversive organisation [*according to whom? -- A.B.*] set up by Mr Assange, did some valuable work in the name of openness. It exposed the

Trafigura scandal of the dumping of toxic waste in Africa. From there WikiLeaks moved on to dumping diplomatic secrets online indiscriminately, which mostly embarrassed Middle Eastern leaders who didn't want their urging of US action against Iran's nuclear ambitions known. And then WikiLeaks appeared to be entangled in Russian interests, which ended up with its being considered party to interference in the American election— on the side of the authoritarian right. *[On the basis of no evidence and of distortions and falsehoods of the sort that disinform this editorial. --A.B.]*

In his rant against the European Union today, Mr Assange revealed the extent to which he has succumbed to the paranoid world view where the far left meets the far right. *[That extent is nil. --A.B.]*

How much better it would have been if the charges against Mr Assange in his personal life could have been tried in court. As it is, the rough justice of his self-incarceration is the best that his alleged victims can hope for — with the moral contamination of WikiLeaks's once-noble mission an unfortunate side effect. *["Moral contamination" is an apt epithet for this utterly ignoble editorial. --A.B.]*

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/it-is-a-disgrace-that-julian-assange-has-escaped-due-legal-process-a7745346.html>

Ecuador 'did its duty' by giving Assange asylum, Correa says

AFP
May 20, 2017

Quito — Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa said Saturday that his country had "done its duty" by granting asylum in 2012 to Julian Assange, and said he was glad Sweden had closed its rape case against the WikiLeaks founder.

"Ecuador fulfilled its duty, we gave him sovereign asylum, and finally the Swedish judicial system has closed the file and will not press charges against Assange," Correa said in a weekly report on his presidential activities.

On Friday, Swedish authorities closed the seven-year-old rape case against Assange and withdrew the European arrest warrant issued against him.

British police, however, have said they still intend to arrest Assange if he leaves the Ecuadoran Embassy in London where he has been holed up. He violated the terms of his probation in Britain in 2012 when he took refuge in the diplomatic mission.

Sweden has made clear that its decision to drop its inquiry did not imply that Assange was innocent, but simply that it saw no realistic way to pursue the matter.

Correa said Ecuador had granted asylum to the Australian "because there were no guarantees of due process (in the US), because there were sectors of the United States that even threatened Julian Assange with the death penalty."

The WikiLeaks founder has always proclaimed his innocence of the charges and claimed that his extradition to Sweden would have led to his transfer to the United States, where he could be tried for publishing a huge store of confidential military and diplomatic documents.

"We never wanted to obstruct" Swedish justice, said Correa, noting that Ecuador had allowed a Swedish prosecutor to question the 45-year-old Australian at the embassy, where he remains for now. *[There is some confusion on that point. The Swedish prosecutor has stated that she was only permitted to be present as an observer while an Ecuadorian official conducted the questioning in Spanish. --A.B.]*

Upon learning of the Swedish decision on Friday to close the rape case, Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Guillaume Long urged Britain to grant Assange a safe-conduct pass so he can leave without risk.

Given the recent statement by US Attorney General Jeff Sessions that Assange's arrest is a priority for the Trump administration, authorities in Quito have reiterated the validity of Assange's asylum.

Getting Julian Assange: The Untold Story

*John Pilger
May 20, 2017*

Julian Assange has been vindicated because the Swedish case against him was corrupt. The prosecutor, Marianne Ny, obstructed justice and should be prosecuted. Her obsession with Assange not only embarrassed her colleagues and the judiciary but exposed the Swedish state's collusion with the United States in its crimes of war and "rendition".

Had Assange not sought refuge in the Ecuadorean embassy in London, he would have been on his way to the kind of American torture pit Chelsea Manning had to endure.

This prospect was obscured by the grim farce played out in Sweden.

"It's a laughing stock," said James Catlin, one of Assange's Australian lawyers. "It is as if they make it up as they go along".

It may have seemed that way, but there was always serious purpose. **In 2008, a secret Pentagon document prepared by the "Cyber Counterintelligence Assessments Branch" foretold a detailed plan to discredit WikiLeaks and smear Assange personally.**

The "mission" was to destroy the "trust" that was WikiLeaks' "centre of gravity". This would be achieved with threats of "exposure [and] criminal prosecution". Silencing and criminalising such an unpredictable source of truth-telling was the aim.

Perhaps this was understandable. WikiLeaks has exposed the way America dominates much of human affairs, including its epic crimes, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq: the wholesale, often homicidal killing of civilians and the contempt for sovereignty and international law.

These disclosures are protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. As a presidential candidate in 2008, Barack Obama, a professor of constitutional law, lauded whistle blowers as "part of a healthy democracy [and they] must be protected from reprisal".

In 2012, the Obama campaign boasted on its website that Obama had prosecuted more whistle blowers in his first term than all other US presidents combined. Before Chelsea Manning had even received a trial, Obama had publicly pronounced her guilty.

Few serious observers doubt that should the US get their hands on Assange, a similar fate awaits him. According to documents released by Edward Snowden, he is on a "Manhunt target list". Threats of his kidnapping and assassination became almost political and media currency in the US following then Vice-President Joe Biden's preposterous slur that the WikiLeaks founder was a "cyber-terrorist".

Hillary Clinton, the destroyer of Libya and, as WikiLeaks revealed last year, the secret supporter and personal beneficiary of forces underwriting ISIS, proposed her own expedient solution: **"Can't we just drone this guy."**

According to Australian diplomatic cables, **Washington's bid to get Assange is "unprecedented in scale and nature"**. In Alexandria, Virginia, a secret grand jury has sought for almost seven years to contrive a crime for which Assange can be prosecuted. This is not easy.

The First Amendment protects publishers, journalists and whistle blowers, whether it is the editor of the New York Times or the editor of WikiLeaks. The very notion of free speech is described as America's "founding virtue" or, as Thomas Jefferson called it, "our currency".

Faced with this hurdle, the US Justice Department has contrived charges of "espionage", "conspiracy to commit espionage", "conversion" (theft of government property), "computer fraud and abuse" (computer hacking) and general "conspiracy". The favoured Espionage Act, which was meant to deter pacifists and conscientious objectors during World War One, has provisions for life imprisonment and the death penalty.

Assange's ability to defend himself in such a Kafkaesque world has been severely limited by the US declaring his case a state secret. **In 2015, a federal court in Washington blocked the release of all information about the "national security" investigation against WikiLeaks**, because it was "active and ongoing" and would harm the "pending prosecution" of Assange. The judge, Barbara J. Rothstein, said it was necessary to show "appropriate deference to the executive in matters of national security". This is a kangaroo court.

For Assange, his trial has been trial by media. On August 20, 2010, when the Swedish police opened a "rape investigation", they coordinated it, unlawfully, with the Stockholm tabloids. The front pages said Assange had been accused of the "rape of two women". The word "rape" can have a very different legal meaning in Sweden than in Britain; a pernicious false reality became the news that went round the world.

Less than 24 hours later, the Stockholm Chief Prosecutor, Eva Finne, took over the investigation. She wasted no time in cancelling the arrest warrant, saying,

“I don’t believe there is any reason to suspect that he has committed rape.” Four days later, she dismissed the rape investigation altogether, saying, “There is no suspicion of any crime whatsoever.”

Enter Claes Borgstrom, a highly contentious figure in the Social Democratic Party then standing as a candidate in Sweden’s imminent general election. Within days of the chief prosecutor’s dismissal of the case, Borgstrom, a lawyer, announced to the media that he was representing the two women and had sought a different prosecutor in Gothenberg. This was Marianne Ny, whom Borgstrom knew well, personally and politically.

On 30 August, Assange attended a police station in Stockholm voluntarily and answered the questions put to him. He understood that was the end of the matter. Two days later, Ny announced she was re-opening the case.

At a press conference, Borgstrom was asked by a Swedish reporter why the case was proceeding when it had already been dismissed. The reporter cited one of the women as saying she had not been raped. He replied, “Ah, but she is not a lawyer.”

On the day that Marianne Ny reactivated the case, the head of Sweden’s military intelligence service – which has the acronym MUST — publicly denounced WikiLeaks in an article entitled “WikiLeaks [is] a threat to our soldiers [under US command in Afghanistan]”.

Both the Swedish prime minister and foreign minister attacked Assange, who had been charged with no crime. Assange was warned that the Swedish intelligence service, SAPO, had been told by its US counterparts that US-Sweden intelligence-sharing arrangements would be “cut off” if Sweden sheltered him.

For five weeks, Assange waited in Sweden for the renewed “rape investigation” to take its course. The Guardian was then on the brink of publishing the Iraq “War Logs”, based on WikiLeaks’ disclosures, which Assange was to oversee in London.

Finally, he was allowed to leave. As soon as he had left, Marianne Ny issued a European Arrest Warrant and an Interpol “red alert” normally used for terrorists and dangerous criminals.

Assange attended a police station in London, was duly arrested and spent ten days in Wandsworth Prison, in solitary confinement. Released on £340,000 bail, he was electronically tagged, required to report to police daily and placed under virtual house arrest while his case began its long journey to the Supreme Court.

He still had not been charged with any offence. **His lawyers repeated his offer to be questioned in London, by video or personally, pointing out that Marianne Ny had given him permission to leave Sweden. They suggested a special facility at Scotland Yard commonly used by the Swedish and other European authorities for that purpose. She refused.**

For almost seven years, while Sweden has questioned forty-four people in the UK in connection with police investigations, Ny refused to question Assange and so advance her case.

Writing in the Swedish press, a former Swedish prosecutor, Rolf Hillegren, accused Ny of losing all impartiality. He described her personal investment in the case as “abnormal” and demanded she be replaced.

Assange asked the Swedish authorities for a guarantee that he would not be “rendered” to the US if he was extradited to Sweden. This was refused. In December 2010, **The Independent revealed that the two governments had discussed his onward extradition to the US.**

Contrary to its reputation as a bastion of liberal enlightenment, Sweden has drawn so close to Washington that it has allowed secret CIA “renditions” — including the illegal deportation of refugees. The rendition and subsequent torture of two Egyptian political refugees in 2001 was condemned by the UN Committee against Torture, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch; the complicity and duplicity of the Swedish state are documented in successful civil litigation and in WikiLeaks cables.

“Documents released by WikiLeaks since Assange moved to England,” wrote Al Burke, editor of the online Nordic News Network, an authority on the multiple twists and dangers that faced Assange, “clearly indicate that Sweden has consistently submitted to pressure from the United States in matters relating to civil rights. There is every reason for concern that if Assange were to be taken into custody by Swedish authorities, he could be turned over to the United States without due consideration of his legal rights.”

The war on Assange now intensified. Marianne Ny refused to allow his Swedish lawyers, and the Swedish courts, access to hundreds of SMS messages that the police had extracted from the phone of one of the two women involved in the “rape” allegations.

Ny said she was not legally required to reveal this critical evidence until a formal charge was laid and she had questioned him. Then, why wouldn’t she question him?

When she announced last week that she was dropping the Assange case, she made no mention of the evidence that would destroy it. **One of the SMS messages makes clear that one of the women did not want any charges brought against Assange, “but the police were keen on getting a hold on him”. She was “shocked” when they arrested him because she only “wanted him to take [an HIV] test”. She “did not want to accuse JA of anything” and “it was the police who made up the charges”. In a witness statement, she is quoted as saying that she had been “railroaded by police and others around her”.**

Neither woman claimed she had been raped. Indeed, both denied they were raped and one of them has since tweeted, “I have not been raped.” The women were manipulated by police — whatever their lawyers might say now. Certainly, they, too, are the victims of this sinister saga.

Katrin Axelsson and Lisa Longstaff of Women Against Rape wrote: “The allegations against [Assange] are a smokescreen behind which a number of governments are trying to clamp down on WikiLeaks for having audaciously revealed to the public their secret planning of wars and occupations with their attendant rape, murder and destruction... The authorities care so little about violence against women that they manipulate rape allegations at will. [Assange] has made it clear he is available for

questioning by the Swedish authorities, in Britain or via Skype. Why are they refusing this essential step in their investigation? What are they afraid of?"

Assange's choice was stark: extradition to a country that had refused to say whether or not it would send him on to the US, or to seek what seemed his last opportunity for refuge and safety.

Supported by most of Latin America, the government of tiny Ecuador granted him refugee status on the basis of documented evidence that he faced the prospect of cruel and unusual punishment in the US; that this threat violated his basic human rights; and that his own government in Australia had abandoned him and colluded with Washington.

The Labor government of the then prime minister, Julia Gillard, had even threatened to take away his Australian passport— until it was pointed out to her that this would be unlawful.

The renowned human rights lawyer, Gareth Peirce, who represents Assange in London, wrote to the then Australian foreign minister, Kevin Rudd: "Given the extent of the public discussion, frequently on the basis of entirely false assumptions... it is very hard to attempt to preserve for him any presumption of innocence. Mr. Assange has now hanging over him not one but two Damocles swords, of potential extradition to two different jurisdictions in turn for two different alleged crimes, **neither of which are crimes in his own country**, and that his personal safety has become at risk in circumstances that are highly politically charged."

It was not until she contacted the Australian High Commission in London that Peirce received a response, which answered none of the pressing points she raised. In a meeting I attended with her, the Australian Consul-General, Ken Pascoe, made the astonishing claim that he knew "only what I read in the newspapers" about the details of the case.

In 2011, in Sydney, I spent several hours with a conservative Member of Australia's Federal Parliament, Malcolm Turnbull. We discussed the threats to Assange and their wider implications for freedom of speech and justice, and why Australia was obliged to stand by him. Turnbull then had a reputation as a free speech advocate. He is now the Prime Minister of Australia.

I gave him Gareth Peirce's letter about the threat to Assange's rights and life. He said the situation was clearly appalling and promised to take it up with the Gillard government. Only his silence followed.

For almost seven years, this epic miscarriage of justice has been drowned in a vituperative campaign against the WikiLeaks founder. There are few precedents. **Deeply personal, petty, vicious and inhuman attacks have been aimed at a man not charged with any crime yet subjected to treatment not even meted out to a defendant facing extradition on a charge of murdering his wife.** That the US threat to Assange was a threat to all journalists, and to the principle of free speech, was lost in the sordid and the ambitious. I would call it anti-journalism.

Books were published, movie deals struck and media careers launched or kick-started on the back of WikiLeaks and an assumption that attacking Assange was fair game and

he was too poor to sue. People have made money, often big money, while WikiLeaks has struggled to survive.

The previous editor of the Guardian, Alan Rusbridger, called the WikiLeaks disclosures, which his newspaper published, “one of the greatest journalistic scoops of the last 30 years”. Yet no attempt was made to protect the Guardian’s provider and source. Instead, the “scoop” became part of a marketing plan to raise the newspaper’s cover price.

With not a penny going to Assange or to WikiLeaks, a hyped Guardian book led to a lucrative Hollywood movie. The book’s authors, Luke Harding and David Leigh, gratuitously described Assange as a “damaged personality” and “callous”. They also revealed the secret password he had given the paper in confidence, which was designed to protect a digital file containing the US embassy cables. With Assange now trapped in the Ecuadorean embassy, Harding, standing among the police outside, gloated on his blog that “Scotland Yard may get the last laugh”.

Journalism students might well study this period to understand the most ubiquitous source of “fake news” — as from within a media self-ordained with a false respectability and as an extension of the authority and power it courts and protects.

The presumption of innocence was not a consideration in Kirsty Wark’s memorable live-on-air interrogation in 2010. “Why don’t you just apologise to the women?” she demanded of Assange, followed by: “Do we have your word of honour that you won’t abscond?”

On the BBC’s Today programme, John Humphrys bellowed: “Are you a sexual predator?”

Assange replied that the suggestion was ridiculous, to which Humphrys demanded to know how many women he had slept with.

“Would even Fox News have descended to that level?” wondered the American historian William Blum. “I wish Assange had been raised in the streets of Brooklyn, as I was. He then would have known precisely how to reply to such a question: ‘You mean including your mother?’”

Last week, on BBC World News, on the day Sweden announced it was dropping the case, I was interviewed by Greta Guru-Murthy, who seemed to have little knowledge of the Assange case. She persisted in referring to the “charges” against him. **She accused him of putting Trump in the White House;** and she drew my attention to the “fact” that “leaders around the world” had condemned him. Among these “leaders” she included Trump’s CIA director. I asked her, “Are you a journalist?”.

The injustice meted out to Assange is one of the reasons Parliament reformed the Extradition Act in 2014.

“His case has been won lock, stock and barrel,” Gareth Peirce told me, “these changes in the law mean that the UK now recognises as correct everything that was argued in his case. Yet he does not benefit.”

In other words, he would have won his case in the British courts and would not have been forced to take refuge.

Ecuador's decision to protect Assange in 2012 was immensely brave. Even though the granting of asylum is a humanitarian act, and the power to do so is enjoyed by all states under international law, both Sweden and the United Kingdom refused to recognise the legitimacy of Ecuador's decision.

Ecuador's embassy in London was placed under police siege and its government abused. When William Hague's Foreign Office threatened to violate the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, warning that it would remove the diplomatic inviolability of the embassy and send the police in to get Assange, outrage across the world forced the government to back down.

During one night, police appeared at the windows of the embassy in an obvious attempt to intimidate Assange and his protectors.

Since then, Assange has been confined to a small room without sunlight. He has been ill from time to time and refused safe passage to the diagnostic facilities of hospital. Yet, his resilience and dark humour remain quite remarkable in the circumstances. When asked how he put up with the confinement, he replied, "Sure beats a supermax."

It is not over, but it is unravelling. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—the tribunal that adjudicates and decides whether governments comply with their human rights obligations—last year ruled that Assange had been detained unlawfully by Britain and Sweden. This is international law at its apex.

Both Britain and Sweden participated in the 16-month long UN investigation and submitted evidence and defended their position before the tribunal. **In previous cases ruled upon by the Working Group—Aung Sang Suu Kyi in Burma, imprisoned opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia, detained Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian in Iran—both Britain and Sweden gave full support to the tribunal.** The difference now is that Assange's persecution endures in the heart of London.

The Metropolitan Police say they still intend to arrest Assange for bail infringement should he leave the embassy. What then? A few months in prison while the US delivers its extradition request to the British courts?

If the British Government allows this to happen it will, in the eyes of the world, be shamed comprehensively and historically as an accessory to the crime of a war waged by rampant power against justice and freedom, and all of us.

<http://johnpilger.com/articles/getting-julian-assange-the-untold-story>

Vad vi vet om Assange-cirkusen

Så la då till slut åklagarna ner utredningen mot Julian Assange. Det var inte en dag för tidigt. Men det var med kniven mot strupen som man kände sig tvingade, för annars hade tingsrätten eller tids nog hovrätten hävt häktningen av honom. Att det var en tidsfråga innan så skulle ske har såväl Svea hovrätt som Högsta domstolen klargjort.

Dick Sundevall
 ParaSraf
 2017-05-20

Samtidigt som rättsskandalen i fallet Kevin går mot sitt slut, går nu även den internationella rättsskandalen med hur Julian Assange behandlats mot sitt slut.

Det är naivt att tro att en överåklagare på eget bevåg ska ha fått köra den här historien efter eget huvud. Naturligtvis har det varit täta kontakter med Riksåklagaren som i sin tur haft kontakter med Justitiedepartementet. Och att svenska regeringar, oavsett partifärg, har informella kontakter med "vänligt sinnade nationer" som USA, är varken ovanligt eller speciellt konstigt.

Det handlar om internationell storpolitik och sånt hanteras inte av en åklagare i Göteborg. Överåklagare Marianne Ny har bara varit ett lydigt redskap i den här cirkusen. Och därmed fått ta skit för den orimligt utdragna processen.

Låt oss gå tillbaka och se vad som egentligen utspelat sig under de här dryga sex åren. Låt oss titta närmare på vad vi verkligen vet och likaså på det här fallets alla märkliga "tillfälligheter". Vi tar det från början.

En hjältes ankomst

Julian Assange kom till Sverige den 11 augusti 2010. Han har då blivit en världskändis och sågs av miljoner människor runt om i världen som en hjälte, genom sitt arbete med att avslöja USA:s krigsförbrytelser. Av bara farten hade hans och WikiLeaks arbete också resulterat i att USA:s föraktfulla syn på andra länders statsöverhuvuden och ministrar exponerats.

Assange får en internationell rockstjärnas mottagande. Han tas emot med stora famnen på de stora nyhetsredaktionerna och är med i tv mer eller mindre varje dag. **Han hyllar den svenska offentlighetsprincipen och pratar om att etablera sig och WikiLeaks i Sverige.**

Tveklöst måste det här ha oroat en del krafter, för att uttrycka det mildt. Han är i det här läget något av USA:s fiende nummer ett. **Det han har gjort, som i Sverige skulle vara ett stort journalistiskt avslöjande, ses i USA som spionage** och förräderi och kan leda till dödsstraff eller i varje fall ett mycket långt fängelsestraff.

I Sverige finns många vänner och försvarare av allt vad USA tar sig för. En del av dem motsvarar närmaste de gamla svenska sovjetkommunisterna som en gång i tiden försvarade allt Sovjetunionen gjorde. **Dessa USA-vänner finns ofta på olika höga nivåer inom det svenska etablissemanget.** Rimligen ser de Assanges planer på att etablera sig i Sverige som ett problem. De kan dock, i det här läget, inte göra något åt det.

Våldtäkt och sexuellt ofredande

En dryg vecka efter Assange ankomst till Sverige ska han komma att bli anmäld för våldtäkt och sexuellt ofredande mot två kvinnor. För att förstå de olika turerna i vad som då utspelar sig bör man ha klart för sig att det inte handlar om två kvinnor som är socialt och samhälleligt jämställda. Jag kommer här att benämna dem A och S.

A är 30 år och väletablerad. Hon forskar och arbetar som press- och politisk sekreterare åt Socialdemokratiska broderskapsrörelsen. Och är bland annat engagerad i en kubansk feministisk gruppering. Hon är en central person inför anordnandet av

seminariet med Julian Assange den 14 augusti 2010 i Sverige. Och det är inplanerat att Assange ska bo i hennes lägenhet dagarna före seminariet, när hon ska vara bortrest.

S är betydligt yngre. Hon arbetar med enklare jobb som timanställd på Naturhistoriska museet. Och som det ska visa sig, är hon lite av en intelligensgroupie. I varje fall vad gäller Julian Assange. Jag använder inte begreppet intelligensgroupie för att nedvärdera henne. Alla har vi varit unga och haft idoler. Och utifrån det agerat mer eller mindre omoget. S är i det hänseendet inte unik eller speciellt klandervärd.

Tillfällighet ett

A kommer hem till sin lägenhet där Assange bor den 13 augusti, vilket är ett dygn tidigare än vad hon sagt. Hon går ut och äter med Assange och på kvällen har de sex i hennes lägenhet. Vilket de återigen har morgonen därpå. Och, vilket framgår av polisförhören, till och från de närmaste sex dagarna. Det här har bekräftats av A i polisförhören.

Senare ska A komma att påstå att Assange natten mellan den 13 och 14 augusti ska ha begått ett sexuellt övergrepp mot henne, genom att avsiktligt ha haft sönder en kondom och sedan fått utlösning i henne. Men hon framför inte detta till någon den dagen eller de närmast kommande dagarna. **Tvärtom säger hon några dagar senare, enligt ett vittne som hörts av polisen:**

”Jag var ju skitstolt, att få världens häftigaste man i säng och som bor i min lägenhet”.

En vecka senare, den 21 augusti, framför hon något helt annat i ett polisförhör. Det återges så här:

”A uppger att hon mått mycket dåligt efter detta tillfälle (samlaget den 13 augusti) då hon och Assange hade sex. Framst på grund av oro för att ha blivit smittad av HIV eller någon annan könssjukdom”.

Den 14 augusti äger seminariet framgångsrikt rum och A ordnar med olika presskontakter för Assange. Vad A då inte vet är att Assange då kommer i kontakt med S, vilket med tiden ska leda till att även de ligger med varandra.

Efter seminariet anordnar A en kräftsiva för Assange, hemma hos sig. Av polisens förhör framgår att de flesta på denna fest är aktiva feminister. Nu är feminister ett väldigt brett begrepp och jag vill inte generalisera, så låt oss försöka definiera var de här feministerna hör hemma: Enligt personer som närvarat på festen är det flera av dessa feminister, tillika vänner till A, som ifrågasätter att det överhuvudtaget är män närvarande på festen.

Tillfällighet två

Vänner till A framför på festen att de nu kan ta över login för Assange, så som det var planerat från början, eftersom A bara erbjudit sig att han skulle få bo i hennes lägenhet då hon var bortrest. **Men A klargör att Assange ska fortsätta att bo hos henne.** Flera som senare ska komma att förhöras av polisen, får uppfattningen att A och Assange nu är något av ett par, även om han flörtar med en del andra kvinnor under kvällen och natten.

Det har nu gått ett dygn efter det påstådda sexuella övergreppet och klockan två på natten twittrar A förtjust följande:

"Sitta ute kl 2 och knappt frysa med världens coolaste smartaste folk, det är ju amazing!"

Tillfällighet tre

Dagen därpå, söndagen den 15 augusti, medverkar A i sin självpåtagna roll som pressekreterare åt Assange i ett möte mellan Piratpartiet och WikiLeaks. Varför skulle hon ha den formella rollen? Rimligen för att hon räknade med att Assange, som var här för att söka arbets- och uppehållstillstånd, skulle befinna sig i Sverige en längre tid.

Tillfällighet fyra

Måndag 16 augusti träffar Assange den yngre kvinnan S, som han hånglat med den 14:e utan A:s vetskap. Det leder till sex mellan S och Assange hemma hos S.

Först torsdagen den 19:e får A reda på att även S är Assanges älskarinna, genom att S ringer henne och berättar vad hon varit med om. Då har Assange bott hos A i sex dygn, **men i och med det här samtalet är Assange inte längre välkommen hos A, så han tar sina pinaler och flyttar morgonen därpå.**

Fredagen den 20:e börjar A prata med vänner om att Assange ska ha våldtagit S. Dock har aldrig S påstått något i den vägen.

Tillfällighet fem

S är orolig för att hon kan ha blivit smittad av HIV när hon har haft sex med Assange, och frågar A hur hon ska göra. A menar att de via polisen ska försöka få Assange att testa sig. Det här är underligt, och samtidigt kanske talande för hela historien.

Om de skulle ha fått Assange att testa sig och det hade visat sig att han var HIV-positiv, så kvarstår ju fortfarande frågan om S har blivit smittad eller inte. **Det självklara i en sådan här situation skulle istället ha varit att A förklarade för S var hon kunde gå och låta testa sig, utan att ta omvägen via att Assange ska testa sig.** Och A vet rimligen att det finns flera ställen i Stockholm där man kan få en sådan test utförd.

Tillfällighet sex

A ska senare i polisförhör komma att påstå att hon uppfattade det som att Assange rev sönder en kondom under ett av deras samlag. **Men i samtalet med S om att gå till polisen för att få Assange att testa sig, framför hon ingen oro för sin egen del.**

Tillfällighet sju

När A tar med sig S för att gå till polisen, blir det av en tillfällighet **till en polisstation i Stockholm där en kvinnlig vän till A just då arbetar.** Och som också tar emot deras anmälan. Det hela slutar med att man kommer fram till att Assange ska anmälas för våldtäkt och sexuellt ofredande.

Tillfällighet åtta

Under de följande dagarna då A insett att Assange har en annan älskarinna parallellt med henne, **raderar A tre egna inlägg på Twitter som är kopplade till Assange och kräftskivan. Hon ber också Piratpartiet att i efterhand radera hennes namn på pressreleasen** från den 17 augusti, där hon uppges vara Julian Assanges pressekreterare. Och den 21 augusti, tio dagar efter Assanges ankomst till Sverige, stänger A ner sina bloggar.

Tillfällighet nio

A berättar i polisförhören att hon uppfattat det som om Assange efter att de haft samlag en stund, dragit sig ur och rivit sönder kondomen, för att sedan fortsätta samlaget och få utlösning i henne. Hon tillfrågas av polisen om hon har kvar den kondomen hemma. Hon svarar att hon inte vet men ska kolla det. A återkommer sedan och säger att hon hittat kondomen och överlämnar den till polisen. Den är trasig och det ser ut som om toppen på den har rivits av.

Det har nu gått en tid och rimligen har A städat ordentligt efter kräftfesten. Alla som har haft middagar med kräftor eller andra skaldjur vet att man måste städa grundligt för att få bort den starka lukten som blir resultatet om något blir kvar från skaldjuren. *[Kräftskivan var utomhus. –A.B.]* Men tydligen har då inte denna kondom blivit undanstädd.

Statens kriminaltekniska laboratorium undersöker kondomen, och kommer fram till att skadan mycket riktigt kan ha uppkommit av att den har rivits sönder.*[???* Men— de hittar inga som helst sekret från A eller Assange på den. Inget från hans sperma och inga sekret i övrigt överhuvudtaget.

Rimligen torde det här vara en av de få kondomer, sannolikt den enda någonsin, som har använts för att genomföra ett vaginalt samlag med — utan att det efterlämnats minsta lilla sekret *[eller DNA –A.B.]* från någon av parterna.

Det här är vad poliser och jurister benämner ett tekniskt bevis. Alltså något som väger väldigt tungt i en domstol. Men hur kan det vara det, kanske någon frågar sig, när det inte fanns några spår av A eller Assange på kondomen? Det är likafullt ett tekniskt bevis, eftersom A påstår att det genomförts ett vaginalt samlag med just den kondomen. **Ett "bevis" som en advokat på goda grunder skulle använda för att ifrågasätta vad A framfört i förhören.**

Tillfällighet tio

Av en tillfällighet får sedan A och S Claes Borgström som målsägarbiträde. Borgström är som före detta Jämo känd för sitt feministiska engagemang. Det har till och från tagit sig i det närmaste extremistiska uttryck, som när han ville stoppa svenskt deltagande i fotbolls-VM i Tyskland på grund av den tyska statens inställning till prostitution. Det är i det sammanhanget värt att notera att han inte protesterat mot att stora idrotts-evenemang som olympiader har hållits i diktaturer av olika slag.

Dock skulle A 2013 komma att sparka sitt målsägarbiträde Claes Borgström. Varför har inte framgått. Kanske för att han gjort så många mediala utspel i den här frågan,

eller för att hon anser att Borgström blivit för nedskitad genom sitt agerande i fallet med Quick/Bergwall?

Sexbrott eller inte?

Personligen anser jag att sexbrott av olika slag är vidriga brott. Men jag har arbetat med rättsfrågor i närmare 40 år och erfarenheten är glasklar, alla anmälda sexbrott är inte sexbrott. Det är naturligtvis inte så att det springer omkring en massa kvinnor och falskt anmäler män för sexbrott på landets polisstationer — men det händer. Varje år döms därmed några kvinnor för dessa falska anmälningar när det går att till exempel påvisa att mannen ifråga inte kunnat befinna sig på den platsen vid det tillfället. I en del fall har dessa kvinnor i efterhand erkänt, i andra inte.

Svenska och internationella undersökningar om hur stor del av anmälningarna som är falska varierar från några få procent ända upp till 75 procent (på vissa amerikanska universitet), men inga undersökningar har kommit fram till att det inte skulle existera några falska anmälningar om sexbrott.

Inte sällan visar det sig att dessa falska anmälningar handlar om att en kvinna känt sig kränkt av mannens agerande, utan att han därmed gjort sig skyldig till något olagligt. Han har på ett eller annat sätt gett intryck av att hon inte är kvinnan i hans liv— vilket hon hade fått uppfattningen att hon var.

Åklagarkarusellen

Under åren som jag arbetat med rättsfrågor har jag mött åklagare, advokater, domare och andra inom rättskedjan som jag fått ett stort förtroende för. Dessa utgör ingen majoritet i sina respektive yrkeskårer men de finns där. Det är personer med stark integritet och ett personligt rättspatos. Personer som står upp för sina rättviseideal och för rättssäkerheten, oavsett vad som för tillfället gäller och oavsett eventuella påtryckningar från olika håll.

En av dessa är chefsåklagare Eva Finné. Har sett och hört henne i olika sammanhang genom åren och mitt förtroende för henne har fördjupats. Hon är allmänt respekterad och ansedd. Mer än en advokat har yttrat något i stil med:

– Henne ska man inte ha emot sig. Då måste man vara ordentligt påläst, för hon är skarp.

Eva Finné brukar följaktligen få ta över komplicerade känsliga utredningar från andra åklagare. Vilket var precis vad som hände i fallet med sexbrottsanklagelserna mot Assange. Det resulterade i att Eva Finné, efter att ha granskat fallet, hävde anhållningsbeslutet avseende Assange och skriftligt meddelade att:

”Jag anser inte att det finns anledning att misstänka att han har begått våldtäkt.”

Några dagar senare går hon ut med nästa skriftliga meddelande, där hon även avskriver anklagelserna om sexuellt ofredande. Hon klargör i meddelandet från åklagarmyndigheten att:

”Innehållet i förhöret ger inte stöd för att något brott begåtts.”

För var och en som läser polisutredningen som biläggs nedan, framstår hennes slutsatser som högst rimliga — för att inte säga självklara. **Kvar fanns sedan bara en**

anmälan om ofredande, vilket inte var ett sexuellt ofredande. Det är därmed ett bötesbrott i nivå med fortkörning.

Tillfälligheter i massor

Då överklagar Claes Borgström nedläggningen och ärendet hamnar hos överåklagare Marianne Ny. Och hon återupptar förundersökningen.

Finns det någon som tror att de olika åklagarturerna är rena tillfälligheter? Någon som tror att det inte pågått ett spel bakom kulisserna? Någon som tror att det är en ren tillfällighet att Assange inte förhöordes ett antal gånger när han var kvar i Sverige i hela fem veckor efter att han blivit polisanmäld? Någon som tror att Marianne Ny kan agera som hon gör utan att ha stöd uppifrån i åklagarhierarkin? Någon som tror att åklageriets agerande inte är förankrat i justitiedepartementet, i ett internationellt storpolitiskt fall som det här?

Ingen åtgärd

Låt oss jämföra det här fallet med **ett annat fall som hamnade hos överåklagare Marianne Nys enhet**. Det är naturligtvis inte exakt lika men har många likheter. Den stora skillnaden är att här har faktiskt en kvinna smittats med HIV. I fallet med Assange har varken A eller S smittats med någon som helst könssjukdom.

En kvinna har haft ett förhållande med en man som vi kan benämna N. Hon har tidigare testat sig för HIV i september 2007 och i maj 2009. Dessa tester har varit negativa, de har alltså visat att hon inte är HIV-smittad.

Det sexuella förhållandet med N pågår från maj till september 2009. Hon hävdar att hon under den tiden inte haft några sexuella förhållanden med andra personer. N vill inte använda kondom så de har oskyddade samlag. I september det året testas hon positivt för HIV, vilket resulterar i att hon anmäler N för grov misshandel (spridande av smitta).

Hon hävdar vidare att hon kan styrka sitt förhållande med N genom att hon under den aktuella tiden bodde på Hotell Jouren i Skärholmen, där det finns övervakningskameror. N måste legitimera sig varje gång han besökte henne där, och hans legitimation kopierades då varje gång. Hon kan därtill uppvisa msn-diskussioner efter deras förhållande, där N talar om deras tidigare relation. Tidigt i utredningen pekar hon ut N med namn, födelseland, svenskt personnummer och bostadsadress.

Det finns därtill en person som är beredd att vittna om att när N skulle testas för HIV, så bytte den här personen identitet med honom och gjorde denna HIV-test — som var negativ. N kan enligt utredningen idag antas befinna sig utomlands.

Det här fallet avskrivs av polisen på Södertörn i Stockholm. Det överklagas till den åklagarenhet där Marianne Ny är chef. Den 1 februari 2011 meddelar den enheten att man inte gör någon ändring av det tidigare beslutet. **Alltså — ingen internationell efterlysning går ut och inga vidare åtgärder vidtas.**

Beslutet är undertecknat av chefsåklagare Magnus Bolin och hans chef, överåklagare Marianne Ny.

Kunde inte förutse

När man tränger ner i anklagelserna mot Julian Assange, så blir i varje fall jag övertygad om att det handlar om två kvinnor som känt sig kränkta av Assange — och vill ge igen. Men kanske i första hand bara förnedra Julian Assange, genom att via polisen påtvinga honom ett HIV-test. Ett test, som om det kom ut, skulle få omfattande medieuppmärksamhet.

Men A, och än mindre S, kunde rimligen inte i det läget förutse vilket resultat det skulle bli av deras polisanmälan. Att det skulle resultera i en omfattande underlig åklagarcirkus, stor internationell medieuppmärksamhet, och till slut landa i internationell storpolitik.

Extremfeminister tog över

Olika grupperingar av extrema feminister som uppenbarligen anser sig ha vetorätt på hur sexuella relationer ska se ut och hur samlag ska få genomföras, tog fallet Assange till sig. Och **med deras snäva synsätt, där frågor som grova krigsförbrytelser och fria medier tycks vara små skitfrågor i förhållande till om ett samlag eller två har gått till så som det enligt deras reglemente ska gå till — tog de över fallet i medierna. Assange förvandlades därmed snabbt från hyllad hjälte till simpel våldtäktsman.**

De flesta i de här grupperna av extremfeminister har troligen inga varmare känslor för USA och än mindre för CIA. Tvärtom är det nog många av dem, kanske de flesta, som anser sig stå politiskt till vänster.

Men likafullt spelade de USA och CIA:s trogna svenska vänner i händerna. För nu fick dessa vänner något att ta på. Något att bekämpa Assanges planer med. Något som **kunde hindra honom och WikiLeaks från att etablera Sverige som en bas för sin verksamhet. Vilket vi idag vet att man lyckades med.**

Exakt vad som har hänt bakom kulisserna lär tids nog komma fram men idag kan vi bara göra rimliga antaganden:

Rimligen har frågan ventilerats i de högre juridiska sfärerna, där man känner "lojalitet med staten". Såväl Riksåklagaren som justitiedepartementet lär sannolikt ha varit inblandade. **Naturligtvis inte i formell mening. Inte i form av formella möten. Och än mindre där det förts några protokoll. Det går inte till så när frågorna är ytterst känsliga.**

Personer bokar istället in luncher med varandra och ventilerar frågan. Eller tar det över en fika. Där framförs försiktigt, ofta indirekt, önskemål från respektive personers chefer:

– Det skulle naturligtvis vara bra om... Du ska veta att han noga följer det uppkomna läget... **Du vet säkert bäst hur det här kan hanteras...**

Amerikanska kontakter

Finns det någon som tror att det inte har funnits informella kontakter mellan folk från USA:s ambassad och lämpligt valda svenskar i en sådan här storpolitisk internationell fråga?

Det har tidigare avslöjats att Carl Bildt som utrikesminister en gång i tiden rapporterade löpande om de interna regeringsöverläggningarna till sina amerikanska "vänner". **Därmed visste de vad det sannolikt skulle komma för beslut, innan partiernas medlemmar och svenska folket hade en aning om det.**

Och låt oss inte glömma att vi lever i ett land där amerikanska CIA-agenter har tillåtits hämta personer på Bromma flygplats. Droga dem, sätta på dem vuxenblöjor, och flyga iväg dem till Egypten där de sedan har torteras.

Sitter där han sitter

År efter år har Assange suttit inlåst på en ambassad för en stat, Ecuador, som står för all den inskränkning i yttrandefriheten som han och WikiLeaks motarbetar. Misstänkt för sexbrott i Sverige. Isolerad medan WikiLeaks bryts ner och tynar bort. *[Inte än i alla fall. –A.B.]* **CIA och USA kunde inte önska sig en bättre utveckling av den här historien. Och detsamma gäller för USA:s trogna svenska vänner.**

Skulle han bli utlämnad till USA, skulle man där ha fått stora problem med opinionen såväl på hemmaplan som internationellt, om han blev dömd till ett långt fängelsestraff i likhet med de 35 års fängelse som Chelsea (tidigare Bradley) Manning dömdes till.

Men Julian Assange har bara suttit fast där på Ecuadors ambassad i London så länge överåklagare Marianne Ny och de som styr henne, vill ha det så. Om åklagare och polis gjorde vad vi i Sverige ofta gör i sådana här lägen, åkt dit och förhört honom, eller förhörde honom via videolänk, så skulle hela den här historien snabbt vara utredd och avklarad. Assange har hela tiden klargjort att han står till förfogande för sådana förhör. Det var det sista han sa när han förhördes av svensk polis.

Under flera år angav man som skäl för att inte åka över och förhöra honom, att man sedan inte kunde veta om man skulle kunna få honom att komma till en svensk domstol, om det blev aktuellt med en rättegång. Men — så genomförs aldrig förundersökningar.

Polis och åklagare driver en förundersökning så långt det är möjligt. **Man stannar inte upp för att man inte vet vad som kan hända i nästa steg, eller nästa.** Utan man kör självklart på så långt det går. Och **att åka utomlands för att genomföra olika förhör är inget ovanligt.** Det var ju inte parkeringsböter eller fortkörning som det här handlade om, utan ett grovt brott i form av en tänkbar våldtäkt och ytterligare sexbrott.

Att man till slut, efter flera år, gjorde det berodde alltså på att såväl Svea hovrätt som Högsta domstolen klargjort att nu måste det hända något, annars skulle man häva häktningen av Julian Assange.

Ett halvår senare, har man så från åklagarsidan fått ihop en översättning av förhöret i London och Assange advokater har återigen gjort en framställan om att häktningen av Assange ska hävas.

Igår, den 18 maj 2017, drygt sex år efter att Assange blev anmäld för olika sexbrott var det så åter dags för åklagarna att yttra sig om hur de såg på fortsatt häktning. Och just igår var det sista dagen de kunde motsätta sig det.

Då gav de till slut upp efter att ha dragit ut på den här cirkusen så långt det gick. Och meddelade bland annat att förhöret som hållits i London inte skulle bli offentligt...

Vi får se hur det blir med det framöver. Personligen tror jag att det är en tidsfråga innan det läcker ut.

Smutskastningen av Assange

Under senare år har många debattörer och journalister ifrågasatt Julian Assange personligen. Allt ifrån hur han vårdar sitt hår, till vad han och WikiLeaks koncentrerar sitt arbete på. Man har framställt honom personligen som en suspekt egotrippad figur och till och med ifrågasatt att han inte stått upp för Chelsea Manning.... Inte tagit Manning i försvar. Men Manning har ju varit hans källa. En källa som han och WikiLeaks har skyddat -- som de ska skydda. Därmed har Assange aldrig ens nämnt hennes namn innan Manning dömdes i USA.

Om Julian Assange är en trevlig kille eller inte är för mig totalt ointressant. Vad han gör med sitt hår likaså. Att han tydligen i första hand som vuxen karl tar råd från sin mamma, framstår för mig som omoget men det är också hans ensak. **Inget av det här gör honom till en brottsling -- än mindre våldtäktsman.**

Det finns en tendens i såväl svenska som internationella medier att beklaga sig över att de som en gång framställts som hjältar inte visar sig vara några gudar i förmänskligad form. Naturligtvis är de inte det. **De är människor med sina personliga fel och brister som oss andra.**

Julian Assange var en datanörd som snabbt fick stor internationell uppmärksamhet och då inte minst från kvinnor som flockades runt honom. Vilket vi kunde se på snart sagt alla bilder av honom medan han var i frihet. Och av vad som framkommit var han allt annat än en gentleman och än mindre någon ömsint älskare.[????]

Hans attityd tycks ha varit, ska vi hoppa i säng eller hur f-n ska du ha det? [Av deras egna vittnesmål står det klart att det var de två kvinnorna i detta fall som tog initiativet.--A.B.] Och bevisligen höll han igång flera [två --A.B.] kvinnor under samma tidsperiod, vilket framgår med all tydlighet av polisutredningen. Det kan vi tycka vad vi vill om -- men det är inte brottsligt.

Tids nog lär det komma fram vad som utspelat sig bakom kulisserna i fallet Assange. Tids nog lär någon som vet vilja berätta det. Det brukar ske när personer står inför pensionen och karriären är över, eller efter att de har pensionerats. Men tills dess får vi hålla tillgodo med det sekretessbelagda material som läckt ut från åklagarnas och polisen utredning....

Slutligen, låt mig klargöra att jag stödjer alla jämställdhetssträvanden. Jag anser att det självklart ska vara lika lön för lika arbete. Och i min yrkesutövning torde jag vara den journalist som fört fram mest omfattande kritik mot polisens låga prioritering av relationsrelaterat våld. Min kritiska granskning ovan av vissa extremfeministiska yttringar, ska alltså inte ses som ett accepterande av någon som helst form av kvinnoförtryck. Med detta klargörande hoppas jag slippa en onödig sidodiskussion.

Tillägg 21 maj

Apropå amerikansk påverkan: I ekots lördagsintervju den 29 april i år berättade Fredrik Wersäll, som idag är president i Svea hovrätt och som tidigare var rättschef på Justitiedepartementet:

– Jag minns ett möte på justitie där det kom en amerikansk delegation och höll något som nästan får sägas vara ett husförhör med oss där vi skulle redovisa vad vi hade gjort lagstiftningsmässigt, vilken beredskap vi hade, vilka aktioner vi hade tänkt göra för att se till att vi ringade in misstänkta terrorister och såg att de inte kunde utföra nya dåd. Det var tyckte jag en delvis skrämmande upplevelse och framför allt omtumlande. Jag hade inte föreställt mig att något sådant skulle kunna inträffa.

'In Germany, such a violation is not even punishable'

Deutsche Welle
2017-05-19

Sweden has dropped rape charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. The German criminal law expert Nikolaos Gazeas talks about extradition and whether Britain can still arrest Assange for skipping bail years ago. Nikolaos Gazeas is an expert on international criminal law in Cologne.

DW: Swedish prosecutors have dropped their inquiry into rape allegations against Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. That also voids an international arrest warrant. London's Metropolitan Police say they will arrest Assange should he leave the Ecuadoran embassy. On what grounds?

Nikolaos Gazeas: So far, the justification has been that in Britain there is still an outstanding warrant for Mr. Assange's arrest. That warrant is based on the charge that Assange violated the bail conditions of his suspended sentence by failing to appear before a magistrate on June 20, 2012, the day after he entered the Ecuadoran embassy. That is a punishable crime in Britain. And that is why police have been ordered to arrest Assange as soon as he leaves the Ecuadoran embassy. It remains unclear whether the United States is also attempting to have Assange arrested or extradited.

For nearly seven years, Assange's freedom of movement has been extremely limited -- especially the five years he spent in the very confined space of the Ecuadoran embassy. Is Britain's stance proportionate in your view?

I think the arrest warrant for this particular violation of British law is disproportionate. The gravity of the charge is minimal. British law dictates a fine for such a violation or, at the very most, three to a maximum of 12 months in prison. Until now, the accusation had been that of rape, a very serious crime. That is no longer the case. **Now we are dealing with a violation of court guidelines. In Germany, such a violation is not even punishable by law.** As far as I know, Mr. Assange has no criminal record either. His exile in the Ecuadoran embassy has had lasting ramifications, but that still does little to change the fact that this case has a low criminal threshold. Thus, the crime he is alleged to have committed would not likely result in serious punishment. **Therefore, I would say that, on balance, a warrant for Assange's arrest for such a minor offense seems disproportionate in light of the extremity of the situation in which he has been living for the last seven years.**

It remains unclear whether the United States will seek Assange's extradition. Nevertheless, Assange fears being extradited to the US. Just last month, CIA Director Mike Pompeo described WikiLeaks as a "nonstate hostile intelligence service." What legal tools does the US have at its disposal for pursuing Assange?

The US has a wide range of instruments at its disposal. The crimes that are being referred to are similar to those that Chelsea Manning was accused of: serious crimes, such as theft of state secrets or other violations of the Espionage Act. We know that Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison — although she was recently released because former President Barack Obama commuted her sentence during his last week in office. The most interesting thing about the current situation is --- at least according to media reports --- that the US has yet to file any official charges. No one knows whether any are being prepared. But, considering Attorney General Jeff Sessions' recent declaration that Assange's arrest was a priority, I would be very surprised if the US suddenly dropped legal proceedings against him. He has been portrayed as far too great an enemy of the state for that to happen. One must also take into account the Trump administration's general hostility toward the press.

The only thing that is certain at this point is that a new extradition treaty between the United States and Great Britain has been in effect since 2006. An extradition requires an extradition request. In all likelihood such a request has yet to be made, and an extradition request cannot be made before a formal criminal charge exists. But there is also another important aspect unique to extradition law: **The US and Britain have an agreement on so-called provisional arrests. Accordingly, both countries are obliged to provisionally detain a person upon request, even in instances when a formal extradition request has yet to be filed.** I am convinced that, should Assange leave the embassy grounds, the US would make such an arrest request. It is also quite possible that British authorities already possess such a request and have come to a quiet agreement with their US partners. In any case, it would not come as a surprise if they had. Such an arrest can happen very quickly. **It is not something that has to go through formal diplomatic channels.** If necessary, it could be something as simple as someone from the US Department of Justice picking up the telephone and asking a responsible party in Britain to provisionally arrest Assange, and then sending the paperwork after the fact.

www.dw.com/en/in-germany-such-a-violation-is-not-even-punishable/a-38912053

Fugitive from Justice

Assange stands forever discredited by his moral evasions and contempt for the law

*Editorial
The Times (U.K.)
20 May 2017*

For five years Julian Assange has been holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy in London. The incarceration has been entirely voluntary because Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, is a fugitive from the law. His determination to escape extradition over allegations of serious sexual crimes has finally paid off for him, though not for the two Swedish women who brought the complaints. Swedish prosecutors, who had sought to

interview him under a European arrest warrant, announced yesterday that they had dropped the investigation.

The prosecutors' decision is a pragmatic step based on the costs of pursuing the investigation. It is not an exoneration of Assange. In fleeing to the embassy in 2012, he skipped bail and should face the force of the law. Whatever the eventual judicial outcome, he is a discredited figure who has demonstrated heedlessness of ethics and accountability.

The women who initially complained to Swedish police maintain their allegations that Assange raped and sexually assaulted them. He denies the claims. Assange took refuge in the embassy because he said that he feared extradition from Sweden to the United States, where he is wanted for leaks of classified information about US intelligence capabilities.

Assange's arguments have always been threadbare. Under Swedish and English law, his lawyers had every opportunity to challenge the European arrest warrant against him. The reason for his flight from bail in 2012 was that the High Court rejected every ground of his appeal and the Supreme Court ruled that the warrant was valid.

The Swedish prosecutors were clear in their announcement that as it was "now not possible to take any further steps that would move the investigation forward" it was no longer proportionate to maintain that arrest warrant. This is not, as Assange's Swedish lawyer claimed, a victory for his client. It is merely a testament to Assange's determination to evade justice. The implication of the prosecutor's statement is that, should Assange end up in British custody, it would become possible to reopen the investigation.

That, in addition to having skipped bail, is reason enough to arrest him at the first opportunity. The police presence outside the Ecuadorean embassy since 2012 has cost taxpayers many millions, for which Assange bears responsibility. But there is also a moral duty of care to the complainants, who have not found justice, to ensure that he is arrested the moment he emerges from his self-selected confinement.

In a typically self-pitying message, Assange lamented yesterday that he had been "detained for seven years without charge". He added: "I do not forgive or forget." The detention was entirely of his own making while the psychological effect on his alleged victims can only be guessed at.

Nor should the conduct of Assange's supporters in this tawdry saga be overlooked. One of his cheerleaders, the former diplomat Craig Murray, named one of the women on a live BBC broadcast in 2012. Mr Murray thereby demonstrated that the spirit of Assange's circle is of Britain in the 1950s, when women were deterred from complaining of sexual assault for fear that they would be disbelieved and their reputations would be trashed. If Assange's name is recalled in future, it will not be as a leaker or whistleblower but as an emblem of misogyny and moral evasion.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fugitive-from-justice-qtzqtzbc6>

Note: The Times is the traditional voice of the British establishment and, consequently, a generally faithful channel for the views of the U.S. government. --A.B.

DN: 2017-05-21

Så lever Assange inne på ambassaden

London. I fem år har Julian Assange befunnit sig inne på Ecuadors ambassad. Men hur ser Wikileaks-grundarens liv ut i byggnaden i centrala London?

I juni 2012 ansökte Wikileaks-grundaren Julian Assange om politisk asyl i Ecuador, efter att ha blivit internationellt efterlyst av Sverige, då han utreddes misstänkt för våldtäkt och sexuellt ofredande under ett Sverigebesök 2010. Anledningen till att han fick politisk asyl var att Ecuadors utrikesminister menade att han löpte risk att utlämnas till USA där han menar att Assange riskerar politisk förföljelse och en orättvis rättegång, då han är misstänkt för att ha publicerat tusentals hemliga dokument online genom sin organisation Wikileaks.

Sedan dess har Julian Assange befunnit sig på Ecuadors ambassad i den fashionabla stadsdelen Knightsbridge i centrala London, granne med det kända varuhuset Harrods.

När överåklagare Marianne Ny på fredagen meddelade att man beslutat att lägga ner utredningen mot Assange, sade han själv i ett uttalande från ambassadens balkong att fallet varit "en enorm orättvisa", och det faktum att han tvingats stanna på ambassaden i så många år menade han att han "varken kan förlåta eller glömma".

Men hur ser livet ut för Julian Assange på Ecuadors ambassad?

2013, ett år efter att Assange flyttat in på ambassaden, berättade han själv för den australiska tidskriften WHO att hans rum var ett ombyggt badrum.

– Jag kunde inte sova på grund av Harrods lastkaj och polisen som alltid byter skift utanför. Och det tystaste rummet var kvinnornas badrum, det enda rum man lätt kan sova i. Så jag tänkte att jag skulle försöka få tag i det rummet, och renovera det. Till slut gick personalen med på det, om än motvilligt. De rev ut toaletten. De har varit väldigt generösa, berättade Julian Assange i intervjun.

Julian Assange har också jämfört sin situation med att bo på ett rymdskepp. Hans rum är 4,6 meter gånger 4 meter stort och uppdelat i kontor och boyta, berättade The Guardian förra året. Inne på rummet har Assange ett löpband, dusch och en sollampa – eftersom ambassaden saknar möjlighet för honom att gå ut. I maj 2016 skaffades en katt, för att Julian Assange skulle ha sällskap. Katten gjorde också ett snabbt framträdande inför pressuppbådet utanför ambassaden på fredagseftermiddagen.

Julian Assange menade i en intervju med tidningen The Telegraph 2015 att han håller sig upptagen trots att han inte kan gå ut.

– Mitt hjärta och själ är i mitt arbete. Jag har kapabel och lojal personal och vi har många som stöttar oss runt om i världen, som tror på det vi gör och vill se det fortsätta. Så även om jag är instängd bakom de här väggarna är jag intellektuellt utanför dem, med vårt folk. Och det är viktigt för mig, sade han då.

Ecuadors utrikesminister har adresserat Assanges situation på ambassaden.

– Vi har gjort allt vi kan för hans fysiska komfort, men det finns ingen möjlighet för honom att vara utomhus. Det finns ingen veranda eller trädgård, så han har tillbringat den största delen av de här fyra och ett halvt åren på första våningen i en byggnad i London, där det inte finns mycket ljus – särskilt inte på vintern, sade utrikesminister Guillame Long i en intervju 2016 enligt The Independent.

Han menade då också att situationen har påverkat ambassadens personal, framför allt det faktum att ambassaden är ständigt övervakad.

– Vår personal har varit igenom mycket. Det har funnits en mänsklig kostnad. Det här är antagligen den mest vaktade ambassaden på planeten, sade Guillame Long.

När Assange 2012 flyttade in på ambassaden menade officiella källor på ambassaden i The Guardian att han skulle få stanna där "så länge det krävs".

– Åtta år, två decennier, sade man.

Julian Assange har dock under en period varit i dispyt med Ecuadors regering. Under det amerikanska presidentvalet blockerade man hans internettillgång efter att Wikileaks publicerat läckta mejlväxlingar från Hillary Clinton. Och under vårens presidentvalskampanj i Ecuador höjdes röster om att Assange kanske inte skulle få fortsätta sin tid under skydd på ambassaden.

En av presidentkandidaterna i valet i Ecuador, högerpolitikern Guillermo Lasso, menade att om han vann presidentvalet skulle man be Julian Assange att flytta.

– Ecuadors folk har betalat en kostnad som de inte borde behöva stå för. Vi kommer vänligt be herr Assange att lämna ambassaden inom 30 dagar efter att ha påbörjat mandatperioden, sade han i en intervju med The Guardian.

Men i stället för Guillermo Lasso valdes Lenin Moreno med liten marginal till Ecuadors president. Han lovade att fortsätta ge Assange politisk asyl och låta honom stanna på ambassaden.

• *Evelyn Jones*

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/sa-lever-assange-inne-pa-ambassaden/>



*Protestors demonstrate at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Britain, May 19, 2017.
Peter Nicholls / Reuters*

Those exposed by WikiLeaks should be investigated, not Assange — whistleblower’s legal team head

RT
21 May 2017

Prominent jurist and head of Julian Assange’s legal team Baltasar Garzon told RT that the US has been secretly conducting an investigation into his client and WikiLeaks, arguing that those implicated in crimes should face legal action instead.

Garzon, a renowned human rights judge who sat on Spain’s central criminal court and once indicted Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, said in an interview to RT Spanish that while Sweden dropping charges against the WikiLeaks co-founder is a welcome step, the main threat to his freedom comes from Washington.

“He [Assange] is satisfied, but, in his own words, the war only begins now. We understood that Sweden was merely a tool in the fight against the freedom of speech. This [role] is the main occupation of the US,” Garzon said.

Assange’s legal team has been preparing to use all means available to gain the upper hand in a possible legal battle, including UN resolutions and international law “in the hopes that this country, despite all its power, admits that neither Julian Assange, nor WikiLeaks, nor freedom of speech advocates are to blame for its woes,” Garzon said.

Those who should be held accountable are not whistleblowers and their sources, he argued, but those “ham-fisted leaders who neglected their responsibility to protect freedom and security in the society.”

The ones who should be “investigated and persecuted” are “those who were exposed by WikiLeaks,” he said.

Not much is known about the clandestine proceedings allegedly underway in Virginia, Garzon said, noting that all the scant data they managed to obtain was received through information leaks and that they continue to be in the dark about the status of the proceedings.

“Since 2010, the US has been carrying out a secret investigation against Julian Assange and WikiLeaks for revealing secret materials, for the fight for the freedom of speech and information,” Garzon said, adding that as far as he is aware, no charges have been brought against his client at this point.

As for the UK police warning that Assange would be arrested for failing to surrender to the British courts back in June 2012, Garzon believes it only serves as a pretext to limit his freedom of movement, barring him from leaving the embassy.

“I believe that it is against the law, because he did not breach any pre-trial restrictions. He was on the embassy’s territory, because he was granted political asylum. He obtained refugee status. That is to say, this situation goes against the law,” the lawyer said. He went on to say that the British police failed to inform Assange that this sort of proceedings had been opened against him during his five-year stay in the embassy.

“I believe that Ecuador’s protection is a priority at the moment. Neither court, nor police have any proof of Julian Assange’s guilt. He must be permitted to leave immediately,” the lawyer said, adding that the British government appears to be eager to bend the law instead of following it in the case of his client.

Garzon said that the legal team is prepared to go to great lengths to enlist the support of the UN, the government of Ecuador, and even the UK government in order to end Assange’s self-imposed exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

At present, however, no timelines can be set.

“Frankly speaking, we don’t know yet,” he said.

On Saturday, a **documentary titled *Hacking Justice* about the legal battle for Assange** was presented at a film festival in Barcelona, featuring Baltasar Garzon as the chief protagonist. Filmmaker and cinema historian Clara López Rubio, who directed the film and has been following Assange’s story for the last five years, told RT they made the film because it was “very important” for the freedom of speech and the freedom of information.

“It was really a great opportunity to be present in a case that is very important for the future of the freedom of speech, for the freedom of information. That was the reason why we made the film,” Rubio said, adding that she hopes the defense team will emerge victorious in the long run.

Since the Swedish prosecutors dropped the charges against Assange, it is time to shift focus on “what really matters... the US investigation that is taking place now,” Rubio said.

<https://www.rt.com/news/389095-assange-lawyer-us-investigation>



Assange's crowing sticks in the craw

The WikiLeaks founder has merely had his warrant revoked — so why all the drama? [Probably because the Swedish prosecutor has abandoned her arbitrary investigation. The revoked warrant is merely in consequence of that decision. --A.B.]

*Barbara Ellen
The Guardian
21 May 2017*

Call me pedantic, but I'm not sure that, where the aborted Swedish rape investigation is concerned, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange should be acting as though he has been found innocent. He hasn't.

The Swedish prosecutor said that the arrest warrant had been revoked, as it was impossible to serve Assange notice. Which is hardly the "total victory" that has been claimed. As many rape victims are all too aware, a lot of cases are halted, for myriad reasons, before they make it to court. Fairly or unfairly, it's not the same as someone being found innocent.

Of course there are complexities to Assange's case, not least his fear that the Swedish government would extradite him to the US to face charges over the leaks, had he left the Ecuadorian embassy. Assange also still faces the lesser charge of failing to surrender himself to a court, an offence that could be punishable by up to a year in prison.

All this considered, and also factoring in that previous high-profile supporters have backed away from him (with a screech of wheels that brings to mind the bat-infested haunted house-mobile in Wacky Races), perhaps Assange needs to take a little more care over his public demeanour.

For instance, he could have thought twice before releasing his triumphalist press statement concerning the dropped case, where he rather diva-ishly intoned that he would not "forgive or forget". I know Assange hasn't been getting out much, but I've seen queens on RuPaul's Drag Race fighting over wigs and nipple pasties with less petulance than that.

In this vexed situation, perhaps Assange should be mindful that the last thing he should be "leaking" right now is his own brand of self-righteous melodrama.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/20/julian-assange-crowing-sticks-in-craw>

Julian Assange tweets 'go mom', talks about election hacking, WannaCry and more

WikiLeaks founder's mother Christine Assange slammed the charges against her son as 'devious and dishonest'.

*India Ashok
International Business Times
May 22, 2017*

Julian Assange recently scored a major victory after Sweden dropped its investigation into an alleged sexual assault case against the WikiLeaks founder. Assange took to Twitter to post not just a smiling picture of him but also to tweet the words "go mom" after his mother, Christine Assange, slammed the charges against her son as "devious and dishonest".

"It is a relief that it is all out in the open and finally Swedish authorities had to admit they had no evidence to charge him," The Australian quoted Ms Assange as saying. "Our whole family is very concerned about what's coming next, whenever we win one battle they come up with something else and it's always devious and dishonest."

Assange said in a recent interview that WikiLeaks' policy of publishing content regardless of who is harmed or benefited may change "under extreme pressure". When questioned on the whistleblowing platform's practice of publishing authentic content expeditiously, Assange responded: "That's our current policy, which might be changed under extreme circumstances."

Giving an example of such a scenario, Assange told Der Spiegel: "If we were on the brink of a nuclear war and a WikiLeaks publication could be misinterpreted, then it would make sense to delay the publication."

When questioned about WikiLeaks' role in election interference and how hackers may now be playing crucial roles in helping political parties win elections, Assange stuck to his guns and reiterated that the whistleblowing platform would continue to publish content, "that's also exactly what the public expects".

"We are not in this business for likes. **WikiLeaks publishes documents about powerful organizations.** WikiLeaks always will always be the bad boy," Assange added. However, when pressed about how WikiLeaks can influence the outcome of elections, he responded: "WikiLeaks is made up of human beings who have different political views. But we cannot undermine our publicly given commitments, our publicly stated principles."

Julian Assange says Obama was a 'wolf in sheepskin' but Trump is a 'wolf in wolf's skin'

When asked about the increasing allegations of WikiLeaks having ties to Russia, Assange dismissed them as "spin" and "media fantasy". However, when the subject of WikiLeaks' loss in popularity following its Clinton emails publications was broached, Assange defensively responded: "What are you saying? If we hadn't published Hillary Clinton's Goldman Sachs speeches, she would have won? Or should we have censored information to favour one candidate? WikiLeaks will never do that."

Assange remained notably silent when asked if he derived any "personal satisfaction" from Clinton's election loss. Der Spiegel's Michael Sontheimer and Jörg Schindler, however, noted that Assange was smiling.

"The NSA, built a giant stockpile of digital weapons, but lost control of it in 2013," the whistleblower said. He also blamed the NSA for not informing Microsoft and other firms about the theft of their cyber tools and wondered what liabilities the NSA bears for the WannaCry attacks.

"Following the Edward Snowden revelations, the US government promised they would not hoard these vulnerabilities but inform IT corporations so they could fix vulnerable software. It turns out that that was a lie," Assange said.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/julian-assange-tweets-go-mom-talks-about-election-hacking-wannacry-more-1622735>

What's next in the long, troubling saga of Julian Assange?

Last week, it was announced that Sweden was dropping the rape investigation into Assange. What happens now, asks Phoebe Luckhurst

*Phoebe Luckhurst
The Pool
22 May 2017*

Julian Assange says that he does not "forgive and forget". On Friday, it was announced that Sweden has decided to drop the rape investigation into the 45-year old Australian exile, who **infamously cloistered himself** in the Ecuadorian embassy in London in 2012, in order to swerve the possibility of extradition from Sweden to the United States.

According to Assange, the rape allegations, which he denies, are a way for the American government to skewer him for his putative role in publishing secret American documents via his anarchic whistleblowing website Wikileaks. In August, Assange will celebrate five years in the embassy; in another exasperating turn, he cannot leave or he'll breach bail conditions issued by the UK government.

Though as of Friday, when the rape allegations were dropped, he has one fewer concern. And duly, he is defiant, his rhetoric in a statement invoking war, suggesting a leader reborn. His lawyer has called this a "total victory". **It is important to note at this point that Assange hasn't been found innocent. He has swerved the charges** by holing himself up in in a rangy townhouse in Knightsbridge for half a decade.

But this is easy to forget as coverage of Assange is noisy. His story intersects with a number of zeitgeist concerns — hacking, sexual assault, free speech— and the lattice of warrants, extradition fears and bail terms can distract from the troubling events that initiated everything.

So, to reiterate: in 2010, Assange visited the country's capital, Stockholm, and was accused of sexual assault by two women. He had sex with both of them on separate evenings and several months later, after he had left the country, he was accused on two counts of sexual molestation, one of unlawful coercion and one count of what is termed, "lesser-degree" rape. He denied (and still denies) all four counts – meanwhile,

he'd holed up in the embassy. During a back and forth over almost half a decade, three of the charges expired; it was only the most serious one, for "lesser-degree" rape, that had stood until Friday. The woman has accused him of having sex with her while she slept, without using a condom, despite the fact that she had repeatedly said no to unprotected sex – which constitutes rape under Swedish law. [*Several errors in this summary.* --A.B.]

*Yes, he's an extraordinary case, but in the age of the internet,
and the faceless persecution it permits, Assange is a grotesque
example of power allowed to run amok at the expense of women*

Now, technically, any investigation can be resumed if Assange visits Sweden before August 2020. But ultimately, he will probably never have to answer to the women who have accused him. A lawyer acting for the one who accused him of rape says her client is "shocked", which likely rather underestimates her trauma.

Assange's case is extraordinary: it cannot necessarily be used as a bellwether of how rape accusations are normally handled. Furthermore, he probably does sincerely think he will be extradited to the USA — where he could face the death penalty — which complicates the circumstances. However, it by no means mitigates them. **And when taken in context with Assange's comments about women and feminism, the saga can certainly be taken as a dispiriting tale about how men in power can use it against women.**

For Assange's record on women is deplorable. For a start, he disdains the women who accused him: in *Risk*, a film by Oscar-winning documentary-maker Laura Poitras, shown at Cannes in May 2016, Assange states that the sexual assault allegations gave rise to a global feminist conspiracy, and says that one of his accusers isn't a credible victim because she set up Gothenburg's largest lesbian nightclub. "It's just a thoroughly tawdry, radical, feminist political positioning thing," he says. "It's some stereotype." He says his two accusers are "running a tag-team".

Poitras — a former admirer of Assange's — says that he put her under "intense pressure" before the film was screened at Cannes in May 2016, upset that the Swedish accusations had been included at all. It seems fair to say that this is an attempt at silencing women's voices. [*See following article, and "Wikileaks Attorneys Blast Citizenfour Maker Poitras" on page 92, above.* --A.B.]

Moreover, many commentators read his targeting of Clinton during the election as a pathological misogyny: Wikileaks leaked documents that damaged her campaign. Others have pointed to the sexist bent of Wikileaks's coverage of feminism, generally. And while Assange will not personally draft every tweet or missive, his personality and prejudice are writ large — huge — in the organisation.

Overall, he seems to be consistent with a certain tribe of man who is typically found haunting the internet, one who sees feminism as by turns an outrage and an attempt to unseat men from their rightful, superior place. In their most primitive state these men manifest as Twitter trolls, the more sophisticated members of this clan are found drafting anti-women treaties on Reddit.

And then you get influential, arrogant outliers like Assange who can dodge accountability for rape allegations and freely cast aspersions about the credibility of a victim [*That remains to be proved.* --A.B.] based on her decision to open a lesbian nightclub. [*It's based on a lot more than that.* --A.B.] Yes, he's an extraordinary case, but in

the age of the internet, and the faceless persecution it permits, Assange is a grotesque example of power allowed to run amok at the expense of women.

<https://www.the-pool.com/news-views/latest-news/2017/21/phoebe-luckhurst-on-julian-assange-rape-allegations>

Rundle: why Australia must advocate for Assange to be set free

Ecuador has granted Julian Assange's asylum, the UK must honour that, and Australia must see that they do. Because no matter your opinion on the man or his recent political choices, the whole Swedish investigation has been a stitch-up from the start.

*Guy Rundle
Crikey
May 22, 2017*

God knows who's styling Julian Assange these days, but they need to be a bit more on the ball. The WikiLeaks supremo emerged onto the tiny balcony of the Ecuadorian embassy in Knightsbridge last Friday, wearing a sort of fake leather jacket and raising his fist, which made him look like either a fascist or a Thunderbird, hard to think of which was worse. Stick to a suit, boyo.

Nevertheless, Assange was cheerful, and he had reasons to be. The Swedish prosecutor has indefinitely stayed the seven-year investigation into an accusation around a sexual encounter in 2010 — an encounter that one section of the Swedish prosecution service had defined as an accusation of minor rape (Sweden has three degrees of rape on its criminal statutes).

The move is being presented as the defeat of due process. In fact, it's most likely a sleazy bit of face-saving. Having interviewed Assange at the embassy, the prosecutors now have everything they need — a complainant, witness statements, Assange's statement — to proceed if they wanted. They aren't because there is no case to answer — exactly as the Stockholm region prosecutor Eva Finné concluded the day after the complaint was first presented in 2010.

Furthermore they have the following: an initial statement to the police, in which complainant S* stated that she never wanted to make a complaint and that she had been railroaded into it by the police and people around her; statements from friends of hers that she and the first complainant, prominent Social Democratic Party activist Anna Ardin, had joked about making money by going to the newspapers with the story; witness statements by same friends that S's account of the events contradicted her official statement; and a series of text messages between the two complainants — never released because legally confidential, but attested to by both sides — which, according to lawyers who have seen them, demonstrate collusion in an attempt to get Assange into legal trouble for some sexual encounters gone wrong.

They have no case, even by the non-Anglo-jurisprudential measures of the Swedish system. **By staying, rather than discontinuing the investigation, the Swedish state, via prosecutor Marianne Ny, is playing the victim — as she/they have done throughout the process.** The case was initially discontinued less than 24 hours after it

had been inaugurated by a stand-in duty prosecutor in the middle of the Swedish summer holidays. It should be discontinued now.

Fat chance of that. The Swedish state is like the social worker in the old Rottweiler joke (what's the difference? The Rottweiler eventually gives the kid back). Now the Australian state must act, on behalf of one of its citizens. Julian Assange is an investigative journalist who, like all investigative journalists, uses leaked documents to publish stories. He does it with novel methods, and a greater volume than many, but these are differences of degree.

Assange has a guarantee of entry to Ecuador by its government and asylum granted by it. The Australian government must demand that the UK honour that granting with safe passage. Currently, **the UK government is arguing that it has no power to interfere in police arrest for breaching bail conditions — which occurred when Assange walked into the embassy in 2012. This is nonsense. The Attorney-General has clear powers to stand this down, even if it involves some simple judicial procedures. It is done frequently.**

This will become a more urgent question if Ecuador — its left-wing government re-elected in April — ups the ante. The simplest way to do this would be for them to grant Assange Ecuadorian citizenship, appoint him to the Ecuadorian diplomatic service, and then present his credentials to the UK government (yes, yes, the frikkin Court of St James). If the government accepts them, well, Assange would have diplomatic immunity, and could finally get to Harrods. If the UK rejects them, well, he has to return to the fondly remembered cool hills of Quito for which he yearns. The passage back to Ecuador would surely attract diplomatic privilege for the journey to the airport. The Turnbull government must insist, if this occurs, that dual citizen Assange has his rights respected. [*The U.K. government has demonstrated that it cannot be trusted to honour international law in this case. --A.B.*]

Simultaneously, they must also assert to the US government that the act of investigative journalism using leaked documents is not a crime and that any prosecution based on such acts would amount to extranational, exceptional pursuit of an Australian citizen by its most consistent ally. Given that we have a PM who made his bones as the flamboyant QC defending the right of an ex-MI5 agent — Peter Wright, mad author of *Spycatcher* — to contravene confidentiality agreements he'd signed up to, the rights of Assange should enjoy the same defence.

In this matter, Assange deserves the defence of anyone who considers themselves of the left, or critical of state power in its current Western form. The incidents that sparked this legal saga do not need dwelling on, but they do need repeating: the sum total of what Assange has been accused of is initiating sex with a half-sleeping woman, S, the morning after they had had a night of consensual sex. By S' account, she consented to the morning sex seconds after it began. But even that is not required: consent, by case law, in the UK, Australian and Sweden, is held to carry over in any case, even when sleep intervenes. There was never a case to answer by any reasonable standard.*

Sadly, many people who should be sceptical of state power, and autonomous state processes, lost any sense of critical judgement because accusations of sex crime were involved. The suggestion from many — including many who had praised the release of the “collateral murder” video and the “cablegate” archive — was **that someone who**

had released half a million files detailing 10 years of violent folly and criminality by the most powerful country in the world should return to a country with compulsory remand, an extradition treaty with the US, and the most pro-US government in its history, on the basis of what occurred during 45 seconds of a sustained consensual sexual encounter.

Although the whole case began as a product of the autonomous processes of the Swedish state, it rapidly became a “honeytrap” (“vinegartrap” might be a better term). When Finné, the Stockholm prosecutor, threw out the investigation 24 hours after it was opened, the two accusers rapidly acquired as a lawyer Claes Borgstrom, a high-powered politician.

Before the accusation, Assange had come to Sweden to base WikiLeaks there and take advantage of Sweden’s shield laws protecting whistleblowers. Such protection required a residency and work permit; the ongoing accusations made those impossible to obtain. There is no question that the US would have started to withhold intelligence from Sweden if Assange had gained those protections — withholding of intel is the US’ big stick, waved around repeatedly (for example, on the weekend of November 8 and 9, 1975, two days before Whitlam was sacked) — at a time when Sweden wanted to be closer in the US’ embrace.

The intent is bare-faced, obvious. It worked in part, by dividing Assange’s supporters on the very sort of issues they care most about. In that respect, they need to support Julian Assange 100% in getting free passage to Ecuador, regardless of their opinion of his recent political choices, not from the other side, out of regard to his slightly exaggerated public persona, but simply because the last seven years have always been a stitch-up....

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2017/05/22/julian-assanges-rape-case-dropped-now-australia-must-advocate-for-his-release/>

“Risk”: a Sad Comedown for Laura Poitras

Thomas S. Harrington
Counterpunch
May 23, 2017

A few nights ago, I went to see *Risk*, Laura Poitras’ portrait— if you can really call it that— of Julian Assange.

I must say that I have been a huge admirer of Laura Poitras’ work, running from *My Country, My Country* (2006), through a number of shorts, to the much-acclaimed *Citizen Four* (2014). My admiration for these superb and probing documentaries was only enhanced by a knowledge of the fortitude she demonstrated in the face of years of harassment by the US government, a story worthy of a brave documentary in and of itself.

I guess this is why my sense of disappointment with *Risk* feels so enormous. It is everything that Poitras’ work has not—fortunately— been all about up until this time: self-involved, reachingly melodramatic **and filled with unfounded innuendo.**

In the film she plays upon— but without ever demonstrating the courage to fully explain, or for that matter, fully embrace— all the personalizing memes that the US government and its domesticated corporate media have used to undercut the legitimacy of Assange’s status, along with Snowden and Manning, as the greatest truth-teller of our time.

You know the story line: he’s an egotist, control-freak, and sexual predator mostly interested in fame and notoriety.

For example, she treats us to an excruciatingly long scene of Assange sitting with the unfathomably stupid Lady Ga-Ga in the Ecuadorian embassy that adds nothing to our understanding of the Australian dissident....except, of course to suggest that, the egoist that he is, he will always take time out of his “important work” to be adored by unfathomably stupid celebrities.

There’s another scene where he **rails in a politically incorrect fashion** against the women who, after willingly having sex with him in Sweden and sharing pleasant post-coital texts with him about it, decide, under intense police and prosecutorial pressure, to reframe it all as a matter of sexual predation.

Gee, imagine being angry and voicing un-P.C thought crimes about something like that! No way you or I would ever let something like that get under our skin.

No, if you or I had been framed in a similar way, resulting in several years of life spent cooped up in a tiny room, we, of course, would always talk about the useful idiots who made it possible with cool equanimity. Right?

Then there’s the attempt to slyly conflate these insinuations about Assange’s insensitivity and inappropriateness (has the world ever been treated to a comparably endemic deployment of two more weaselly rhetorical placeholders?) on such matters to the apparent temper issues that his sometime collaborator Jacob Applebaum appears to have **with the women he sleeps with, one of whom just happens to be named Laura Poitras.**

So, the implied reasoning goes, if Laura and other women had nasty break-ups with Jake where he was “abusive” (whatever the hell that actually means in educated/ progressive circles in 2017), and Jake works with Julian, and both, as the film clearly demonstrates, have an extraordinary sense of intellectual and moral self-confidence, then the best thing to do is to be fundamentally distrustful of Julian.

And so it goes in this 91-minute train of poorly structured subjective mush.

What you realize in the end is that **it is precisely Assange’s lack of a need to please people in conventional ways that most unnerves others**, including Laura Poitras.

For a population now taught to believe, through Facebook and other social media, that getting “likes” is the be all and end all of human existence, someone who frontally eschews all that in the service of what he considers much loftier goals can indeed be quite confounding.

Does this probably make the guy a lot less fun and cuddly than the mass of other human beings serially seeking approval? No doubt about it.

But, so friggin’ what?

By all reports, Gandhi could be a pretty callous guy on the personal level. But what would moral progress in the 20th century without him?

It is a good thing social media, that hall of impressionistic and simplistically personalizing mirrors, was not around then to shadow the Indian leader and render its snap judgments about his essential humanity.

If, however, it had existed then, you can be quite sure that that the British colonial spymasters would have availed themselves of material produced within its confines by those with a compulsive need to nitpick his personal habits to spread memes aimed at undermining his work and moral example.

• *Thomas S. Harrington is a professor of Iberian Studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut and the author of the recently released *Living la Vida Barroca: American Culture in a Time of Imperial Orthodoxies*.*

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/23/risk-a-sad-comedown-for-laura-poitras>

Julian Assange, Sweden, And Continuing Battles

*Binoy Kampmark
Eurasia Review
May 23, 2017*

It had been, from the start, a cruel wait and see game. Lacking logic and consistency, the Swedish effort to extradite Julian Assange from the United Kingdom, not for formal charges but the pretext of questioning him over sexual assault and rape, collapsed on Friday.

The Director of Public Prosecutions Marianne Ny and Chief Prosecutor Ingrid Isgren, in a press conference in Stockholm, were doing their best not to have Assange have the last, grizzly laugh. Abandoning the investigation had been a logistical matter, as they had been unable to serve the Australian with allegations during an interview at the Ecuadorean embassy in November 2016. [*So they claimed. --A.B.*]

It is worth pointing out that getting that interview had been a point of persistent refusal and stonewalling from the Swedish prosecutor's office. Communications had also been repeatedly made by the WikiLeaks legal team that they were open to a video interview from the start.

Ny's text, relayed to the Stockholm District Court, claimed in dryer language that it was "no longer possible to continue the preliminary investigation pursuant to Chapter 23, Section 4, second paragraph, of the Code of Judicial Procedure." Keeping in mind "the facts and circumstances of the case, executing the decision to extradite him to Sweden is not expected to be possible in the foreseeable future." [1]

When pressed about the issue of whether the US still had a thick and clumsy hand in matters, denial followed. At no point had figures in Washington applied pressure to the case. But Isgren and Ny did claim that an email from a figure claiming to work for the FBI was received in March inquiring about Assange, though both claimed it insufficiently clear to draw any conclusions from.

Indifferent to the inquiry, the prosecutor's office simply referred the matter to information already available on the agency's website. Showing the sort of care they have had to the entire process, the inquiring email was deleted.

Little wonder then, that Assange shot back, telling supporters and journalists that Sweden, and the European Union more broadly, had made indefinite detention a key policy. "There is no time limit that someone can be detained without charge. That is not how we expect a civilised state to behave."

[Norwegian] Professor Mads Andenæs, chair of the UN Working Group on arbitrary detention, claimed the collapse of the prosecution case "a victory for the rule of law. The warrant was contestable. There were dissents in both the UK and Swedish supreme courts." Andenæs also noted that the UK Supreme Court had trouble with "several aspects of the extradition request."[2] As had the UN Working Group itself, which found for Assange last year.

Within Sweden itself, the legal fraternity were also getting stropky at the lethargic, asthmatic efforts to push the case. The Swedish Supreme Court had also issued a warning to prosecutors that they needed to speed up efforts or drop the case.

With haste and speculation, the Swedish exit from the Assange equation came with questions whether he would complement it with his own exit from the Ecuadorean embassy in London. "The European arrest no longer holds," exclaimed Ecuador's foreign minister Guillaume Long on Twitter. "The UK must now grant safe passage to Mr Julian Assange." Nothing of the sort: a promise had been made by police that he would be arrested the moment he steps out.

The hook upon which to hang the case against Assange remains his decision to defy UK judicial opinion in June 2012, when he took refuge in the Ecuadorean embassy after the Supreme Court handed its final decision ordering his surrender to Sweden pursuant to the flawed European Arrest Warrant.

A statement from the Metropolitan Police dispelled any doubts: "Westminster Magistrates' Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Julian Assange following him failing to surrender to the court on 29 June 2012." [3] The Met were "obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the Embassy."

This keeps the geopolitical dimension relevant. Assange in the hands of the British authorities will be a far easier catch for US agents keen to pursue WikiLeaks on charges relating to the disclosure of classified material, despite the seemingly impregnable defences of the free speech amendment.

As Assange claimed in a grimly delivered press address from the balcony of the Ecuadorean embassy, looking every bit the modelled out information soldier, his detractors in the United States government have little interest in observing the first amendment freedoms for the press for WikiLeaks and its associates.

The Central Intelligence Agency's Mike Pompeo has deemed WikiLeaks a "hostile non-state intelligence agency" which precludes conventional press protections. "We can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us. To give them the space **to crush us** with misappropriated secrets is a perversion of what our great Constitution stands for." [4]

The continuing struggle, one between the guerrilla warriors of the information and transparency movement pitted against the abuses of the Deep State, will continue. As

will the barnacle determination of Assange in occupying that little bit of Ecuador in Knightsbridge. “The proper war,” promised Assange, “is just commencing.”

Notes

[1] <http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-text-of-swedish-prosecutors-decision-to-drop-assange-probe-2017-5?IR=T>

[2] <https://twitter.com/JulianAssange/status/865553210861207553/photo/1>

[3] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/julian-assange-arrest-leave-ecuador-embassy-metropolitan-police-london-wikileaks-sweden-drop-a7744231.html>

[4] <https://theintercept.com/2017/04/19/assange-strikes-back-at-cia-and-talks-trump-russia-and-hillary-clinton/>

www.eurasiareview.com/23052017-julian-assange-sweden-continuing-battles-oped

Assange defies plea to avoid Ecuador politics

Press TV

May 27, 2017

The founder of the WikiLeaks website, Julian Assange, has defied a demand by Ecuador — which has granted him asylum and shelter at its London Embassy — to steer clear of politics in the Latin American country.

Assange has leaked secret Washington-related wires on WikiLeaks. And he could be arrested and extradited to the United States for prosecution if he leaves the Ecuadorean diplomatic premises, where took shelter back in 2012, when Sweden issued a European arrest warrant for him over sexual assault charges.

Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno on Thursday called on Assange “not to interfere in Ecuadorian politics, nor in the politics of its allies.”

“His (Assange’s) status does not allow him to talk about the politics of any country, let alone ours,” President Moreno had said.

On Friday, however, **Assange tweeted, “Ecuadorians can be confident that if WikiLeaks receives evidence of corruption in Ecuador it will be published.”**

Sweden recently dropped its investigation against Assange, potentially creating an opportunity for him to leave the Ecuadorian embassy. But British police, who have 24/7 presence around the perimeters, said they would still arrest Assange if he came out because he had broken his conditions for bail by not surrendering himself to the police before.

President Moreno had previously said his country “will ensure” that Britain “allows the transfer of Mr. Assange to Ecuador or to the country in which he wishes to reside.”

But Assange’s new defiance toward Ecuador’s newly-elected president could now dim his chances for a smooth travel to and stay in Ecuador.

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/27/523332/Ecuador-Moreno-Assange-Latin-American-politics-defiance>

"Fel avskrivningsgrund om Julian Assange — åklagaren vill dölja sina tillkortakommanden"

Rolf Hillegren
Dagens juridik
2017-05-29

Efter närmare sju år har överåklagaren Marianne Ny äntligen lagt ned förundersökningen mot Julian Assange-- en utredning som aldrig borde ha återupptagits sedan den 2010 lagts ned av en erfaren chefsåklagare.

Skälet till mitt påstående är mycket elementärt: **Det finns ingen bevisning och då ska man inte bedriva förundersökning.**

Assange häktades i sin frånvaro i november 2010 och greps i december samma år i England.

Före 2015 utförde åklagaren i stort sett inga utredningsåtgärder då hon envist hävdade att förhör med Assange måste hållas i Sverige och inte i England. I samband med överklaganden av häktningsbeslutet har dock domstolarna uttalat att åklagaren måste vidta åtgärder för att föra utredningen framåt.

Först 2015, sedan häktningsfrågan varit uppe i HD, ändrade sig Ny och i slutet av 2016 hölls förhör med Assange i London. Att översätta förhöret tog sedan sex månader, vilket ligger väl i linje med den passivitet som präglat denna utredning.

Vid den presskonferens som hölls den 19 maj ansträngde sig Ny till det yttersta för att få det att framstå som om hon gjort sitt bästa utan att tidigare lyckas nå fram till ett beslut. Det är inte sant, men risken är stor att hon lyckades övertyga vissa på den punkten genom några såväl osakliga som osmakliga påståenden. Det finns därför skäl att göra några påpekanden.

Vid presskonferensen motiverade åklagaren sitt nedläggningsbeslut med att hon kommit fram till att beslutet att överlämna Assange till Sverige inte kommer att kunna verkställas inom överskådlig tid, vilket är en förutsättning för att kunna lagföra honom.

Det borde hon ha insett senast i augusti 2012 när Assange efter att ha flytt till Ecuadors ambassad beviljades asyl i Ecuador. Om hon vid det tillfället använt den avskrivningsgrunden hade det framstått som mindre klandervärt än det nu gör.

Åklagaren har samtidigt påstått att det inte har gått att delge Assange misstanke om brott samt att hon inte räknar med att få bistånd från Ecuador på den punkten. Det låter synnerligen kuriöst, men om vi utgår från att det är sant så är det rimligen en komplikation som hon borde ha blivit medveten om på ett betydligt tidigare stadium.

Genom sitt val av beslutsmotivering antyder åklagaren att Assange är skyldig till brott och att endast praktiska omständigheter utgör hinder för åtal. Detta förstärks av att hon också uppgav att om Assange skulle bege sig till Sverige så riskerar han att gripas och att utredningen återupptas.

Det hade varit betydligt mera smakligt om hon konstaterat att brott inte kan styrkas, vilket de flesta som har erfarenhet av brottmål torde hålla med om. Då hade det också stått klart att Assange bör betraktas som oskyldig, vilket gäller den som inte är dömd.

Att låta en förundersökning med synnerligen tveksam bevisning pågå i nära sju år strider mot alla regler som finns om proportionalitet. Åklagaren hänvisade vid presskonferensen till de häktningsbeslut som finns i ärendet som ett bevis på att hennes agerande har varit försvarligt och sanktionerat av domstolarna.

Men så bör man inte se på saken. **För häktning räcker som bekant en betydligt svagare misstankegrad är för fällande dom.** Och i detta fall hade det inte varit häpnadsväckande om åklagarens häktningsyrkande resulterat i beslutet: "Yrkandet ogillas --- ej sannolika skäl".

Men när någon väl är häktad ska det mycket till för att häktningen ska hävas så länge åklagaren kan hänvisa till företagna och kommande utredningsåtgärder.

I detta fall har domstolarna dock varit alltför välvilligt inställda till åklagarens passivitet, men denna välvilja är knappast något som bör ses som ett godkännande av Nys slappa utredningsmetod.

Vid beaktande av vad domstolarna uttalat i samband med de omhäktningsförhandlingar som förekommit **står det helt klart att om Ny inte lagt ned förundersökningen nu så skulle en domstol ha hävt häktningen** av Assange (tingsrätt, hovrätt eller HD). Tiden var nu definitivt ute.

Från icke-juridiskt håll har stundom denna fråga ställts: Ska man kunna göra som Assange har gjort och undgå lagföring genom att hålla sig undan? **Svaret är tveklöst ja.**

Polis och åklagare har det fulla ansvaret för att en utredning drivs framåt. Den misstänkte har inga skyldigheter i det avseendet. Jag skulle möjligen kunna förstå dem som finner detta stötande om det handlade om ett fall med övertygande bevisning. Men i detta fall handlar det om ett solklart avskrivningsärende från första början.

Vad skulle ha hänt om åklagaren plötsligt och oväntat drabbats av sanningslidelse och på ett fullständigt ärligt sätt redogjort för hur utredningen bedrivits och varför hon till slut lagt ned den? Jo, det skulle ha inneburit en total självdemaskering och inkompetensförklaring.

Presskonferensen framstår uteslutande som en avledningsmanöver från åklagarens sida i syfte att dölja sina tillkortakommanden. Tyvärr tror jag att hon i viss mån lyckades. Det finns alltför många frågor som hon sluppit besvara.

Den nedlagda utredningen fyller högt ställda krav för att kallas rättsskandal. Det är anmärkningsvärt att en åklagare på så hög nivå som Nys handlagt en utredning på

detta sätt och **det är även anmärkningsvärt att Riksåklagaren låtit det ske utan att ingripa.**

Denna utredning har inte bara varit förödande för Åklagarmyndigheten. Den har dessutom bidragit till att en negativ bild av svenskt rättsväsende blivit internationellt spridd.

Kommentarer

Thérèse Angélique. mån, 2017-05-29 16:28

Rolf Hillergren, fd åklagare har gedigen juridisk insikt och därav rätt i att av åklagare Marianne Ny efter sju år, som synes tvångsfixerad (tills vidare) lagt ned ärendet Julian Assange.

Samtliga med objektivitet och civilkurage står bakom fd åklagare Hillergren konstaterande avseende så ock att utredningen naturligtvis aldrig skulle återupptagits, sedan att den år 2010 lagts ned av en erfaren chefsåklagare ty, **det inte bara saknas bevisning utan det finns ingen våldtäktsanmälan heller**, och då ska man inte bedriva vare sig förundersökning eller häxjakt på någon, oavsett vem denne någon är.

Tillika nämns att Julian Assange är inte den enda som råkat ut för Marianne Ny sannerligen rättvidriga agerande.

I tidigare inlägg har vi länkat till Rättsmagasinet Paragraf som följt ärendet Assange inkluderande att efter artiklarna länkas till benämnt FU material vilket vi gör denna gången också, varsågod. <https://www.magasinetparagraf.se/>
Mvh/Thérèse Angélique med ProBono Team.

Rikard mån, 2017-05-29 16:43

Som icke-jurist ställer man sig frågan vad som utmärkte Assangefallet jämfört med andra våldtäktsmål där långt mindre resurser ställts till förfogande för utredning. Varför var just detta fall så viktigt jämfört med exempelvis gruppvåldtäkten mot en funktionshindrad kvinna på Gotland förra året?

Det går inte att utesluta att den täta kontakten mellan regimtrogna politiker och det juridiska skräet spelar roll....

Thérèse Angélique. mån, 2017-05-29 18:20

@Rikard—

Avseende: "Det går inte att utesluta att den täta kontakten mellan regimtrogna politiker och det juridiska skräet spelar roll", har stark bäring ty kvinnorna lärde känna varandra genom att båda är engagerade i samma politiska parti och de har tiden efter anmälan skickat personliga hälsningar till varandra på nätet och varit öppna med sin vänskap i sina bloggar.

Annat fritt att beakta eller förakta framgår 2011-03-10 Rubrik: Polisvän förhörde Assangeanmälare". **Polisens förhørsledare i Assange utredningen har både personliga och politiska kopplingar till en av de två kvinnor som anmält Wikileaks grundare**

I Sverige var Julian Assange till polisens förfogande drygt fem veckor efter att de politiska kvinnliga frändernas benämnda våldtäktsanklagelser, som i verkligheten lyder: Kvinnorna med polisvän krav var, **att i strid mot lagen** försöka tvinga JA till HIV test, vilket av outgrundlig orsak inte publicerats mer än i, Rättsmagasinet Paragraf.

Att Julian Assange var i Sverige och stod till polisens förfogande fem veckor efter detta krav HIV test, har av medierna omvandlats till att han var i Sverige fem veckor efter att -- sexövergreppen blev kända!

Annan rubrik: "Twitter pratar om sexuella övergrepp, publicerad 2010-12-17 "Som en reaktion mot misstron till kvinnorna i fallet Julian Assange har svenska Twitter präglats av berättelser om sexuella övergrepp, programledaren Johanna Koljonen satte igång debatten som snabbt blev enormt stor och under veckan även när traditionella medier som exempelvis DN, SvD, Dagens Arena och Bang".

Det nämns att i DN artiklar har faktiskt redovisats att förhørsledaren/polis i utredningen skrivit starkt negativa kommentarer om Julian Assange på sin Facebook-sida och att "Polisvännen förhörde Assange-anmälare och att "polisens förhørsledare i Assangeutredningen har personliga och politiska kopplingar till en av de två kvinnor som anmält Wikileaksgrundaren.

Julian Assange nekar således på sannerligen goda grunder till våldtäkts-anklagelserna och trots falskt angiven med livet orätt slaget i spillror har han på osedvanligt empatiskt sätt uttryckt att "kvinnorna kanske blev nervösa när de av varandra fått reda på att båda haft sex med honom och synes rädda för att ha smittats av någon könssjukdom".

Det råder ingen tvekan om att så ock detta justitiemord har starkt politiska influenser och journalist Jan Guillo synes vara en som vaknat ur gammelmmedia sömnen ty idag 2017.05.29 publicerar han lydande citat: Att avslöja justitiemord är en lika grundläggande uppgift för den fria pressen som att avslöja korruption inom den första statsmakten (riksdagsmän som begår diverse brott på fyllan) eller den andra statsmakten (ministrar som skattesmiter), slut citerat.

Samtliga i Sverige politiskt styrt justitiemördade inkluderande journalisterna i den politiska skandalen IB affären är till 100% styrd av Détournement de pouvoir som i varje fall för en av de journalisterna synes tagit många år att komma fram till, synes innehållsmässigt ha betydelse a la kejsarens nya kläder eller när f*n blir gammal blir han religiös!

Anders Dolf Ericsson ons, 2017-05-31 02:29

Rikard, du hade nog inte upptäckt GD då, men jag skrev om fallet i GD när det var uppe i Stockholms tingsrätt för några år sedan (se posten Om Swift varit svensk idag hade Gulliver pissat på Stockholms tingsrätt | Genusdebatten), där jag har gjorde någon slags summering, men har mycket länkar till annat material, bland annat häktningspromemorian med förhör och försvarets dokument från förhandlingarna om utlämning i domstolen i London, plus länk till Göran Rudlings utmärkta analys av häktningsförhören.

Mitt inlägg är förmodligen den enklaste vägen att hitta allt bakgrundsmaterial du behöver för att sätta dig in i fallet så du kan bedöma de juridiska diskussionerna och argumenten här....

Bettan Lagergren mån, 2017-05-29 17:05

Ett mycket bra inlägg av f d åklagare Rolf Hillegren. Den förödande kritiken mot åklagare Ny är synnerligen berättigad. Det grundläggande problemet med sådan inkompetens som Ny står för, är att hon fullständigt skämt ut landet Sverige och fått Sverige att framstå som närmast en bananrepublik. En utredning av detta slag, som naturligtvis är viktig, ska bedrivas med snabbhet men utan att ge avkall på kvaliteten. Kommer man till en punkt då brott ej kan styrkas, så ska utredningen läggas ner. Punkt. Så borde ha skett för länge sedan. I praktiken har Ny's sätt att (icke)bedriva utredning lett till ett flerårigt faktiskt frihetsberövande av Assange. Det går inte att befria sig från misstanken att detta kanske till och med var hennes syfte.

Advokat mån, 2017-05-29 17:20

Klokt inlägg av Rolf Hillegren. **Men domstolarna har ett stort medansvar.** Det ligger av tradition inte för domstolarna att häva häktningsbeslut när utredningen gått i stå. Det hade inte varit fel med en mera kritisk inställning vid långa häktningar.

Carax mån, 2017-05-29 18:03

Väl rutet Rolf Hillegren. Det är häpnadsväckande hur Marianne Ny - och för den delen delar av åklagarkåren - försvarat det oförsvarliga med att "det inte har gått" hit och dit. Assange har inte haft någon skyldighet att komma till Sverige eller att medverka alls, punkt slut, materialet ser ut som det gör och bevisfrågan ska bedömas därefter. Vilket Marianne Ny borde ha kommit fram till för länge länge sedan.

Robert C mån, 2017-05-29 18:26

Kan Mariann Ny åtalas? **Då Åklagaren i fallet verkar ha obestriddligen brutit mot lagen 23 kap. 4 § rättegångsbalken om objektivitetsprincipen, undrar om Hon kan åtalas för tjänstefel, eller hur kan hon över huvud taget bedriva fortfarande sin tvivelaktiga verksamhet som åklagare?** Båda FN o mänskliga rättighetsorganisationer o flertal båda Svenska och utländska erfarna jurister har framfört sin kritik o personen i fråga är fortfarande verksam som åklagare. Står åklagare över lagen och kan härja fritt efter egen tycke och tvivelaktiga åsikter och strunta i Lagstiftningen? **Står Åklagare över lagen i dagens Sverige och kan frihetsberöva människor efter egen tycke, utan att få svara inför någon ?**

Lennart mån, 2017-05-29 19:47

Marianne Ny ska väl åtminstone JO anmälas. Det bör ligga i Assanges intresse att själv ombesörja den saken.

Robert C mån, 2017-05-29 20:01

Som lagstiftningen ser ut JO kommer INTE att fälla Åklagaren, med hänvisning att båda tings o hovrätt har tillstyrkt Hennes yrkande om fortsatt häktning i frånvaro och skälig misstanke om brott.

Däremot Särskilda Åklagarenheten borde göra en titt på saken om tjänstefel, för om man innehar en så betrodd position som Åklagare borde följa lagstiftningen. Om man vill företräda målsägare eller vara partisk, alternativt ha Gudkomplex och frihetsberöva folk efter egen tycke då bör vederbörandes lämplighet ifrågasättas.

esas tis, 2017-05-30 12:20

Det är inte bara Marianne Ny som har bedrivit den här politiska charaden, det är även domstolarna som på helt godtycklig basis hävdar att det inte föreligger någon risk för utelämnande till USA. Rättsröten i det här fallet går bortom Marianne Ny och det är nog ingen risk att det åtgärdas anytime soon. Svenskt rättsväsende har visat sig fogligt gång på gång i det här fallet och låtit åren rinna förbi. Det var också relativt väntat att Marianne Ny skulle avsluta genom att lägga all skuld på Assange och medvetet se till så att hans rykte aldrig kan rentvås. Uppdraget slutfört.

Juriststudent mån, 2017-05-29 22:06

Det är exakt sådana här exempel som gör att jag som ung svensk har noll förtroende för den Svenska statsmakten. Då syftar jag inte på Ny's agerande, utan konsekvenserna av detta.

1. Hon undgår ansvar.

2. **Varken media, åklagarmyndigheten, domstolen eller politiker/regeringen anser att det finns ett intresse av att göra något åt saken**, må så vara att dessa fyra ageranden hade sett olikartad ut.

I Sverige står man helt fritt att begå både ditt och datt såvida man inte trampar en maktkompetent eller mediekompetent på tårna. Då blir det ett jävla liv.

Sverige som land har ingen ljus framtid. Ingen som helst. Och man behöver inte ens vara lagd åt det "konspiratoriska främlingsfientliga hållet" -- för att citera media rätt om folk med annan åsikt -- för att komma till den insikten....

Duqu tis, 2017-05-30 03:55

Redan innan pressträffen i nedläggningen av Assange-målet, började ÅKM att "gallra" bort vitala dokument i detta mål. Marianne Ny tog själv beslut om att radera inkomna mail från FBI som ställt okända frågor, för att försvåra framtida efterforskningar. Detta nämns som hastigast samma dag som målet läggs ner. Att då jämföra med hur förra advokaten Hurtig fick en varning av advokatsamfundet för att ha missat att diareföra ett sms från M. Ny i nämnda mål.

Källa: <https://s30.postimg.org/859nhhfsx/aklagare.png>

Har ÅKM någon trovärdighet kvar? Assangeärendet är bara ett av flera fall den senaste tiden som klart pekar på en myndighet i fullt förfall, och som nu också fungerat som nyttig idiot för UD och olika politiker, som mer lyssnar till medierna än att följa de lagar som skrivits och har idag åklagare som läser lagboken som fan läser bibeln.

Sen kan man också diskutera hur Mä-biträden egentligen ska agera, Massi Fritz har passerat gränserna flera ggr i sina mediala utsvävningar, vilket helt inriktat sig på att smutskasta den misstänkte, än att företräda sitt klient på bästa sätt. Att Massi Fritz också sa nej till förhör i England och därigenom förlängde ärendet och pinan för ena målsägaren saknar nog motstycke i svensk rättspraxis. När UNGWAD kom med sitt uttalande i detta ärende, vägrade Sverige att följa dess rekommendation, vilket nu i praktiken också sänkt Sverige till bananrepublik.

Carax tis, 2017-05-30 13:08

Håller helt med om bedömningen av Elisabeth Massi Fritzs agerande, hon har uttalat sig i media som om det vore självklart att Assange vore skyldig (trots att även hon måste ha varit medveten om materialets brister), och har bidragit till tidsutdräkten. Åklagaren kan ju heller inte helt bortse från målsägandebiträdets inställning, så Marianne Ny har säkert haft känslan av att ha Massi Fritz flåsande i nacken. Vilket dock inte är någon ursäkt.

Claes tis, 2017-05-30 04:58

På samma sätt som det var uppenbart att Pirate-bay målet var ett beställningsjobb från Amerikanerna är det uppenbart att Marianne Ny har agerat nickedocka åt samma beställare.

Billy Butt tis, 2017-05-30 07:20

ASSANGE HADE KUNNAT BLI FRI IDAG..... men....han hade blivit oskyldigt dömd
Den som läst förundersöknings materialet i fallet Julian Assange kan lätt konstatera två saker:

- (1) att det inte finns bevis att han gjort sig skyldig till sexbrott enligt BrB 6:e kap.
- (2) att det rörde sig om ett s.k. "ord mot ord" mål.

Slutsatsen man kan dra av detta är att Julian Assange borde aldrig ha ens anhållits och grunder förelag ej för häktning. Då uppstår frågan: "varför drevs detta mål?". Svaret är ganska enkelt. **Målet drevs därför att det är inte politisk korrekt för åklagare i Sverige att avföra sexbrottsmål.** Många åklagare driver målen in i rättssalarna för att

överlämna ansvaret till domstolarna att bestämma om brott har begåtts medan i själva verket är det ÅKLAGARNAS uppgift att bestämma om tillräckligt bevis finns för att stödja tesen om att brott har begåtts. När det gäller dessa sexmål där teknisk bevisning saknas och där ord står mot ord drivs ofta målen av den ena "dåren" efter den andra. Man kan konstatera att en hel del av justitiemorden vi sett i sexmål har berott på ren inkompetens från åklagare och domstolarnas sidor. Med detta menar jag att åklagaren inte vågar, av rädsla (för media kanske -- vad vet jag?) släppa saken och domstolarna leker Gud och tror sig kunna avgöra vem som talar sanningen och vem som ljuger.

Det är vad som hade hänt i fall Julian Assange hade kommit till Sverige. Att han riskerade bli felaktigt dömd var någonting som han och hela hans stab förstod mycket väl!

För några år sedan blev jag kontaktad av företrädare för Julian Assange. De ville veta "min historia" men jag valde att inte förtala det svenska rättsväsendet även om det var en stor frestelse. Istället rådgav jag Assange att åka självmant till Sverige och skaffa en av våra bästa försvarsadvokater. Han gjorde det sistnämnda men inte det förstnämnda.

Med 25 års erfarenhet av att granska sexmål i Sverige kan jag bara konstatera att Julian Assange hade blivit oskyldigt dömd men varit fri idag efter att ha avtjänat ett låt oss säga 2 årigt straff. Om han hade kommit hit är det sannolikt att världen hade fått en inblick i hur Sverige dömer oskyldiga i "ord mot ord" sexmål och den bilden av Sverige som visar oss för att vara så "fina" och "gedigna" förvaltare av de mänskliga rättigheter hade blivit skadad. Och det vore kanske bra i och ed att Sverige skulle tvingas skärpa sig -- eller dålig för Sverige som möjligen kunde avslöjas till världen som en bluffmakare. Om Assange hade dömts oskyldigt i Sverige hade världens media granskat Sverige och vi skulle inte längre ha varit kända i världen bara för Volvo, Saab och ABBA....

Åsa Samsioe tis, 2017-05-30 16:28

Handlar Julian Assange-ärendet bara om Marianne Nys inkompetens och förmodad vänskapskorruption bland jurister som blundar och håller varandra om ryggen? Eller är det värre än så?

Hur kan det komma sig att det bara är pensionerade jurister som vågar uttala sig i ärendet och vad är anledningen till att jag hittills inte har kunnat läsa en enda kritisk artikel av en enda journalist i Sverige hittills?

Kan det vara så illa att det i stället handlar om korruption på systemnivå i vårt kära Sverige, som vi så gärna vill framhålla som föredöme när det gäller etisk/moralisk hållning?

Det är inte bara en hund utan en hel kennel begravd här!

pip ons, 2017-05-31 02:28

Mm detta är anmärkningsvärt. Media reagerar inte när en förundersökning pågår i över sex års tid. Det är helt ok att oskyldiga behandlas så? Misstänkliggörs för grova brott år ut och år in utan att bevis håller för åtal.

Här blir man rädd för denna tigande media. Allvarligt rädd. Varför agerar media så och så länge? År ut och år in. Knappast en slump när samtliga media agerar i samma anda.

Man vill inte ha en media som låter sig tystas. Som låter sig påverkas. Som stillasittande medverkar till att övergrepp kan fortgå....

Åsa Samsioe ons, 2017-05-31 07:05

Anledningen till att jag vet att inga journalister hittills har skrivit kritiskt om hur Assange-ärendet hanterats, är att jag prenumererat på nyheter från Google om Assange.

Jag har också några gånger skrivit till tidningar och frågat varför ingen journalist engagerat sig i ärendet, men aldrig fått något svar.

Däremot har jag vid flera tillfällen kunnat läsa kommentarer från Elisabeth Massi Fritz, som anklagat Assange för att vara feg och dömt honom på förhand, vilket man kan tycka är anmärkningsvärt av en jurist.

Jag har följt Assangeärendet från början, läst polisutredningen som Dick Sundevall lagt ut på nätet och förundrats över hur lite substans det varit i anklagelserna mot Assange.

Jag läste någonstans att polisförhören med de två kvinnorna inte ens spelades in och att den äldre kvinnan förhördes per telefon. Vid sidan av detta var det en massa andra konstigheter, vittnesmål och omständigheter som borde ha talat till Assanges fördel.

Jag är förfärad över hur vårt rättsväsen fungerar.

Anders Dolf Ericsson ons, 2017-05-31 11:26

Så ska man inte heller förglömma att den kvinnan som våldtäkten gällde avbröt förhöret för att hon blev upprörd när hon fick veta att JA anhöllits/häktats i sin frånvaro och att hon aldrig godkände förhöret. Enligt andra vittnesmål i häktningspromemorian framgår det också att hon kände sig överkörd och att man drev målet mot hennes vilja....

Åsa Samsioe ons, 2017-05-31 19:16

Om det är så att Assangeärendet enbart handlar om Marianne Nys inkompetens i kombination med slappa domstolar, som låtit henne hållas, så kan man ju säga att media har missbrukat sin makt över opinionsbildningen till Assanges nackdel, genom att bara publicera artiklar som kritiserar honom, utan att ifrågasätta hur ärendet hanterats. Jag kan bara gå till min egen bekantskapskrets där de flesta nu är övertygade om Assanges skuld utan att ha satt sig in i ärendet.

Men det som stör mig är att ett så tvivelaktigt mål med så små chanser att gå till åtal har föranlett en europeisk arresteringsorder, med enorma kostnader för Storbritannien, som fått rulla på i sex år. Med tanke på de enorma resurser som USA satsat för att komma åt Assange, förstår man ju att det måste finnas en överenskommelse mellan USA, Storbritannien och Sverige kring hur man skall hantera Assange.

Det ligger ju helt i linje med utlämningen av de båda egyptierna **och incidenten när USA tvingade ett plan från Ryssland att landa i Wien för att man trodde att Edward Snowden var med på planet.**

Om styrningen/påtryckningarna har skett från regeringsnivå, blir det hela mer begripligt. Då förstår jag att Marianne Nys uppgift bara har varit att förhala. Hon har varit maximalt passiv och orkade inte ens ta sig till London för att förhöra Assange på Ecuadors ambassad. Istället skickade hon sin medhjälpare. **Det förklarar också varför media tigit som muren och undvikit att kritisera hanteringen av Assangeärendet.** Synd bara om vi har en rättsapparat som lånar sig till handlingar som strider mot svensk lag och på så sätt bidrar till att förstöra människors liv och rykte.

Andreas tors, 2017-06-01 02:21

Det är nog inte bara inkompetens det handlar om, hela syftet med tjänsten var väl att driva de stora mängder tveksamma fall som normalt avskrivs i brist på bevis. Bevisläget har knappast ändrats utan man ville få dit någon som drev dessa fall ändå, vilket man också fick.

Det är alltså inte hennes kompetens som ska ifrågasättas i första hand utan i så fall hennes integritet och den politiska bakgrunden till hennes roll.

Att objektiviteten kunde ifrågasättas var uppenbart redan innan Assange-fallet kom upp, bl.a. med tveksamma uttalanden om att använda frihetsberövanden under utredningen som en sorts straff, inte för att det behövdes för utredningen. Nu tycks samma princip ha använts även i det här fallet med utdragen utredningen och frihetsberövande by proxy.

Det finns ingen ansvarig som kan hävda att de inte visste vad som var på gång.

Åsa Samsioe ons, 2017-05-31 23:59

Beskrivning av hur ett samarbete med USA kring Assange kan ha initierats: Carl Bildt var utrikesminister 2010 när Assange förhördes. Karl Rove, som hade tjänstgjort som chefsrådgivare åt president George W Bush, var jämngammal med Bildt, norskättad och hade deltagit i politikerveckan i Almedalen 2008 och även fungerat som rådgivare åt moderaterna.

Med tanke på att Bildt lärde känna Karl Rove redan på 1970-talet och vid den tidpunkten även höll USA informerade om vad som sades under hemliga svenska regeringsöverläggningar, ligger det nära till hands att misstänka att ett utbyte kring Assange också kan ha ägt rum.

Jag påstår inte att det är så. Jag påstår att **det vore mycket märkligt om Karl Rove inte skulle använda sig av sina redan upparbetade regeringskontakter i Sverige**, när han fick reda på att Assange, USA:s mest eftersökte man, hade förhörts av svensk polis, misstänkt för sexbrott. Resten av historien får man själv föreställa sig..

Mikael tors, 2017-06-01 00:37

Tack för en väl skriven text. Från mitt perspektiv ter det sig mycket solklart att detta handlar om politik. Det är ingen hemlighet att USA vill få tag i Assange och en av vägarna vore att Sverige skickade honom till dem. Men är det så illa? Att vi går USA:s ärenden? Mja, jo, så illa är det. Och nu är det ju så, ironiskt nog, att om man läser wikileaksdokumenten så framgår det i all tydlighet att det handlar om en maktelit som sträcker sig långt utanför USA. En maktelit som innefattar både Obama och Hillary Clinton. En hemlig klubb där de turas om att ge varandra tjänster och gentjänster. Även några Svenska ministrar, affärsintressen och även medier befinner sig i denna maktelit. Är det någon som noterat hur Svensk media rapar upp CNN:s bevisade lögner helt utan någon som helst källkritik? Samma CNN som bevisligen samarbetade med Clinton bakom kulisserna och hjälpte Hillary att fuska i DNC valet och därmed blåste alla andra av demokraternas kandidater på chansen att få vara med och fightas om presidentposten. I Svensk media målades Assange ut som nåt slags monster, fullkomligt grundlöst. Om medierna i Sverige funderar varför ingen tar dem på allvar längre så kan de titta i backspeglarna. Det var deras svartmålning där och då, inom ett ämne som jag råkade vara mycket påläst om, som jag förstod hur oerhört korrupt medierna är. Ingen som vill veta hur världen egentligen fungerar bör läsa dagstidningar eller se nyhetsrapporteringar. Börja med Wikileaks, jobba dig sedan ut därifrån och lär dig granska källor.

Carax tors, 2017-06-01 12:51

Man kan ha hur mycket konspirationsteorier som helst, som ändå aldrig kan verifieras och fastställas, men det räcker så bra med att konstatera att förundersökningen inte har skötts på det sätt som Rättegångsbalken förutsätter, att Marianne Ny, med benäget bistånd av domstolarna, har hållit ärendet levande och Assange häktad under en helt orimlig tid, utan att peka på vart dröjsmålen konkret skulle leda till, och att hon inte fattat beslut åt det ena eller andra hållet inom försvarbar tid. Tror för min del att debatten om sexualmålen, att dessa generellt inte skulle utredas på ett tillfredsställande sätt, och målsägandebiträdenas agerande, har haft störst betydelse. Läs också

Olle Ekstedts betraktelse över tillståndet i rättsväsendet, det finns flera exempel på brist på stringens i åklagarnas agerande än detta, utan att man kan spekulera i konspirationsteorier om samröre med USA. Risken med konspirationsteorierna är att kritiken bara avfärdas som tokstollerier, i stället för att man angriper den orimliga handläggningen som sådan, i förebyggande syfte för framtiden. Angriper man handläggningen motverkar man också agerandet, vad det än beror på.

Medborgarögat fre, 2017-06-02 00:56

Rolf Hillgren ger ett klockrent redovisande av detta spektakel. Trots att åklagartröjan finns i garderoben. Tjusigt!

Claes Borgström i alla ära. Hans skrifter var sällsynt selektiva och enkelvridna. För den som sett alla detaljer och är inläst på fallet måste Borgströms efterhands-försvaret vara som en annan planet. Bra att komma ihåg är att Borgström är uttalad feminist. Säger det mesta. Han vet sanningen fast han inte varit med vid händelserna.

Massi Fritz obehagliga texter i kvällstidningarna tar nog också priset. **Det tycks vara lätt att få plattformar för gallan**, då man har ett känt namn. Feminist ut i fingerspetsarna.

Assange är intelligent och anstränger sig inte för att vara sina belackare till lags, utan ser sina hot och intressen bl.a. gentemot USA som det viktigaste, så klart. Han var också anträffbar för förhör i Stockholm vid tiden för utredningen, men ingen tog tag i detta. Först var det en annan åklagare som lade ner saken, men så kom M. Ny-- förmodad feminist-- in på arenan och skulle visa var skåpet skulle stå.

Det var åklagarens prestige och maktintresse som sinkade saken medan Assange var tillgänglig, öppen där han var och bara väntade. Han har aldrig nekat till att vilja bli förhörd.

Vare sig jag eller Borgström eller Massi Fritz vet om händelserna faller in under definitionen i lagens mening. I och med att han inte fällts och inte heller fällts och sedan friats kan man inte skriva som Fritz och Borgström gör. Det liknar haveristen i Sture Bergwallfallet Göran Lambertz som säger att han bara utnyttjar yttrandefriheten och påstår att han aldrig sagt att Berwall är skyldig ändå utan bara att han kan vara det. Med glidningar och "kan" så kan man säga samma sak som det bokstavligen och sedan komma undan med att man inte sagt det.

Så gör de riktiga hycklarna. Ordlekar och allehanda vändningar. Han visade bara att han stod på statens sida oavsett vad som framkommit. Vissa mord hade ingen kropp och visst mord var visst att personen levde utomlands t.ex. plus mycket annat. En debil ser att Bergwall inte är skyldig om man har koll på alla detaljer. Lambertz ifrågasatte detta utan bättre vetande eller medvetet mot bättre vetande.

Assange glömde visst regnrocken då det regnade för han tyckte han fått beskedet att det inte regnade så mycket att rocken skulle behövas. Tydligt behövs det flera nya medgivandebeslut under en hel natt och på olika saker som ingår i akterna. Ja till det, ja till det, nej till det, ja till det, nej till det o.s.v. **Borde inte lagstiftarna ordna ett formulär att fylla i där ett tiotal rutor för tidpunkter finns och en rad specificeringar som skall fyllas i före akten** annars bedöms det som vårdslöshet och bestraffas även om inget övertramp skett.

Till denna bottenhistoria för rättsväsendet hör att kvinnan själv inte ansåg att det var fråga om någon våldtäkt eller liknande. Det var Marianne Ny som dunkade i dem det. Kan man vara ett brottsoffer om man inte ens vet om det eller har upplevt det är den retoriska frågan?

Om en partner varit otrogen i äktenskapet, men hållit det hemligt, kan då partnern vara ett offer av något man inte lidit av?

Marieanne NY, Borgström och den envetne Massi Fritz tror att de gör samhället en tjänst, men det blir en björntjänst och jakten på den manliga björnen som bara är en del av sin biologiska och hormonella natur, är deras livselixir....

Affärsjurist sön, 2017-06-11 09:07

Jag hade en kommentar till Borgströms debattinlägg där jag hade hoppats på ett klarläggande från honom eller Hillegren eller någon annan förundersökningskunnig, och nu verkar kommentatorsfältet stängt. Jag upprepar min fråga i kondenserad / bearbetad form, och utan att fokusera så mycket på likheterna och skillnaderna mellan de två ärendena dvs det preskriberade där Borgström (fortfarande) är målsägarbiträde och det nyligen nedlagda där E Massi Fritz är målsägarbiträde.

Hur kan rent logiskt M Ny fatta beslut om nedläggning, resp underlåta åtal före preskription, efter att inför engelska domstolar 2011-2012 ha yrkat/vitnat att båda förundersökningarna-- förutom ett förhör i "EMF-ärendet" vars innehåll dock inte skulle utgöra förutsättning för åtal-- var klara för åtal? Vidare att Assange redan då var vederbörligen "charged" i den svenska motsvarigheten?

Kan f ö en åklagare undslippa sin åtalsplikt med hänvisning till utestående formaliaåtgärder som åklagaren själv råder över, om det nu är bristande delgivningsåtgärder som verkligen föranlett nedläggningen?

Om Ny var sanningsenlig inför de engelska domstolarna måste hon ha haft åtalsplikt i det preskriberade ärendet där förhör avhållits, och rimligen även i det nu nedlagda ärendet? Eller: om nedläggningen nyss resp preskriptionen 2015 var någorlunda rimliga pga förundersökningsläget, hur kan hon ha varit sanningsenlig inför de engelska domstolarna och inte ha missbrukat EAW-institutet? EAW får väl inte användas för att enbart få till stånd ett förhör, dvs åtalsläget borde ha varit tillräckligt redan 2011 oavsett det utestående förhöret?

Åsa Samsioe sön, 2017-06-11 10:48

Verkar som om Affärsjurist är den som ställt den mest relevanta frågan i hela Assangesoppan!

Om allt var klart för åtal redan 2011, så hade man väl inte behövt hänga upp målet på Assanges vittnesmål? Han hade dessutom redan förhörts och även rätt att tiga på alla frågor. Och om Marianne Ny missbrukat EAW-institutet borde väl Storbritannien vara ursinniga nu och stämma oss för alla utgifter de haft?

För att förklara/rättfärdiga hur ens hela den här soppan har kunnat äga rum måste man nu fullständigt inkompetensförklara Marianne Ny. Men i rimlighetens namn måste man väl då även inkompetensförklara tingsrätten och hovrätten?

Jurister och andra som skriver inlägg på den här sidan fnyser åt "konspirations-teorier"-- att det kan finnas ett politiskt motiv i Assangeärendet. Uppenbarligen föredrar de att i stället inkompetensförklara vårt rättssystem!

Jag vet inte vad som är värst, men det mest oroande i hela Assangeaffären är pressens totala ointresse. Bådar inte gott för vår demokrati....

Affärsjurist lör, 2017-06-24 08:04

Tack för denna enda kommentar på min fråga hur Nys förundersökningsåtgärder "då" och "nu" ö h t skulle kunna vara förenliga. Då frågan inte verkar komma närmare ett svar, ska man tills vidare alltså anta att Ny rent rättsligt och logiskt måste ha gjort fel? Kanske även i meningen fel i tjänsten?

Någon förundersökningskunnig och varför inte Rolf Hillegren skulle som sagt gärna få reda ut begreppen, gärna med utgångspunkt i debattinlägget ovan.

<http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2017/05/fel-avskrivningsgrund-om-julian-assange-aklagaren-vill-dolja-sina-tillkortakommanden>

Sweden releases ‘fully redacted’ Assange extradition files

RT

30 May 2017

Swedish prosecutors have released documents related to the Scandinavian state’s attempts to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. However, the papers have reportedly been fully redacted, **with even the bullet points being blacked out.**

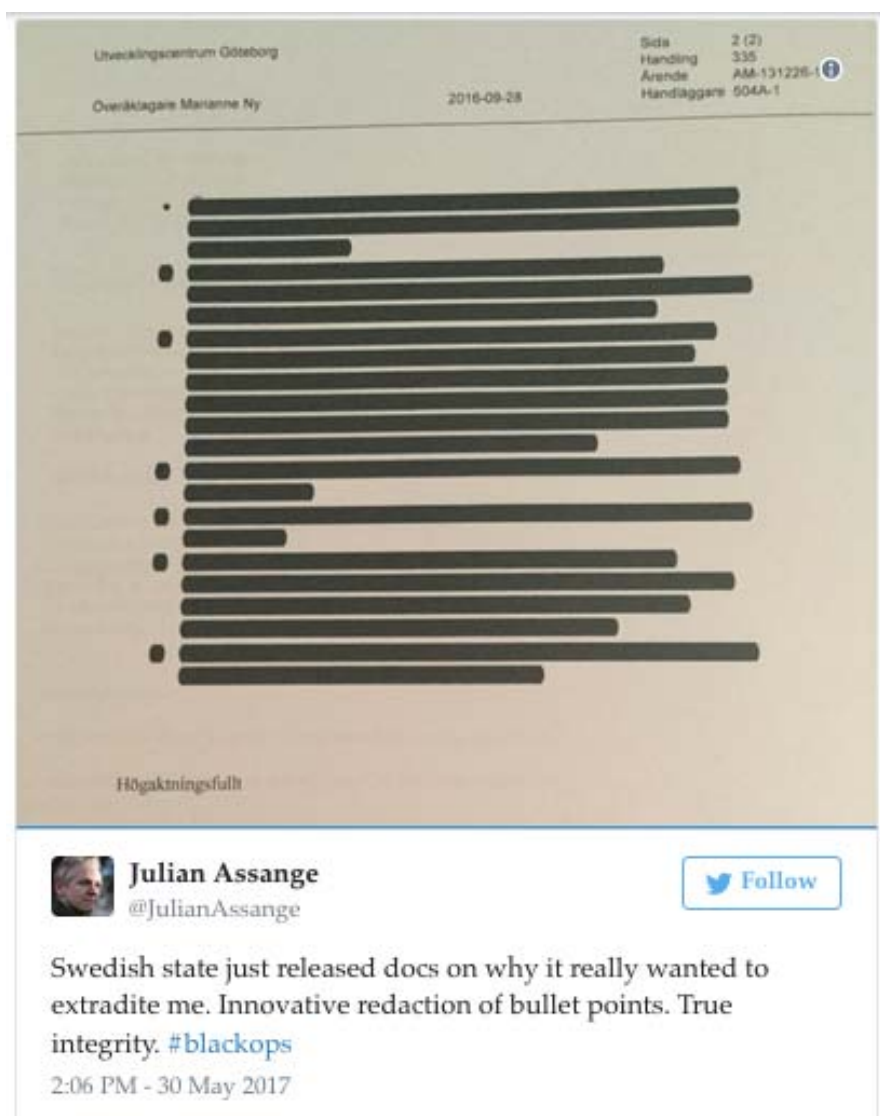
The country’s authorities dropped their preliminary seven-year rape inquiry against Julian Assange earlier this month.

Stefania Maurizi, an investigative journalist for Italian newspaper La Repubblica, posted an image online of a blacked-out document she says was obtained from the Swedish Prosecution Authority under a Freedom of Information request.

The post was in turn shared by Assange and WikiLeaks who commented on the Swedish government’s “innovative redaction of bullet points.”

The document is completely redacted bar one bullet point, sparking jokes from the Twitteratti. Some social media users quipped that they simply didn’t understand the “language” used in the file.

Maurizi revealed she is appealing the Swedish FOIA response, but asked: “Please don’t ask me [to] comment on my FOIA on Julian Assange: I filed a FOIA lawsuit in UK and do not want to undermine it.”



<https://www.rt.com/news/390223-sweden-redacted-assange-foia/>

Vad ville Ny dölja?

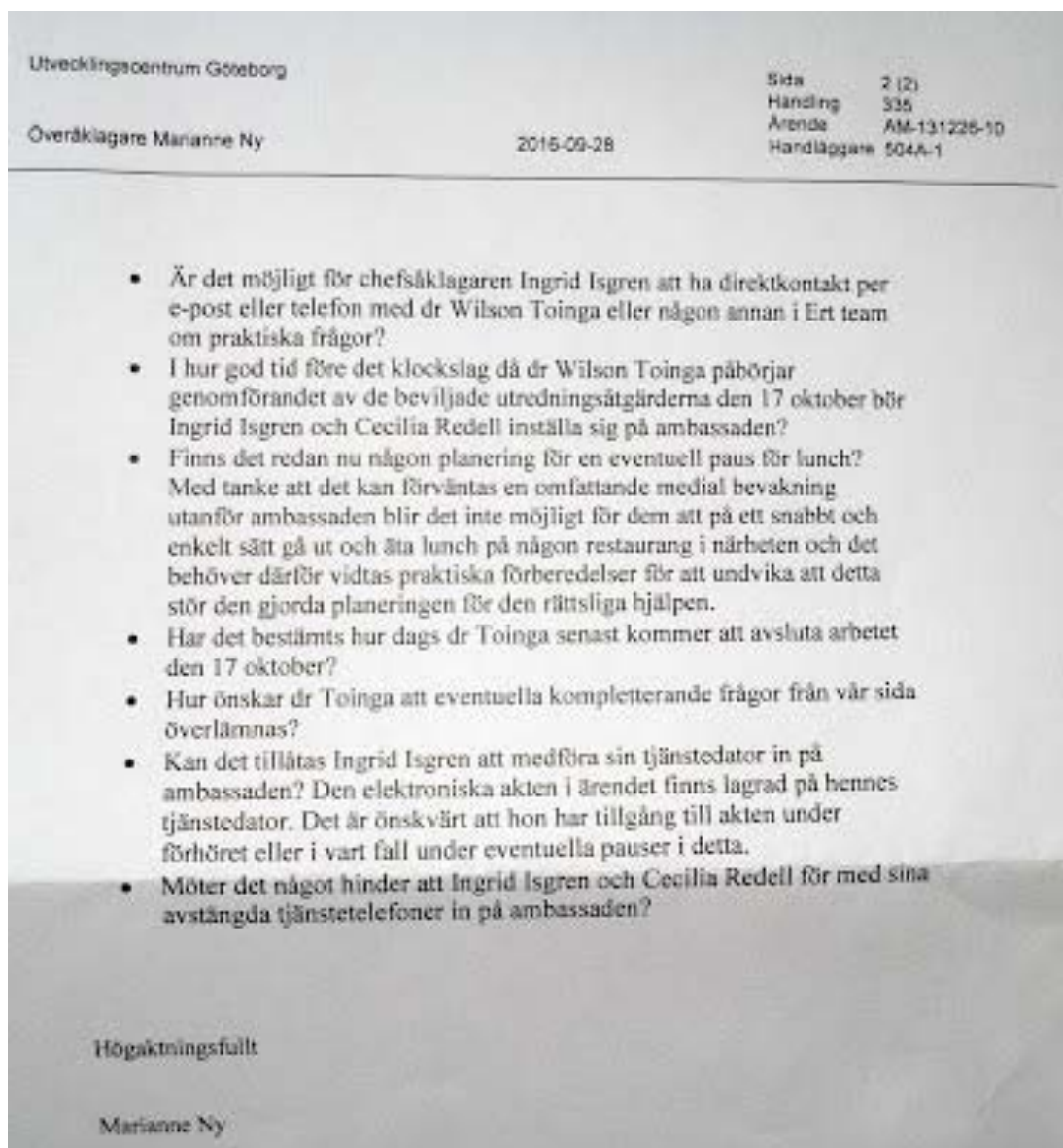
8 Dagar
8 juni 2017

För en tid sedan cirkulerade en lustig bild på sociala media. Ett brev från överåklagare Marianne Ny till myndigheterna i Ecuador där hon tog upp "praktiska frågor" rörande det kommande förhöret med Julian Assange.

När brittiska journalister hade begärt att få en kopia hade samtliga rader på sidan 2 strukits över med svart.

En faksimil blev snabbt viral. En sinnebild av svensk byråkratis "öppenhet" och "transparens".

Nu har Marianne Ny gått med på att lämna ut innehållet. Här är texten som dolde sig bakom de överstrukna raderna:



Vi vet nästan ingenting om vad som framkom i förhöret, men vi vet att det inte räckte för ett åtal --- vilket Ny sedan skyllde på en formalitet: att en tänkt delgivning skulle vara svår att genomföra. **(Sedan när låter svenska åklagare bli att väcka åtal för att delgivningen kan bli besvärlig?)**

Hur som helst vet vi nu vad det var Ny ville mörka från 28 september 2016 till 2 juni 2017, då **hon gick med på att utlämna skrivelsen på 8 dagars begäran**. Inget särskilt märkligt kan tyckas. Ny är av allt att döma noga med detaljerna och var mån om att detta förhörstillfälle som hon hade tagit efter så många år inte skulle rinna ut i sanden.

Men de två sista punkterna är intressanta: varför var Marianne Ny mån om att hennes utsända Ingrid Isgren och Cecilia Redell skulle få ta med sig elektronisk utrustning in på ambassaden? En dator och två "avstängda tjänstetelefoner"?

Önskemålet om datorn kan man i och för sig förstå, men "avslagna tjänstetelefoner"? Trodde Marianne Ny att Ecuadors myndigheter var okunniga om att även en synbart

avslagen telefon (liksom en dator) kan sända vad som sägs i dess närhet?
(<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/columnist/komando/2014/06/20/smartphones-nsa-spying/10548601/>)

Om det var avsikten, vilka skulle vara intresserade av det? Samma stormakt som haft det största intresset av Marianne Nys 6 år långa förhållning av Assangemålet?

Jag vill inte påstå att det föreligger en konspiration. I skarpa lägen krävs inga konspirationer för att få höga svenska ämbetsmän att agera vakthundar för rådande världsordning.

Stefan Lindgren

Julian Assange hits back after Ecuador president brands him a 'hacker'

JULIAN Assange has clashed with the new President of Ecuador just one day after the leader said he would allow the Wikileaks founder to continue living at the country's embassy in London.

*Ross Logan
Daily Express
May 30, 2017*

Ecuador's leftist leader Lenin Moreno announced Mr Assange would be allowed to stay at Ecuador's embassy in London where he first sought political asylum in 2012, but in doing so branded the Australian "a hacker".

In his strongest comments to date against the WikiLeaks founder, Mr Moreno said Mr Assange should "respect the situation he is in".

He said: "Mr Assange is a hacker. That's something we reject, and I personally reject.

"But I respect the situation he is in, which calls for respect of his human rights, but we also ask that he respects the situation he is in."

The President's comments are at odds with his predecessor and mentor Rafael Correa, who had said Mr Assange was a "journalist" and granted him asylum in London five years ago to avoid extradition to Sweden over rape allegations.

Mr Assange had celebrated Mr Moreno's election in April by goading his defeated rival Guillermo Lasso, who had pledged kick him out of the embassy, on Twitter.

But the Wikileaks chief took exception to the new President calling him "a hacker", tweeting: "Posting evidence of corruption is not a hack.

"I am a journalist and editor. Even the United States does not call me a hacker."

This month Swedish prosecutors dropped their investigation into the rape allegations against Mr Assange, but British police he could still be arrested if he left the Ecuadorean embassy for jumping bail.

Mr Moreno took a tough stance against Mr Assange during his election campaign, warning him "not to intervene in the politics" of countries friendly to Ecuador.

He said: "His status does not allow him to talk about the politics of any country, let alone ours."

But it is a warning Mr Assange has so far failed to heed.

During his time at the embassy, Mr Assange has been ruthless with his critical assessment of global politics.

Earlier this month he belittled the CIA, branding the agency as "dangerously incompetent" after the agency deemed him a "friend of terrorists".

The Case For Droning Julian Assange

*Jon Levine
Mediaite
June 5th, 2017*

After a very long period of molycoddling, the Trump administration appears to finally be getting tough with Wikileaks. During a press conference in April, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said that he was looking for ways to arrest and prosecute its mercurial leader, Julian Assange. That same month, CIA Director Mike Pompeo denounced the organization as a "hostile intelligence service," but added that the problem of Wikileaks and Assange offered no "quick fix."

With all due respect to the estimable CIA Director, I would proffer there is a quick fix.

We can drone Julian Assange.

In a controlled targeted strike, the United States can blow up the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he currently resides, and put an end to Mr. Assange and Wikileaks.

Now hear me out; I don't use the "D-word" lightly. The fact is, Mr. Assange is no ordinary hacker, fleecing little old ladies or snatching R&D from Microsoft. He is a nefarious actor on the world stage. His disclosures have directly aided and abetted America's international adversaries from Russia to ISIS, and his leaks have unquestionably made Americans and many others less safe around the world. Assange's actions are not hacking, they are cyberterrorism — and they should be dealt with thusly.

Assange should be given an ultimatum, say 48 hours, to surrender to British authorities, or face a drone strike.

"If you accept the premise that drone attacks are appropriate in some situations where it is impossible to apprehend suspected terrorists, then a proposed drone attack against Assange seems permissible," Robert Precht, a former public defender told Mediaite. "Giving the option of surrendering or being attacked actually seems generous."

It's a subject on which Precht is uniquely qualified to opine. In 1993 he served as the defense attorney for World Trade Center bomber Mohammad Salameh, which he later recounted in his book, *Defending Mohammad*.

“Having defended the lead suspect in the World Trade Center bombing case, I would say the evidence of conspiring to commit terrorist acts is greater in Assange’s case than the evidence against some of the World Trade Center defendants, who are all serving life sentences now,” he told Mediaite.

It takes only a cursory look at Assange’s record to see how Precht came to his conclusion.

Back in 2010, Wikileaks released a cable listing numerous sensitive sites around the world. As the *New York Times* reported at the time, the listing was a potential goldmine for terrorists looking to launch attacks against U.S. interests and personnel. Then-British Foreign Secretary William Hague called the leak “particularly reprehensible,” adding to BBC Radio that, “there is great concern, of course, about disclosing a list of targets that could be of use to terrorists or saboteurs.”

Just a year later, another document dump from Wikileaks released the names of thousands of individuals whose inclusion in secret U.S. cables stood to put them in immense personal danger. Many of them were activists and fellow whistleblowers like Assange himself. Publishing the files without the redactions served no public interest.

“We deplore the decision of WikiLeaks to publish the unredacted state department cables, which may put sources at risk,” read a joint statement issued by Assange’s then-media partners, *The New York Times*, *El Pais*, *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel* and the *Guardian* which reported the news.

Per the *Guardian*: “Diplomats, governments, human rights charities and media organizations had urged WikiLeaks’s founder, Assange, not to publish the full cache of cables without careful source protection ... WikiLeaks has published its full archive in an easily accessible and searchable manner, the first time the content has been made widely available to those without sophisticated technical skills.”

It wasn’t a one-off either. Wikileaks has continued its practice of recklessly releasing unredacted names, with a fresh example in just March of this year.

“To me, the fact that he released documents identifying vulnerable targets of terrorism is damning,” said Precht.

The amazing thing about droning Julian Assange is that, once one accepts the premise that he is drone-worthy, **the elegance and humanity of that option becomes readily apparent.**

The British, which the BBC estimates have spent £12,000,000 on Assange related security costs, would likely be happy enough for any solution that gets rid of him. And since there is no risk of Assange escaping, negotiations between the U.S. and Ecuador could take place with full transparency with zero risk for miscommunication.

If a credible threat of drone strike were calmly issued to the Ecuadorians, they would almost certainly eject Assange, negating the need for it in the first place. On the odd chance they refused, a date for droning could be set and publicly announced, giving Embassy staff ample time to evacuate themselves from the area. London's finest, meanwhile, could ensure the zone was completely cordoned off from civilians.

At the risk of being trite — it would be like droning fish in a barrel.

As former president George W. Bush once said, the United States should make no distinction between terrorists and those harbor them. **Ecuador is harboring a terrorist, and the United States should send a message that, that is still not okay.**

• *Jon Levine is Mediate's Morning Editor.*

<http://www.mediaite.com/online/the-case-for-droning-julian-assange/>

Wikileaks Documentary Makers Accuse Assange of Censorship

Brenda Coughlin, Yoni Golijov and Laura Poitras
Newsweek
6/16/2017

We are the producers of *Risk*, a documentary film about Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. We unequivocally defend WikiLeaks' journalistic right to publish true and newsworthy information.

The Trump administration's threats against WikiLeaks and attacks on press freedom are chilling. As Margaret Sullivan recently argued in the Washington Post, prosecuting WikiLeaks under the Espionage Act would set a dangerous precedent for all journalists.

We were disturbed, however, to learn that Julian Assange and WikiLeaks sent cease and desist letters to our distributors demanding they stop the release of *Risk*: "We therefore demand that you immediately cease the use and distribution of all images of the Named Participants and that you desist from this or any other infringement of the rights of the Named Participants in the future."

In WikiLeaks' efforts to prevent the distribution of *Risk*, **they are using the very tactics often used against them — legal threats, false security claims, underhanded personal attacks, misdirection — and with the same intentions: to suppress information and silence speech.** [*WikiLeaks claims that Poitras has violated several crucial aspects of the agreement concerning the film; see page 92, above. —A.B.*]

Since 2016, Assange and his lawyers have repeatedly **demand**ed that we remove **scenes from the film in which Assange speaks about the two women who made sexual assault allegations against him** in 2010 [*No, the police and prosecutor did so "on their behalf". --A.B.*] and Sweden's investigation which has since been discontinued.

In response to our refusal to remove these scenes, Assange and his lawyers are now claiming that *Risk* threatens the safety of the staff who consented to being filmed, and

furthermore, that we are being sexist by including Assange's own comments about women in the film.

These arguments are not only false, they are a deliberate effort at misdirection.

Risk was filmed over the course of many years, beginning in 2011. Assange and WikiLeaks freely consented to participating in the film, knowing we were making an independent documentary. Neither WikiLeaks nor Assange have any editorial control of *Risk*. **There were individuals who requested from the beginning not to appear in the film, and those requests were respected.**

Wikileaks and their lawyers were shown the film before each public screening, most recently inside the Ecuadorian embassy in London on April 1, 2017. Each time, we invited their responses.

WikiLeaks' comments have consistently been about image management, including: demands to remove scenes from the film where Assange discusses sexual assault allegations against him; requests to remove images of alcohol bottles in the embassy because Ecuador is a Catholic country and it looks bad; requests to include mentions of WikiLeaks in the 2016 U.S. presidential debates; and, requests to add more scenes with attorney Amal Clooney because she makes WikiLeaks look good.[???

It is only after we declined to make the changes they tried to impose that WikiLeaks raised objections to *Risk*. [So? --A.B.] Their attempts to censor the content of the film are an effort to prevent reporting on Assange's own words. They also constitute a saddening break with WikiLeaks' own ideals.

Last month, WikiLeaks' lawyers published an op-ed saying they object to our editing in the United States. However, Assange has known since 2015 that we were editing in the U.S. In 2016, he signed an agreement to license WikiLeaks' own footage to us and raised no objection to mailing a hard drive with footage directly to our editing room in New York City.

WikiLeaks has also repeatedly publicized their participation in *Risk*, most recently re-tweeting a link to the film's trailer on April 10, 2017 (a tweet that has since been deleted), without raising any concerns.

In their cease and desist letter, lawyers for WikiLeaks and Assange state: "The unauthorized release of the Film has caused our clients to suffer ongoing irreparable harm, and exponentially increasing damages every time a new viewer sees the Film."

All the participants in *Risk* agreed for years to be in the film. We have no obligation to seek WikiLeaks' or Assange's authorization to release the film. In fact, our rights under the First Amendment are protected precisely because we are engaging in independent journalism. Assange himself has criticized the media for seeking permission from public figures before releasing stories.

Like WikiLeaks, our journalism has been the target of U.S. government investigation, secret grand jury, and threats by elected officials. We fully understand and empathize with the dangers WikiLeaks is facing, and we stand in solidarity with all journalists and publishers around the world currently under attack.

www.newsweek.com/wikileaks-documentary-makers-accuse-assange-censorship-626613?piano_t=1

Risk review: Wikileaks documentary offers unparalleled access to Julian Assange

Jake Wilson
The Age
 June 16, 2017

In 2011, Julian Assange and a handful of his supporters are gathered in Ellingham Hall, the Norfolk manor where he's taken refuge while battling extradition to Sweden over claims of sexual assault.

One of Wikileaks' encrypted files has been hacked, meaning that tens of thousands of "unredacted" diplomatic cables are about to be released online. As Assange rubs his eyes with the look of a man fighting chronic fatigue, one of his allies, Wikileaks editor Sarah Harrison, tries to get Hillary Clinton on the phone.

When Harrison is given the runaround from the State Department, Assange takes over the conversation, growing testy as he tries to convey the emergency to some guy named Chad on the other end of the line. "To make it clear, we don't have a problem. You have a problem."

This tense, character-driven scene could be inserted, beat for beat, into a dramatisation of the Wikileaks story. In an observational documentary like Laura Poitras' *Risk*, it's almost too effective to seem real — as if the atmosphere of pulp suspense surrounding media coverage of Wikileaks had engulfed both filmmaker and subject, leaving no difference between fictionalised history and the real thing.

Poitras has played these kinds of tricks before — famously in *Citizenfour*, her 2014 documentary about Edward Snowden, which mimicked the style of a conspiracy thriller. A major success in its own right, *Citizenfour* originated as a spinoff of *Risk*, which has been a work-in-progress since 2010.

Over the years, **Poitras has been given unparalleled access to Assange and the Wikileaks team** — but other filmmakers have managed to beat her to the punch with this subject matter, notably Alex Gibney in his 2013 documentary *We Steal Secrets*.

Perhaps as a result, *Risk* is briefer and more impressionistic than might be expected from its long genesis, assuming a baseline level of familiarity with the Wikileaks saga. Titlecards with facts and figures seem meant to jog our memory rather than tell us anything fresh.

Poitras shows little interest in passing judgement on Wikileaks as an organisation, much less in exploring the substance of what they've revealed about — for example, the American military or the CIA.

Rather, she aims to convey the texture of unfolding events from an insider's point of view. **Her spacey voiceover suggests she imagines herself as a character in a science-fiction or spy story, even including accounts of her Assange-related dreams.**

Reports indicate Assange was enraged by the film's original cut, and since its premiere at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival it has been re-edited by Poitras to reflect their falling out.

While there's no smoking gun here that will radically change anyone's viewpoint, judging by the current version, **Assange's fury is understandable**. Many scenes reveal him as both predictably high-handed and surprisingly naive, particularly in his private responses to the sexual misconduct claims.

Sympathetic or not, he remains a fascinatingly weird screen presence, with mannerisms as distinctive as those of any cult performer: the darting eyes and superior smirk, the hand gestures that turn every exchange into an impromptu lecture. [*Or he has personal mannerisms like most other folks. --A.B.*]

Poitras and her editors use these physical details for their own sly purposes, assembling the portrait of an Assange who's both a sophisticated player and a creature of appetite and instinct (one early shot shows him pulling the cap off a bottle with his teeth [*which demonstrates that he is "a creature of appetite and instinct"?*]).

Some moments are bizarre enough to rival the new *Twin Peaks*: Assange taking a meeting in a leafy grove and reacting suspiciously [???] to birds, or adopting a preposterous disguise to fool the British media. Then there's the scene where he's visited in the Ecuadorian embassy by celebrity fan-girl Lady Gaga, a 21st-century equivalent to Andy Warhol hanging out with one of his "superstars".

Too bad Poitras didn't take a hint from Lynch or Warhol regarding duration. If *Risk* were 10 or 20 hours long, it might not be any more "balanced" but it would have the potential of being an essential work, a close-up view of one of the great stories of our time.

As it stands, it provides a few extra pieces of a fascinating puzzle -- while **testifying to the wholesale blurring of distinctions between journalism, art and entertainment**, a process far advanced in Warhol's day and virtually complete in ours.

<http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/movies/risk-review-wikileaks-documentary-offers-unparalleled-access-to-julian-assange-20170613-gwq775.html>

Pamela Anderson pens online love letter to Julian Assange

Glasgow Evening Times
18 June 2017

Pamela Anderson has penned an online love letter to Julian Assange, branding Theresa May the "worst Prime Minister in living memory" and calling for the WikiLeaks founder's release.

The former Baywatch star also calls on world leaders, and China, to intervene and help free Mr Assange, who has been holed up in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London for almost five years.

She said there is no longer any reason to keep Mr Assange "trapped in a small room" now Sweden has dropped its case against him.

Anderson continues: "But Theresa May -- who kept him imprisoned in the embassy for 5 years -- refuses to allow him to leave.

"Theresa May, who is on her last legs. Theresa May of the pyhrric victory (sic).

"Theresa May, who won't shake the hand of the victims of the Grenfell fire. Who doesn't care about poor people. Who doesn't care about justice or peace. Who doesn't care about Julian.

"The worst Prime Minister in living memory."

Anderson also invites French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte to the July opening of her new restaurant in France, and asks him to grant Mr Assange asylum.

Anderson uses the letter to address Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, and highlights their mutual compassion for animals, while stating Mr Assange should be given compensation.

To Mr Corbyn, she said: "I have watched the recent UK election with great interest. I have cheered the turn in your party's fortunes! You are clearly a decent and fair man."

Anderson describes the US government as the "ultimate bully, a superpower, with 1,200 military bases all around the world".

In the letter posted on pamelaandersonfoundation.org, the ex-playboy model gushes over how his "bravery and courage" make Mr Assange sexy.

She signs it: "I love you, Pamela."

Anderson was spotted delivering lunch to Mr Assange at the embassy in October last year and then again in February this year, saying she was "concerned" about his health and his family.

She later wrote about him on her blog in a long message which was accompanied by a photo of him, saying: "My relationship with Julian --- it's no secret. He is one of my favourite people and he might be the most famous, most politicised refugee of our time."

www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/15355031.Pamela_Anderson_pens_online_love_letter_to_Julian_Assange_branding_Theresa_May__worst_Prime_Minister_in_living_memory_/

June 19 Marks Five Years of 'Illegal' Incarceration for Assange, But Also Hope

Sputnik
19.06.2017

Ever since June 19 2012, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has been confined to the Ecuadorian Embassy in Knightsbridge, London. Journalists and supporters flocked to the building to mark the fifth anniversary of the day he "moved in" — and hear Assange make a special announcement.

Assange — and his supporters around the world — undoubtedly breathed a simultaneous sigh of collective relief in May when, after a marathon seven year legal stalemate, Swedish prosecutors dumped their investigation into allegations of sexual assault into the 45-year old Australian computer programmer.

After all, the development would surely mean that Assange's ordeal — trapped day in, day out in a small room in an office that takes up a mere 2,153 square feet on a single floor of a residential house, with no access to outdoor space and no direct sunlight — was finally at an end.

However, it quickly became apparent Assange's problems were far from over.

London's Metropolitan Police — which had stood watch outside the Embassy's door 24 hours a day, seven days a week ever since he entered it, at an estimated cost to UK taxpayers of US\$16.8 million (£13 million) between 2012 and 2015 alone — were quick to issue a statement of their own.

Chiefs said the force remained "obliged" to execute an arrest warrant issued in 2012 by Westminster Magistrate's Court after Assange failed to surrender to authorities. In other words, Assange will still be arrested if he leaves the embassy, as he remains wanted in the UK — albeit for a much less serious offense.

So dozens of Assange's advocates descended on the embassy June 19, to well-wish and hear the man himself make a "special announcement" on his ongoing imprisonment from the embassy balcony, a frequent host to Assange's "press conferences." Perhaps unsurprisingly, those gathered were strongly supportive of WikiLeaks' controversial frontman.

Sputnik journalists present did not encounter a bad word said about Assange, with one fan referring to him as a "bringer of truth, who tells the truth the government won't" — another suggested he "spreads hope."

Likewise, the crowd was unanimous — Assange's prolonged period of effective incarceration in the claustrophobic confines of the embassy directly resulted from stubbornness on the part of the UK government.

"It's the government's choice to keep him here. All they have to do is call off the dogs, and it would save taxpayers loads of money. It's not Assange causing this problem, it's the government refusing to allow him freedom of movement," an attendee told Sputnik.

In addition to members of the public, two of Assange's most prominent public supporters — renowned LGBT rights campaigner Peter Tatchell and investigative journalist John Pilger — were also in attendance.

"He did not choose to seek asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy. He was granted asylum by the Ecuadorian government. It is the responsibility of the British government to honor its obligations under the refugee convention, and allow Julian Assange safe passage. Currently, the British government is refusing to do that. They consistently refuse to offer guarantees he won't be extradited to the US, where he is likely to face very serious charges that could land him in prison for decades. They have made the situation worse via their intransigence," Mr. Tatchell told Sputnik.

Mr. Pilger likewise slammed the government for refusing to ensure Assange's freedom. "The US has made it clear he will be extradited from the UK and they will put him behind bars in the kind of hellhole Chelsea Manning had to endure. Edward Snowden said Assange were on a manhunt target list. Those are very good reasons for him not to come out. He's been charged with nothing, the farcical Swedish case is gone, he's been vindicated. This is illegal, this is against international law, and this has been imposed on him. He should be given free passage out of the country immediately," Mr. Pilger told Sputnik.

Given the surging support on display, it's disappointment surely spread like wildfire throughout the gathered when Assange's legal team made clear he would not be speaking after all that lunchtime — although for reasons the assembled would surely welcome.

The announcement had not been canceled outright, merely postponed — due an "imminent meeting" hastily arranged with UK officials.

Melinda Taylor, head of Assange's legal team, said they received confirmation there will be a meeting with the British authorities, and neither they nor Assange wished to prejudice that meeting.

"There is no legal reason to keep Julian here. We'd say the UK arrest warrant has no basis for enforcement — **he wasn't violating bail, he sought asylum here, which is a lawful right. His whereabouts have been known, he hasn't fled the jurisdiction**, this isn't a bail violation. In any event, he's effectively served far more than the maximum sentence that would apply to a bail violation, which is 12 months. In all, Assange has suffered through seven years of arbitrary detention," Ms. Taylor told Sputnik.

The team are said to be optimistic a "satisfactory" outcome can be found which respects the British legal process and restores Assange's freedom and dignity.

<https://sputniknews.com/military/201706191054770136-assange-anniversary-embassy-pilger/>

How WikiLeaks Has Survived While Julian Assange Has Been Holed Up in London

Sputnik
19.06.2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has spent the past five years in the Ecuadorian embassy. So how has WikiLeaks managed to continue publishing revelations, such as the Vault 7 files?

Designed as a "not-for-profit media organization," it was dreamed up by Assange, because he felt mainstream media was not properly holding governments to account and was too scared of losing its advertising or being closed down if it exposed serious wrongdoing.

Assange had registered the domain name, a play on Wikipedia, in 1999 and it was always his intention to get hold of highly confidential material.

On its website it says: "WikiLeaks specializes in the analysis and publication of large datasets of censored or otherwise restricted official materials involving war, spying and corruption."

For the US government, and many others, that statement alone makes it a hostile organization which threatens the secrecy which the CIA, the Secret Service and the US diplomatic corps rely on.

When WikiLeaks published its most damaging revelations in the spring of 2010 — diplomatic cables which had been leaked by US soldier Bradley Manning — Assange was threatened by the US with prosecution under the 1917 Espionage Act.

In August 2010 the Swedish prosecutor's office issued an arrest warrant for Assange, in connection with allegations of rape and molestation by two women dating from incidents earlier that summer.

In May 2012, Britain's Supreme Court ruled that he should be extradited to Sweden and the following month Assange accepted Ecuador's offer of sanctuary and vanished behind the doors of the Latin American nation's embassy. He has been there ever since.

But despite all this WikiLeaks did not fold. So how was it able to soldier on?

As WikiLeaks grew Assange realized he had to cooperate with like-minded individuals and he worked with people like Daniel Domscheit-Berg, in Germany, and others.

But Assange's abrasive personality makes him a hard person to get along with [???] and Domscheit-Berg quit in 2010, setting up his own site, OpenLeaks, with little success. *[No success, apparently — possibly in part because, according to some sources, Domscheit-Berg is "a hard person to get along with". --A.B.]*

A source with knowledge of how WikiLeaks operates said: "**WikiLeaks hasn't operated without Julian. It doesn't exist independently of him at all. It consists of him and whoever he has persuaded to help him at any point,**" the source told Sputnik.

"If there's money, some of them get paid a little. If not, they're just volunteers. **There have never been more than a handful of helpers. There have been times when it was Julian alone,**" they added.

"**For the last five years, he has been running things from inside the Ecuadorean embassy.**"

WikiLeaks reportedly employs a small paid staff, who work in various secret locations and is **supported by around a thousand volunteers**.

In December 2010, the US government forced PayPal and a number of credit card companies to stop accepting donations for WikiLeaks.

WikiLeaks has also been the target of several Denial of Service attacks by hackers, possibly employed by the US government.

But despite everything it remains in operation, and earlier this year the Vault 7 files were released, containing several stories which were highly damaging to the CIA.

Bradley Manning, the soldier who has undergone a sex change and is now known as Chelsea Manning, was released from prison last month after President Obama commuted the sentence.

<https://sputniknews.com/europe/201706191054769442-wikileaks-survival-julian-assange/>

Julian Assange: Five years without sunlight

Jeannette Cwienk
Deutsche Welle
2017-06-19

On July 19, 2012, a Tuesday, Julian Assange entered the situation that he would later describe as "detention without charge." This Thursday will mark five years since the WikiLeaks founder fled to the Ecuadorean Embassy in London and asked for political asylum. Just prior to that, his appeal against extradition to Sweden had been denied by the UK Supreme Court.

Sweden had issued a warrant for the Australian's arrest in November 2010. The charge: Assange was accused of having raped a woman in Sweden and of having sexually harassed others. He has denied the charges to this day, criticizing them as politically motivated. He feared that once he arrived in Sweden, he would be extradited to the United States.

When WikiLeaks published the video "Collateral Murder" in April 2010, Washington declared Assange public enemy number one. The video shows a US helicopter attack that killed 11 people in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, including two journalists.

Further revelations would follow. The internet platform eventually went on to publish some 250,000 classified documents from US embassies around the world, clearly showing, for instance, that the US intelligence agency NSA had spied on German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Although no official charges have been filed against Assange by the USA, the case of Chelsea Manning, who was instrumental in providing the platform with a large number of classified documents, shows that the country does not fool around when it comes to the issue of whistleblowers. Manning was sentenced to 35 years in jail. He

was later pardoned by President Barack Obama, after having served seven years in a US military prison.

It thus seems that Assange had good reason to apply for political asylum at the Ecuadorean Embassy. Since then, he has been living, together with his cat, in a remodeled 20-square-meter (215-square-foot) office. Since the embassy has no yard, media sources say that the most important piece of equipment in the space is a daylight lamp. The 45-year-old maintains contact with the outside world via computer and telephone. A shower was also fitted into the office space, and it is said that his meals are delivered by a nearby pub.

Assange faces the threat of arrest should he ever decide to leave the embassy grounds. This is despite the fact that Sweden's judiciary dropped all charges against him in May of this year. Shortly after Sweden made the announcement, British authorities voiced their intent to arrest him should he leave Ecuadorean territory. The reason: Assange violated the terms of his bail in 2012.

So when it was announced that Sweden had dropped charges against him, Assange celebrated from a safe distance. He tweeted that the decision was an important victory, "for me and for the UN human rights system." At the same time, he decried having spent "almost five years here in the embassy, without sunlight." And speaking from an embassy balcony, he told supporters that "the proper war is just commencing."

But he is conducting that war behind the drapes of his self-imposed exile. And those close to him say that the situation is having adverse effects on his health. **In February 2016 his mother told the Australian radio station ABC that he suffered from heart problems, chronic pneumonia and serious pain in his shoulder.**

Legal experts say the British authorities' desire to arrest Assange for breaching his bail agreement is dubious. Nikolaos Gazeas, an expert for international criminal law, told DW that such infractions were generally at the bottom end of the criminal liability scale. He went on to say that a warrant for Assange's arrest was unreasonable in light of the extremity of his situation.

Is the truth of the matter rather that Assange is to be arrested so that he can be extradited to the USA? Several US media outlets have reported that the US Attorney General's Office is already working on a document that will charge him and other WikiLeaks founders with conspiracy, theft of government documents and breaking espionage laws. To date, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has not confirmed the stories, but it has not denied them either. US Attorney General Jeff Sessions himself declared that Assange's arrest and the fight against the leaking of state secrets would be a "priority" for the US government.

So it seems things do not look good for Assange. And his reputation as a fighter for freedom of opinion has also been tarnished over the last couple of years. For instance, WikiLeaks has been accused of working in concert with Russia. The organization sparked a storm of protest last July when it published emails documenting leading representatives within the Democratic Party as favoring US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at the expense of her more left-leaning challenger for the party's nomination, Senator Bernie Sanders. *[Why omit the fact that no evidence has ever been presented to refute his denial that he has been "working in concert with Russia"?* --A.B.]

Assange is also **suspected** of having wanted to get involved in the recent French presidential election. In February, Assange told the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* that he wanted to release compromising information on then candidate, and now president, Emmanuel Macron. The revelations never came to light, but that did not stop Russian media outlets such as Sputnik and Russia Today (RT), both of which have close ties to the Kremlin, from spreading Assange's announcement as if the scandal were already there. *[In what way do these reports by Sputnik and RT — no less well documented than numerous report on many subjects by the Western mainstream media with close ties to the White House and Whitehall — tarnish Assange? --A.B.]*

Even support from Ecuador seems to be waning at this point. Just recently, newly elected Ecuadorean President Lenin Moreno called Assange a hacker. He went on to say that hacking was something that he and his country rejected. During the election campaign, Moreno warned Assange against meddling in South American politics. Nevertheless, the president says that he will honor Assange's political asylum, **stressing the fact that Ecuador will continue to give the Australian refuge in his country's London embassy.** *[Does that constitute “waning support”? --A.B.]*

<http://www.dw.com/en/julian-assange-five-years-without-sunlight/a-39297322>

Julian Assange cancels planned 'special announcement'

WikiLeaks founder had scheduled press conference at Ecuadorian embassy to mark five years since he claimed asylum

*Ewen MacAskill
The Guardian
19 June 2017*

The WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, has abruptly cancelled a press conference at which he had planned to make a “special announcement”.

Journalists and supporters had gathered under a balcony at the Ecuadorian embassy in central London, from where Assange usually conducts press conferences.

The latest was to have coincided with the fifth anniversary of his taking refuge in the embassy.

The Swedish authorities have dropped an investigation into sex-related allegations, but there is an arrest warrant out for him in the UK accusing him of jumping bail.

Assange expressed hope in an interview with the Press Association ahead of the planned press conference that a standoff with the UK authorities might be resolved.

He cited various reasons to be hopeful. **“We have support across many parts of the political spectrum in the United States, including most of the mainstream media.**

“Within Europe there is a growing recognition that extraditing me or any of our staff to Trump’s America is not a way to win votes.”

Assange has repeatedly expressed fears that arrest in the UK would lead to his extradition to the US, where he could be charged with espionage offences. Without the UK arrest warrant, Assange would be free to fly to Ecuador, which has offered him asylum.

Melinda Taylor, one of Assange's legal team who was outside the embassy on Monday, said: "Julian was scheduled to make a special announcement today. I am not privy to that. His UK lawyers were told there is going to be a meeting with UK authorities.

"Under advisement, he cancelled the announcement to assure negotiations proceeded in an open and constructive manner because it is essential there is a resolution as soon as possible to what the UN stated is illegal and arbitrary detention."

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jun/19/julian-assange-cancels-special-announcement-ecuadorian-embassy>

The Price that Julian Assange Pays

People who challenge power are often viewed by their supporters as more icons than human beings thus missing the personal costs of their actions, a reality that Julian Assange's mother revealed to Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein.

*Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein
Consortium News
June 21, 2017*

June 19 marked the fifth full year that Wikileaks founder Julian Assange spent at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he was given asylum against the threat of arrest from a Swedish prosecutor pursuing a sex-abuse investigation (since dropped) and possible extradition to the United States for a potential espionage charge related to publication of U.S. secrets.

To gain insights into what this long ordeal has meant to Assange, an Australian native, Randy Credico of WBAI's "On the Fly" and Dennis Bernstein of "Flashpoints" on Pacifica Radio interviewed Assange's mother, Christine Assange. The interview also explored the deep history that led her son to found Wikileaks and to challenge the enormous powers of the U.S. and British governments by exposing the truth about their dangerous, deadly and often illegal policies.

Randy Credico: I guess I should begin by asking, how long has it been since you've seen your son Julian?

Christine Assange: A number of years, but we communicate.

RC: Yes, you communicate, but it's not the same, so far away. It must be difficult. I mean he's not in prison, but it may as well be prison. I know for a mother to be separated from her son like this, it must be grueling, and a difficult row to hoe on a daily basis.

CA: It is. It's very hard to put into words this experience that we're going through over the last seven years. There have been periods where I've coped and periods where I

haven't. It tends to go up and down, as I guess Julian does as well. And it's very hard to communicate with your son **when you know that every phone call that you're making, every text that you're sending, is being listened to.** Or even a letter that you write. You end up feeling that it's almost useless trying to communicate anything real.

RC: That must really take its toll. So it will be five years [on June 19th]. Five years! Can you believe that he's been there for five years at this point in time?

CA: No, the idea is horrifying to me actually. I mean we know that he's been detained for seven years without charge, but five of those have been in the Ecuadorian Embassy [in London], and we thank the people of Ecuador for their protection.

But during those five years, Randy, the U.K. government and the Swedish government **have refused all of Julian's requests for the normal one hour a day of life-giving fresh air, exercise and sunshine.** It's a human right abuse of the grandest order.

Anyone who is involved with rights of refugees around the world should be highlighting his case. Here we are in the Western supposedly free world, interning someone without charge, and then denying them the rights that even people in Third World prisons get, **including the right to have medical tests.** He had a very bad shoulder with bad chronic pain for years, and they refused to allow him to have an MRI test.

Dennis Bernstein: Let me just ask you this question: do you remember the last time you were able to give your son a nice big hug?

CA: Yes, four years ago.

DB: Could you tell us what you remember about it?

CA: It's hard keeping up with all the fighting, Dennis. It's very hard to explain. But I got a big hug when I left. I was only there for a few weeks. I've actually got a few things here that I've got to look after. But probably the best time I remember him is the one with the picture you've got on your show, of me and him with his arm around me. That was when he'd just gotten out of prison, and I'd gone over there to campaign for him.

And we were out in the snow, at about 3 o'clock on the morning, outside of the place that he was staying. And that was with an Australian television crew and we were all Aussies together in that moment. And I was giving him a big hug, and they were cheering, and it was a really good moment. It all feels so far away, and so foreign for us all to be there together. And for me to hold Julian, with his countrymen around giving support, was a really good moment.

DB: And now that we've got Julian's mom on the phone, could you talk a little bit about ... the first clue that he was going to be perhaps an interesting person, a troublemaker, or somebody who was really interested in public affairs? How do you remember that beginning?

CA: Well I don't think there was any one point at which it happened. Julian had always been an incredibly curious child, and always wanted to know why — wanted to know how things worked. And I actually encouraged that in him as a child. He would ask how something would work, and rather than say, this is how it works, I would ask him, how do you think it works?

And then we would explore theories at his age level about how something would work, and he was very turned on by all that. I also read him a lot of books. From the time he was a baby, he was read books every day, from fairy tales, to Greek legends, to the adventure heroic classics — Tarzan, for example, where good was trouncing evil, and there were heroic adventures.

The justice part of it was not to any form of ideology, it was just about showing empathy and fairness in everyday life. So I think all those things together — and he came from a creative background — all that enabled him to sort of explore justice, and the power to change.

Then he wanted to know how the world worked. He wanted to be a physicist because he wanted to get to the bottom of it. And he went to university for physics and **was disappointed that most of the job opportunities involved working for the US government, developing weapons, etc.**, and so he wasn't very happy with that.

And then the next thing I remember, we were having a discussion about the ills of the world and what could make a change in the world and I asked him, what do you think would lead to a change? And he said he thought there are two possibilities: one was a cataclysmic event that knocked some sense into people because they'd have to really look at their environment.

The other one was technology. And I think Wikileaks was the result of the technology that he saw would change the world.

DB: You said something very interesting: that it wasn't about grand things, but about fairness in everyday life. Can you think of one of those everyday examples that sort of blossomed into the Julian Assange that we know in terms of his vision now for information?

CA: Well not anything specific in terms of day-to-day life, but just in general with people we were dealing with in the family or with neighbors: we wouldn't walk past somebody who was lying in the street, for example. If there was someone lying in the street, whether they were drunk or if it was a drug overdose, or if they were sick — we would stop and ask them if they were alright. And Julian would continue that. We were in a situation where we were helping some people involved in a justice situation that had to do with the court system, and Julian was boots and all defending people.

But also when he was a young teenager, he was very into computers. So I bought him a computer, and he went exploring on it, and later on he joined up with some other young people. And there was not a lot available in terms of being challenging and adventuring in the suburbs, but these bright young friends of his were challenging themselves on computers, and one of the ways they were doing it was to what they called "look-see" hacking, which was where they'd break in and they'd look at things, they wouldn't damage anything, but let people know their system was insecure.

Now, in the process of doing that, **I remember during the Gulf War that he got in and had a look, and he told me, "There's stuff going on here that's not right, there are people doing things that are not right here, and we're not being told about it — it's not coming out in the media."**

And I think that also galvanized him into his concept of Wikileaks, which was basically a concept around really good media. And that is that the media hold the governments and the corporations through, basically the truth, responsible to the people.

RC: He has done an incredible job. We are much better off — we are more knowledgeable about our government's evil actions around the world, and obviously he's being penalized for that. First of all, he's been vilified by these phony allegations. How did you react when these allegations came out of the Swedish government prosecutor's office?

CA: Well I remember the time exactly. It was about 11 o'clock at night when I got a phone call, and the person didn't even introduce themselves, they just said, "Mrs. Assange, how does it feel to have your son accused of a double rape?"

And straight from my solar plexus I just said, "He didn't do it." Because I know my son, and I know that Julian wouldn't do it. But then I had to go through the whole process of investigating the case because, to defend him, I had to know exactly what was going on.

And so, like those who defended him with knowledge, we had to troll through all the documents, to find out the basis of the allegations, and then what we found was a complete and utter set up. And **that was a horrifying feeling to find out that your son would actually be set up on something as serious as a rape allegation, purely because he published the truth about corrupt power.**

DB: *Where exactly are you right now?*

CA: I'm in Australia.

DB: *Oh, you're in Australia! You're very far away, but you're very close to us here, and we're really appreciating the kind of material that you're sharing about Julian Assange on this, his fifth year of his being held captive, really you have to say by threats of the United States government, who has a special penchant for hurting whistleblowers.*

I'm thinking of this carpenter — this illiterate carpenter — who actually fled from fascist Italy and ended up in fascist Argentina. And he used to spout these phrases, and one of the things he used to say is, "Truth has few friends, and those few are suicides" [Antonio Porchia]. Now that's a very dark comment, but it does seem, if you think about Julian Assange or other great truth tellers, what was waiting for them was a jail cell, or a bullet. Your thoughts on that — that courage that it takes to go forward?

CA: Well the original truth teller was Jesus Christ, wasn't he? He was throwing the money changers out of the temple. And now 2,000 years later we've got defense contractors, the oil industry and Wall Street. And he said, "And you shall know the truth and it shall set you free."

And nothing has really changed since then. We still have corrupt power consolidating itself, and really destroying the world, and not working on the behalf of people. And it sort of brings me back to what we should be doing, as people. What should we do? Our leaders let us down again and again. They say they're going to do something and when they get in power they're either bad leaders who were leading us on, or they're good leaders who are under pressure themselves. And they're fighting each other and name-calling, but it's still not working, is it?

So I see Wikileaks as a uniting point for everybody — from the Left and the Right and everything in between — uniting around the First Amendment, which is what you call it in America, or the free press around the world, to hold our leaders in the business world and in the government accountable through transparency and truth.

And good leaders are actually supported by Wikileaks because if they are indeed under pressure from the Deep State — for example, supposing we assume that Donald Trump is a good guy, and does want to, as he says, "drain the swamp", which is the Deep State, then he's going to need Wikileaks — not just during the campaign, when Wikileaks was wonderful and he loved Wikileaks, but even more so now, when the Deep State is going to try to prevent his campaign.

Now if he's not in fact a good guy, but a bad guy all along, then of course he's going to want to suppress Wikileaks. And our assessment of Donald Trump very much hinges on whether he is going to protect Wikileaks and Julian.

DB: We were just speaking with one of the attorneys, Jesselyn Radack, who has worked with Julian Assange, and we were talking about the message that might be being sent now by the very strong crackdown and arrest of the most recent whistleblower coming out of the National Security Agency [Reality Winner]. Does that give you pause or concern that Julian might have a tough row ahead?

CA: Oh, I've always known he's going to have a tough row ahead, you only have to look at the way they've treated their own whistleblowers, as you said, in their own CIA and NSA. The Obama administration arrested and prosecuted more whistleblowers than all other presidents combined, so things were certainly not looking good, even before this change of administration.

I'm not talking about Reality Winner. I'm not sure where she's coming from but, even so, wherever she's coming from, the protocol should still be the same. And I don't know if that's the case. If you are a whistleblower there should be protections for you and then it should be investigated and authenticated. And there should be a transparent legal process, and your rights should be protected during that time period. The reason I say I don't know where she's coming from, is because they've been talking about so-called leaks about Russians, and all the rest of it, and we know that they've been set up, that the Russians didn't hack the DNC.

They're going to say that there were leaks and they're not leaks, but because we don't know who, that's the reason why we need to protect all whistleblowers, including her, and why it should go through due process, the same as for any other citizen.

*DB: We know that **Julian was pretty troubled by the way in which The Intercept blew their source in this context.** He seems to have been a lot more careful in his work in terms of protecting sources. I'm wondering if you noted that.*

CA: Oh, absolutely. I remember when Wikileaks was being set up, that Julian was saying to me, "We're going to spend two years with the best minds in the world, to create an anonymous drop box, so that nobody can crack it, because we want to protect our sources. And we want people to feel so comfortable in leaking to us and not to feel frightened that they're going to be revealed". So he's kept to that, even to the risk to his own life and liberty.

Wikileaks has never revealed a source — no source has been exposed by Wikileaks. Chelsea Manning exposed herself on the Internet. And very few other media have been willing to rise to that challenge. So it's best to leak to Wikileaks if you're going to leak. It's a pity that she [Reality Winner] didn't leak to Wikileaks.

*RC: Yes. I must say, he really is a remarkable individual. I am not a techie, but he really knows all of this stuff really well, he's brilliant, but he comes off so genuine. It's really amazing to see him on all of these talk shows, on radio — how well he comes off. And he's got a great sense of humor, he's got an incredible education, **he's so well-spoken**, so dignified when he's on. Does that amaze you?*

CA: Yes... well yes and no... because he's grown up with me, and I've seen him, and he's always been a refined person. He's never been a crude person. He's been an honest

person and an empathetic person, and he's always been very bright, so that he got to where he is on the world stage doesn't surprise me.

Though of course in another way it does, and I'm in awe of him as well — not in any kind of demigod way, but **just as a human being with such resilience and courage, and so strong in the truth. And taking the most incredible amount of attacks**, not just from governments and corporations, and what they're getting up to behind the scenes, but trolls.

I mean **the thing that probably hurt me the most when watching him stand up for his work, was seeing other journalists, particularly UK journalists, trolling him on Wikileaks with the most vile, immature, picky, vicious comments**. I couldn't believe that this was coming out of the mouths of so-called journalists! And he's resilient, and the ability to rise above it is quite awe-inspiring, isn't it?

DB: And he continues on despite it all. He certainly has a resolve and a focus that borders on super-human. He has not been distracted from the work, in fact he has managed to expand it. It's sort of a bit of a miracle.

CA: Well, Julian is very grounded. His convictions come out of critical analysis, they don't come out of an easy path of jumping on some ideological bandwagon, so that when the going gets tough, he's grounded in where he's coming from. Because he drove himself, he's not easily shaken by attacks, by ideological attacks, for example, or personal attacks. **I think they've called him every "ist" there is** — narcissist, racist, marxist, capitalist — and on and on it goes. But he knows that the reason he's doing this is about media truth and justice, and government transparency, and he's grounded in that reality, and that's why he's not so easily shaken.

RC: He is the most fearless individual. I mean he's got the entire Intelligence Community, the Military Community [against him] — not just here in the U.S. but in Britain — even your own government. What is your own government doing to protect one of their citizens? Under Prime Minister Turnbull?

CA: They've never done anything under any of them! The Labor government under Julia Gillard called what he did illegal and wanted to take his passport away, and she actually said she was quite happy to hand him over to the U.S. and change our extradition laws specifically to make it easier for him to be handed over.

Basically we don't have a real government, **we've got a puppet government** — it's just a U.S. puppet, and they're constantly auditioning through the US Embassy for a place in the spotlight. Prime Minister Turnbull was an ex-Director of Goldman Sachs Australia. Not sure if you're familiar with the term "government sets"? That's where big US banks put their people in governments around the world.

So basically it would appear that in the Australian political landscape, if you want a promotion, you will swear on your credentials that you're willing to tow the line on Assange.

DB: And finally, we've got Julian's mom here, and I have to end this way — forgive me, Mom, but what are you most proud of in terms of your son? What part of his actions, his work, makes you the most proud as his mom?

CA: That he's standing ethically in truth for justice, with courage. That he's willing to risk his life and his liberty for his fellow man, basically. And that's what he's doing — he's risking his health, his liberty and even his life, because we've heard all the horrible

stuff coming out of various commentators: things like “We’re gonna shoot the son of a bitch” coming from Bob Beckel, a Democratic strategist.

And all the horrible things that Mike Pompeo said about him being a demon and “an unsafe intelligence actor.” And nonsense stuff about him being involved in child pornography from both sides, trying to set him up. I mean most people would have fallen over by now. But I think that because Julian is standing for something that’s good and right and correct, I think that’s where he derives his strength.

RC: *He does have a lot of support, and I’ve been getting a lot of support from his supporters for this show, on Twitter and social media.’ What can people do? What do you recommend people do to help out Julian?*

CA: Some of the American supporters have been very busy lately. They’ve organized the Boycott UK and it’s under the hashtag #BoycottUK and also the hashtag #FreeAssangeNOW .

This is a very good idea because we all know that money makes the world go round and in fact some are saying that a lot of the opposition to Julian is from greedy corporations because he exposes things like some of the reasons for war, and some of them profit from defense contracts. They also know that by reducing profits for major corporations, they will lean on government to change their policy. So boycotting big UK businesses until they free Julian — all big businesses that are operating in the UK.

Another California supporter ... has put up a campaign called “5 dollars for 5 years” and that is about how Julian spent five years in the Ecuadorian Embassy giving the truth, fighting for us, for our right to know. How about if we donate five dollars — a dollar for each year that he spent there? And that will go to top up the Julian Assange Defense fund which is at justice4assange.com. And you can donate your five dollars there.

Also on that site there’s a lot of information — it’s the best site in the world for finding out the facts about what’s been happening to Julian Assange for the last seven years. And let me tell you, it reads like *The Bourne Conspiracy* — what the government’s been up to to try to shut my son up is criminal and unbelievable.

So, just in America, just these last few weeks, American citizens have been standing up to fight.

But what you’re doing is also incredibly important, Randy. We find that when people are apprised of the facts about Wikileaks, and the facts about Julian, that most come onboard to support him, and some even come onboard as very active supporters. So it’s about getting out the facts, because there’s an awful lot of propaganda and lies. But once people know the facts they are supportive, so that’s also very important that people talk to each other about the facts, find out the facts. And there’s a very good FAQ at justice4assange.com.

So getting out the facts is really important, boycotting is very important, and funding Julian and funding Wikileaks is also important. We often feel very alone and powerless in the world at the moment, but we do have two things that we can still do.

One thing is where we spend our consumer dollar. It might only be five dollars, but if a million people donate five dollars, that’s really putting Julian and Wikileaks in a strong position to fight.

The other thing is the vote: keep your politician on speed dial and yank his or her chain every so often to remind them that we actually pay their wages, and we expect them to stand up for truth and government accountability, we expect them to not get in bed with corruption, and we are not impressed with them persecuting truth-telling media.

So there are just three things you can do straightaway. And of course you can always form your own Free Assange group — it can be a group of one or two or more. And this is what some ladies have done in America and around the world — nice people who have formed Free Assange groups. They are just ordinary people — they're not actually highly political people, they're often mothers who want to see the world protected for their children, and they often have no political experience, but a lot of heart and drive and creativity. And they often make the best advocates.

RC: Well, Ms. Christine Assange, I really appreciate you being part of this show. You are welcome back anytime. You are really doing an incredible job on behalf of your son, who is a hero. And I would like to give you the last word. If there's something you want to convey to Julian and his supporters there in London, I'm going to give you the last word.

CA: Well, firstly, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all the supporters around the world who have stood up and fought to protect and defend Wikileaks and Julian. Sometimes you've only done one action, sometimes you've done more — it doesn't matter, you did something.

The people in London at the Ecuadorian Embassy have just been troopers. Both Ecuador and its embassy staff and the people of Ecuador and the people from the Julian Assange Defense Fund and Wise Up Action — those guys who stood outside that embassy, day-in, day-out — in the rain, hail, snow and sun — to support my son and protect him. And at one stage, when they tried to raid the embassy illegally and grab Julian, these people were his protectors. And I would encourage anybody who is visiting London anytime to drop into the embassy and stand outside the embassy and join these historic groups.

Show Julian that you care. Show the powers that be that the people care and they're not going away. Wikileaks, after all, is supplied by the people, with information for the people, for their protection. It's 100% funded by the people, and it's defended and protected by the people, including our lawyers. This is a people's publisher, and it just goes to show you what the people can achieve when they get together. Wikileaks is rocking the halls of power, and they're terrified. And they have come back as bad as IS [Islamic State] terrorists against the truth, but the people are standing firm.

And to my son, I love you, I'm still here, I'm still fighting, I'm incredibly proud of your work. You're a terrific human being, and we're all standing here and we will keep fighting until we get you out of there.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/06/21/the-price-that-julian-assange-pays/>



*Beach buddies: Julian Assange and Pamela Anderson.
Composite: Getty Images/Guardian Design*

Bravery, courage, strength — why Pamela Anderson thinks that Julian Assange is sexy

The former Baywatch star is in amorous mode online as she extols the virtues of her WikiLeaks hunk

*Marina Hyde
The Guardian
22 June 2017*

“What is the sexiest quality in a man?” asks Pamela Anderson in a blog which starts like a 90s fragrance advert, but which you know will end in the conclusion that there is nothing hotter than skipping bail over rape allegations.

Without getting overly Brut Aquatonic about it all, the essence of man is apparently distilled in Pamela’s gentleman friend Julian Assange, to whom the erstwhile Baywatch star is increasingly moved to write or quote poetry. This week’s post was no exception, addressing Assange directly with William Ernest Henley’s stiff-upper-lip anthem *Invictus*, and ending with the words “I love you”. But before we got to that, there was a digression which took in sex appeal, Pamela’s “sexy” new Saint-Tropez vegan restaurant, and the offer – to Emmanuel Macron – of a bilateral summit.

First, let’s talk about sex appeal. “Surely the sexiest qualities in a man are bravery and courage,” explains Pamela. “Sexiness in a man is showing strength.” For whatever reason, Diesel has yet to set one of its Only the Brave men’s fragrance adverts in an embassy hidey-hole, where the protagonist is shown skewing elections to a dubstep soundtrack. Maybe Diesel feels that’s more of a Dior Homme look.

Either way, Pamela encourages you to think a lot harder about what sexual allure is. And unless you are totally frigid, you need to understand that it ends in a Trump White House. As the former Dancing on Ice contestant puts it: “Secretary of State

Hillary Clinton is no more. The Obama administration is gone. Julian won, and we all benefited from this. He took on the Leviathan and won. That is sexy.”

Mmm. Lost in Showbiz always feels that these sexier-than-thou takes risk making those who spout them a hostage to fortune. It can't help but recall a similar line being taken by Anne Hathaway, who once declared: “One of the most untouted aphrodisiacs in the world is charity work. Seriously, you want a girl to be impressed, vaccinate some kids, build a house.” This was a reference to Anne's chap at the time, with whom she lived in a Trump Tower apartment where one wardrobe contained monsignor robes, which she declined to treat as an alarm bell. Her subsequently jailed fiance told her he was “the chief financial officer of the Vatican”, yet he turned out – how to put this sparsely? – not to be.

And so too with Julian, whose invaluable sexywork in getting Donald Trump elected may yet turn out to be not the universal win for humankind it currently appears. But, you know, it's still early days. Even so, Pamela does offer the Assange camp's most explicit quid pro quo reference yet, stating pointedly: “President Trump, who benefited from WikiLeaks' publication, has not stood up for Julian's freedom to publish.” Not sexy. Unsexy. Bad!

As for other world leaders, the one on whom she appears to be pinning her most concerted hopes is Emmanuel Macron. Addressing the new French president directly, the Baywatch star says: “As a resident of France, my adopted home, I would like to meet with you and discuss Julian's situation. I am opening a new vegan restaurant in France in July, and I would like to extend my invitation to the new president and his first lady. Join me on the day I open the doors, and we will sit and eat good food and discuss what can be done for Julian. France could display its strength, and so could you, if you give Julian asylum.” My feeling is that Macron would need to see the à la carte options as well as the set menu before he commits, but no doubt time will show.

For Theresa May, alas, there is not so much as the offer of an amuse-bouche. Britain's beleaguered prime minister is dismissed as someone “who kept him imprisoned for five years now”. Assuming he was a Baywatch fan, though, things are looking much better for the Labour party's leader. “I am reaching out to Jeremy Corbyn,” announces Pamela, “who could and should be the next prime minister.” Then what? Corbyn should give Assange “safe passage and compensation”. Compensation for skipping bail sounds like a fun policy to scale – but there's more. “When you come to power,” she warns the Labour leader, “you must rehabilitate the UK's reputation in Latin America!”

If all that fails, Pamela has another iron in the fire. “I will write a love letter to China ... I am sure China can be a symbol of peace and strength in the world.” To everyone else, she has stark instructions: “Stop escalating cyberwars. Stop geopolitical sabre-rattling. Stop interfering in elections. Stop torturing animals and eating them. Stop writing speeches on goatskin. Letting Julian go free would change everything.”

So there you go. It couldn't be simpler. How much longer is the social scene going to be denied the liberation of this most 21st-century of It-couples?

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/lostinshowbiz/2017/jun/22/bravery-courage-strength-why-pamela-anderson-thinks-julian-assange-sexy-wikileaks>

Ecuador Ratifies Protection of Cyber-activist Julian Assange

Prensa Latina
23 June 2017

Quito. Ecuador ratified [*confirmed?*] that it will maintain the protection and watch over the physical and psychological integrity of the cyber-activist Julian Assange, who remains today under asylum in the embassy of Quito in London, although there is no criminal process against him.

The stance of the national administration was confirmed by Maria Fernanda Espinosa, head of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility, who said that this is the role of host countries of people in the condition of the Australian founder of the WikiLeaks web portal.

'There are rules that both parties must meet, in the case of the asylum seeker, he must be careful to not to interfere in the internal affairs of the host country and I think that is clear to him, and on our side the guarantee to continue protecting his rights,' she said.

In this respect, she expressed her hope that this relationship of communication and openness will continue.

On the other hand, she said that contacts have been made with the United Kingdom, at the request of the president, Lenin Moreno, which includes dialogues and a working meeting with the UK ambassador in Quito.

At the recent 47th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in Mexico this week, there were also exchanges with representatives of London, who is an observer within the organization.

'The idea, the will, and the decision are to arrive at a solution that simply benefits and guarantees the rights of the person under asylum, who in this case is Julian Assange. There is the best disposition and we are looking for the most suitable ways,' she emphasized.

She also said that there are permanent and direct channels of communication with the Australian journalist, through the Foreign Ministry in the United Kingdom.

Assange remains under asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012, when he applied for that status in the face of fears that his life might be jeopardized by his political persecution.

For the lawyers' 45-year-old Australian, the case against him was only a pretext to extradite him to the United States where he can be tried and sentenced to life imprisonment for the thousands of secret and classified documents of the government of that country that his digital portal disclosed and still makes public.

Although there is no pending legal matter with Assange in the United Kingdom, the authorities prohibit him from leaving the Foreign Ministry, which constitutes a violation of his rights, which is why his defense ratified yesterday that they will bring

the case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the United Nation Refugee Agency.

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=14629&SEO=ecuador-ratifies-protection-of-cyber-activist-julian-assange>

Assange Outlines The Six Reasons "Why The Democratic Party Is Doomed"

*Tyler Durden
Zero Hedge
June 25, 2017*

Julian Assange, a man who has certainly taken his fair share of the blame for Hillary's loss last November, has just taken to Twitter to list out the 6 reasons why the "the Democratic party is doomed."

Assange's assessment is spot on and covers many of the themes we discuss on a daily basis. To summarize, **Assange asserts that the Democratic party essentially severed ties with the working class long ago due to their inability to craft a cohesive political agenda.** Identity politics subsequently took the place of a solid legislative agenda but that "short-term tactic has led to the inevitable strategic catastrophe of the white and male super majorities responding by seeing themselves as an unserved political identity group."

That said, in 2016, the failures of the Democratic party went well beyond an out-of-touch agenda as WikiLeaks managed to expose the outright corruption of the DNC and political elites that were, up until that point, held up as royalty. But, rather than tuck tail and run, the political elites of the Democratic party have attempted to hold on to their power base by recklessly pushing the "Trump-Russian collusion narrative" which is a "political dead end."

In the end, **Assange suggests that "the Democratic base should move to start a new party since the party elite shows no signs that they will give up power."**

Here is the full explanation from Assange: Why the Democratic party is doomed:

1. The Democratic establishment has vortexed the party's narrative energy into hysteria about Russia (a state with a lower GDP than South Korea). It is starkly obvious that were it not for this hysteria insurgent narratives of the type promoted by Bernie Sanders would rapidly dominate the party's base and its relationship with the public. Without the "We didn't lose -- Russia won" narrative the party's elite and those who exist under its patronage would be purged for being electorally incompetent and ideologically passé.

The collapse of the Democratic vote over the last eight years is at every level, city, state, Congressional and presidential. It corresponds to the domination of Democratic decision making structures by a professional, educated, urban service class and to the shocking decline in health and longevity of white males, who together with their wives, daughters, mothers, etc. comprise 63% of the US population (2010 census).

Unlike other industrialized countries **US male real wages (all ethnic groups combined) have not increased since 1973**. In trying to stimulate engagement of non-whites and women Democrats have aggressively promoted identity politics. This short-term tactic has led to the inevitable strategic catastrophe of the white and male super majorities responding by seeing themselves as an unserved political identity group. Consequently in response to *sotto-voce* suggestions that Trump would service this group **53% of all men voted for Trump, 53% of white women and 63% of white men** (PEW Research).

2. The Trump-Russia collusion narrative is a political dead end. Despite vast resources, enormous incentives and a year of investigation, Democratic senators who have seen the classified intelligence at the CIA such as Senator Feinstein (as recently as March) are forced to admit that there is no evidence of collusion [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BS5amEq7Fc>].

Without collusion, we are left with the Democratic establishment blaming the public for being repelled by the words of Hillary Clinton and the Democratic party establishment. Is it a problem that the public discovered what Hillary Clinton said to Goldman Sachs and what party elites said about fixing the DNC primaries against Bernie Sanders? A party elite that maintains that it is the "crime of the century" for the public and their membership to discover how they behave and what they believe invites scorn.

3. The Democrat establishment needs the support of the security sector and media barons to push this diversionary conspiracy agenda, so they ingratiate themselves with these two classes leading to further perceptions that the Democrats act on behalf of an entrenched power elite. Eventually, Trump or Pence will 'merge' with the security state leaving Democrats in a vulnerable position having talked up two deeply unaccountable traditionally Republican-aligned organizations, in particular, the CIA and the FBI, who will be turned against them. Other than domestic diversion and geopolitical destabilization **the primary result of the Russian narrative is increased influence and funding for the security sector which is primarily GOP owned or aligned.**

4. The twin result is to place the primary self-interest concerns of most Americans, class competition, freedom from crime and ill health and the empowerment of their children, into the shadows and project the Democrats as close to DC and media elites. **This has further cemented Trump's anti-establishment positioning and fettered attacks on Trump's run away embrace of robber barons, dictators and gravitas-free buffoons like the CIA's Mike Pompeo.**

5. GOP/Trump has open goals everywhere: broken promises, inequality, economy, healthcare, militarization, Goldman Sachs, Saudi Arabia & cronyism, **but the Democrat establishment can't kick these goals since the Russian collusion narrative has consumed all its energy and it is entangled with many of the same groups behind Trump's policies.**

6. The Democratic base should move to start a new party since the party elite shows no signs that they will give up power. **This can be done quickly and cheaply as a result of the internet and databases of peoples' political preferences. This reality is proven in practice with the rapid construction of the Macron, Sanders and Trump campaigns from nothing.** The existing Democratic party may well have negative reputational capital, stimulating a Macron-style clean slate approach. Regardless, in the

face of such a threat, the Democratic establishment will either concede control or, as in the case of Macron, be eliminated by the new structure.

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-06-25/assange-outlines-six-reasons-why-democratic-party-doomed>

Julian Assange wants us to see him as a selfless seeker of truth. But the reality, as his ghost-writer discovered, is that he is actually greasy, greedy, childish, secretive and 'probably a little mad'

*Craig Brown
The Mail on Sunday
24 June 2017*

If ever you feel down in the dumps, the perfect way to cheer up is to remind yourself that at least you are not the Ecuadorian Ambassador to the Court of St James.

In what might possibly be the longest sleepover in diplomatic history, Julian Assange has been resident in the cramped Ecuadorian Embassy in London for the past five years.

For all his international fame and glamour, Assange's personal hygiene leaves a lot to be desired. A few years ago, his one-time friend and colleague Daniel Domscheit-Berg wrote a memoir in which he revealed that Assange often wore two pairs of trousers at the same time, and several pairs of socks. According to Domscheit-Berg, he eats everything with his hands, and then wipes his fingers on his trousers. 'I have never seen pants as greasy in my whole life.'

Apparently, he is also very greedy. 'If there were four slices of spam, he would eat three and leave one for me.'

For the poor old Ecuadorian Ambassador, it must be a bit like having Albert Steptoe to stay. Nor do Assange's manners stretch to a proper thank you. When the distinguished writer Andrew O'Hagan went to visit him there, Assange complained to him that the ambassador was mad, and spent too much time stalking the corridor and fretting about being too fat.

At the beginning of 2011, O'Hagan was signed up to ghost-write Julian Assange's autobiography, which had already been sold to publishers around the world for \$2.5 million. No shrinking violet, Assange had high hopes for the book. 'I hope this will become one of the unifying documents of our generation,' he announced on signing the contract.

Needless to say, it all ended in tears. After recording more than 50 hours of interviews with O'Hagan, Assange decided that he no longer wanted to go ahead with the project, declaring that 'all memoir is prostitution'. On the other hand, he didn't want to pay back his advance, either. He claimed to have already spent it on legal bills. Against Assange's wishes, his British publishers decided to publish what they had, wittily calling it 'The Unauthorised Autobiography' and rushing it out without the author's

consent. In turn, Assange denounced them as ‘profiteering’ and added them to his fast-growing list of enemies.

O’Hagan has written a delightfully beady and unforgiving account of the months he spent with Julian Assange attempting to ghost-write that doomed autobiography.

He had first encountered Assange when he watched him delivering a lecture in London, some months before. His first impressions were mixed. ‘He was really interesting but odd, maybe even on the autism spectrum.’

At their first one-to-one meeting, O’Hagan had the impression that Assange saw himself less as a campaigner than as a rock star. He found this baffling. ‘Assange referred a number of times to the fact that people were in love with him, but I couldn’t see the coolness, the charisma he took for granted.’

At that point, Assange was living under virtual house arrest in Ellingham Hall, a stately home in Norfolk, wearing an electronic tag and having to report to the local police once a day. He spent a good deal of time ranting against his enemies, many of whom — journalists on *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* — had once been his friends.

‘He had a strange inability to realise when he was becoming boring or demanding. He talked as if the world needed him to talk and never to stop.’ He also exhibited what O’Hagan wryly terms ‘an unending capacity to worry about his enemies and to yawn in one’s face’.

Assange seems to have a sort of superhero complex, regarding himself as the saviour of planet Earth. His entry in the visitors’ book at Ellingham Hall, written on the day WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of leaked US embassy cables, read: ‘Today with my friends we tried to bring modern history to the world.’ It’s all a far cry from ‘Thank you for having me’.

The role of the ghost-writer is difficult at the best of times. He must conjure words out of subjects who are often too lazy or stupid to write them for themselves. If the subject is too timid, he must encourage him to open up, and if the subject is too boring, he must coax him into more profitable pastures.

From early on, O’Hagan realised that Assange only felt comfortable when delivering long-winded world overviews that no one would ever want to read. ‘I was trying to get him to stop his undergraduate lecturing about freedom. I knew there was nothing I could use: it was all standard-grade Voltaire with a smattering of Chomsky.’

But whenever O’Hagan attempted to shepherd him into the details of his own life, Assange would shy away. He somehow imagined he could write an autobiography with all the autobiographical bits taken out. ‘His sentences were too infected with his habits of self-regard and truth manipulation. The man who put himself in charge of disclosing the world’s secrets simply couldn’t bear his own.’

O’Hagan rented a house nearby, and Assange would come over. His account of Assange’s piggish table-manners accords with Daniel Domscheit-Berg’s. ‘I made lunch every day and he’d eat it, often with his hands, and then lick the plate. In all that time he didn’t once take his dirty plate to the sink... I found his egotism at the dinner table to

be a form of madness more striking than anything he said... If you told him to do the dishes he would say he was trying to free economic slaves in China and had no time to wash up.'

As for the book itself, it became clear early on that Assange had no real intention of ever properly setting his mind to it. Somehow, O'Hagan was able to assemble a rough draft from the 50 hours of tapes. 'It wasn't by any means great,' he writes, 'but it had a voice, a reasonable, even-tempered, slightly amused but moral voice, which was as invented as anything I'd ever produced in fiction.'

At this point, one starts to question the artistic morality of ghosting a book that is so far from the truth. Was O'Hagan conniving in a lie? Does the role of ghost really remove you from any obligation towards authenticity? O'Hagan doesn't tackle these questions, but it strikes me that he, too, may be prone to some of the self-denial of which he so sharply accuses Assange. At one point in his book, O'Hagan complains that Assange somehow 'thought I was his creature'. But wasn't he? Is the ventriloquist's doll ever his own master?

Assange couldn't get round to reading the rough draft. 'At a guess, I'd say he had read the first three pages.' But this didn't stop him from declaring it unpublishable. He then began to rant against the very notion of writing about oneself, saying that 'the art of autobiography was hateful. Men who reveal their private lives in books are weak'. Furthermore, men who write about their family are 'prostitutes'.

He then denied ever saying several things to O'Hagan. 'I would never say my stepfather was an alcoholic.'

'But you did say it, Julian... You said it to me in dozens of interviews. I have them all on tape.'

'I was tired.'

From early on, O'Hagan realised that Assange only felt comfortable when delivering long-winded world overviews that no one would ever want to read

Assange then wanted to turn it into more of a manifesto, less of an autobiography. He claimed to have worked on O'Hagan's draft, but then claimed he couldn't find it. 'There was something pathetic about the search: it was clear he had never marked up any version.'

By now, O'Hagan was at the end of his tether. 'I've never been with anybody who made me feel so like an adult. And I say that as the father of a 13-year old.' Assange's lying finally convinced him that 'he is probably a little mad, sad and bad'.

This vivid, damning essay on Assange takes up just under half of the book. The rest is given over to two pieces on vaguely related topics. The first is about the ease with which one can invent an alter-ego on the internet, and the second tells of another doomed ghosting job undertaken by O'Hagan, this one for Craig Wright, who claimed to be the inventor of Bitcoin. Somehow, they both feel like pale shadows of what has gone before. Who would have thought we could ever miss Julian Assange?

www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-4629214/Craig-Brown-secret-life-Julian-Assange.html

Ecuador Confirms Asylum Protection for Julian Assange to Continue

Telesur
25 June 2017

The government of Ecuador said it will continue protecting the WikiLeaks founder, 5 years after he took refuge in its U.K. embassy.

Ecuadorean authorities have confirmed the country will continue to protect WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who remains under asylum in its embassy in the U.K. without any criminal processes against him.

Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa said that at the request of newly elected President Lenin Moreno, there has been "a series of dialogues, of communication, and even a work meeting with the ambassador of the U.K. in Ecuador," to resolve Assange's situation.

"The idea, the will, and the decision are to arrive at a solution that simply benefits and guarantees the rights of the person under asylum, who in this case is Julian Assange. There is the best disposition and we are looking for the most suitable ways," Espinosa said in a press conference on Saturday.

The 45-year-old Australian has lived in the Ecuadorean embassy in London since 2012 when he took refuge to avoid extradition to Sweden over rape allegations, saying he feared his life would be in danger.

Assange has said he feared being extradited to the United States to face life imprisonment for publishing leaked information of thousands of classified military and diplomatic documents from that country.

Swedish prosecutors dropped the alleged rape investigation into Julian Assange in May, but British police said that if Assange were to leave the embassy they are still their obligation to arrest him for "failing to surrender to the court on June 29, 2012."

Assange's defense says it's a violation of his rights and ratified they will bring the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the United Nation Refugee Agency.

The United Nations has also decried the unfair treatment of Assange, declaring that he was being arbitrarily detained and that his human rights were violated.

Espinosa said that at the recent 47th General Assembly of the Organization of American States, or OAS held in Mexico there were also exchanges with U.K. representatives on this matter, as the European nation is an observer country within the organization.

She said she expects communications and openness will continue, and that they keep a permanent and direct channel of communication with the Wikileaks journalist.

"There are rules that both parties must meet, in the case of the asylum seeker, he must be careful to not to interfere in the internal affairs of the host country and I think that is clear to him, and on our side the guarantee to continue protecting his rights," Espinosa said.

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Ecuador-Confirms-Asylum-Protection-for-Julian-Assange-to-Continue-20170625-0008.html>



*'I don't want to have fallings out with people that I have respect for':
film-maker Laura Poitras. Photograph: Malte Jaeger/Archimedes Exhibition GmbH*

Laura Poitras on her WikiLeaks film *Risk*: 'I knew Julian Assange was going to be furious'

The Oscar-winning director made her name with the Edward Snowden revelations. In turn, that led to the opportunity to closely film Assange. But the more she filmed, the more critical she became

*Simon Hattenstone
The Guardian
29 June 2017*

Laura Poitras wants to make one thing absolutely clear. She still admires Julian Assange despite everything that has happened. But, it soon emerges, this is a mighty caveat.

Risk, Poitras's film on Assange, six years in the making, is finally finished. During this time she has gone from being an Assange supporter given privileged access to an outsider banished from the WikiLeaks inner sanctum; she has exposed the National Security Agency's global spying programme (a lot of it published in Britain by the

Guardian) after being the first journalist to make contact with whistleblower Edward Snowden, and she has made an Oscar-winning documentary about Snowden called *Citizenfour*.

Her Snowden film is gripping — a complex, real-life seat-of-the pants thriller. The Assange film, *Risk*, is very different. At times, it could be a black comedy— part *The Office*, part *Brass Eye*.

Yet it was never meant to be like this. Poitras initially contacted Assange because she believed the work he was doing (again, a lot of it published in Britain by the Guardian [*which has betrayed Assange and WikiLeaks --A.B.*]) was so important.

“I thought WikiLeaks was doing the hard journalism that hadn’t been done for a long time post 9/11. The mainstream media had abdicated responsibility to ask hard questions of what was going on in the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. It was crucial and brave journalism. I was also interested in the global impact it was having. So I was very optimistic about the project.” She pauses. “And I remain optimistic about many things about the work they do and its necessity.” Another caveat.

WikiLeaks seemed to be reinventing journalism when it launched in 2006 as an online platform allowing sources to leak classified information anonymously. In 2007, the not-for-profit organisation discovered that some prisoners held at Guantánamo Bay were denied access to the Red Cross. In 2010, it received more than 700,000 US military and state department documents and released the Collateral Murder tape showing a US Army Apache helicopter crew killing 15 civilians (including two Reuters journalists) – as the crew laughed at the “dead bastards” saying “light ‘em up!” Last year, WikiLeaks exposed the Democratic party leadership’s bias against Bernie Sanders and for Hillary Clinton. And on it goes.

Assange, born in Australia and a computer programmer by profession, is the founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks. In 2011, to all intents and purposes he was WikiLeaks — the crown prince of transparency. Poitras says it took time for Assange to agree to access. **At one point in the film, she says: “It’s a mystery why he trusts me because I don’t think he likes me.”**

Poitras, by contrast, was born in Massachusetts to wealthy parents (in 2007, they donated \$20m [£15m] to found the Poitras Center for Affective Disorders Research at the McGovern Institute for Brain Research). As a teenager, she dreamed of becoming a chef and worked as a cook in a French restaurant in Boston. She then became fascinated with film, which she studied at the San Francisco Art Institute, and, in 1992, moved to New York to pursue film-making. In 2006, her film *My Country, My Country*, a documentary about life for Iraqis under US occupation, was nominated for an Academy award. Her 2010 film *The Oath* is about two Yemeni men caught up in America’s war on terror.

Assange was aware of both films. It is clear he believed Poitras would faithfully document the hero behind the groundbreaking work. Which she has done. And some. So we see portrayed a man of principle desperate to expose the secret institutions that shape how we live. **But we also see a pompous Assange demanding to speak to Hillary Clinton** and telling the US Department of State that he is only calling as an act of altruism (“To try and make it clear, we don’t have a problem, you have a problem”) [*This is “pompous”? They did, in fact, have a problem. --A.B.*]; **a comically deluded**

Assange, who believes dyeing his hair ginger and putting on a floppy hat and pair of shades was the perfect disguise, and a narcissistic dictator having his hair cut by two members of staff.

We also meet **the paranoid Assange** who, according to Poitras, runs the organisation like an intelligence agency using “denial and deception”; and the contemptuous Assange, who tells his colleague Sarah Harrison to imagine the press are “a piece of shit on your shoe” [*as much of the press seems to imagine Assange –A.B.*]. Then there is **the messianic Assange** with the self-confessed “God complex”, who tells Lady Gaga, “Let’s not pretend I’m a normal person,” and **ticks her off [???**] for asking how he feels. (“It’s irrelevant how I feel ... because the cause is so much bigger.”) Not forgetting Assange **the wannabe celeb**, who readily acquiesces to Gaga’s request for him to wear a T-shirt instead of his shirt, so he looks different for her fans. [*The “wannabe celeb” was a real celeb long before he met Ms. Gaga, which presumably explains her wanting to meet him. –A.B.*]

Poitras knew Assange could be difficult — when she started filming he had already fallen out with the Guardian [*It could not have been The Guardian that was “difficult”, of course. -- A.B.*] — but the level of difficulty surprised her. In 2010, an arrest warrant was issued in Sweden, where WikiLeaks is based, in relation to sexual assault allegations against two women. Things became more difficult in 2012, when the UK’s Supreme Court ruled that he should be extradited to Sweden and he sought sanctuary in the Ecuadorian embassy.

In one astonishing scene, Assange talks to Helena Kennedy QC, who is advising him on how to deal with the allegations. Assange says, as if to excuse himself, that it is a “radical feminist conspiracy” and dismisses the complainants as lesbians. Kennedy tells him it is not helpful to talk like this. “No, not publicly,” he says, while being filmed. Her look of despair is priceless. Assange then explains why it is not in the best interests of the women to press charges. “An actual court case is going to be very hard for these women ... they will be reviled for ever by a large segment of the world population. I don’t think it’s in their interest to proceed that way.” [*An entirely plausible conclusion, given the facts and subsequent developments. –A.B.*]

It is this scene that led to Poitras and Assange’s falling out. She promised him she would show him the film when it was ready. And shortly before an early version of *Risk* premiered at Cannes, he did see it — and blew a gasket. “His lawyers demanded we took this scene out, and another one where he talks about the investigation and the women involved. We didn’t, and then he sent a text saying the film is a threat to his freedom and he is forced to treat it accordingly.” What right did he have to make that demand? “He had no right. He had no editorial control over the film.” [*That is in dispute; see page 92, above. –A.B.*]

Did it surprise her when he tried to censor *Risk*? “Yes it absolutely did, considering what WikiLeaks stands for. I was surprised on the ideological level — not only did he demand that things were removed, but more recently he sent ‘cease and desist’ letters to my distributors demanding that they stop releasing the film. He was really angry and he tried to intimidate.”

Would she have had more respect for Assange if he had returned to Sweden to be interviewed by the police? She exhales loudly. “I don’t know. I do think his fear of US indictment is not paranoia. The investigation is massive, and he has very good reason

to be concerned about being extradited to the US.” [So much for the writer’s “paranoid Assange” –A.B.]

Poitras’s relationship with WikiLeaks was further complicated when it emerged in 2016 that Jacob Applebaum, one of Assange’s closest WikiLeaks confidantes, has also been accused of sexual abuse. Poitras discloses that she and Applebaum had “been involved briefly in 2014”. She then realised she was making a very different film from the one she started out making. “It does take on a question about gender and sexism. When there is another person in the film who has been accused of abuse of power and sexual misconduct, how could I not address it?” [Possibly because that was not included in the agreement by which such extensive access was granted. –A.B.]

The longer she filmed Assange and WikiLeaks, the more critical she became— of their failure to redact names from documents putting people at risk, the tone of the WikiLeaks Twitter feed, attitudes to women, and the motive for some releases. While Poitras is no fan of Hillary Clinton, she does question the timing of the Podesta emails (John Podesta was chairman of Clinton’s election campaign), thought to have been hacked by the Russians and published by WikiLeaks in October/November 2016 just before the election. Clinton partially blamed her defeat on WikiLeaks.

I ask Poitras if she enjoyed making *Risk*. She laughs, which feels like an answer in itself. “Did I enjoy it? No, I can’t say I did. Filming is always hard, and this was particularly hard. I knew Julian was going to be furious with the film, and I don’t have any joy with that. **I know he’s polarising, but there is no doubt he’s a really significant historical figure in the work that he has done, which has transformed journalism, and I think he understood ahead of many people how the internet was going to change global politics.**”

While she is critical of Assange, Poitras is also scathing of the media— indeed, the film is partly a critique of the pack mentality of the press. She also believes the Guardian and the Washington Post took too much credit for the Snowden story and literally tried to push her out of the limelight. “In New York, when they gave the Pulitzer prize to the Guardian and the Washington Post, neither organisation invited me on to the stage. That pissed me off. That was really bad behaviour. On the other hand, the story needed institutions behind it.”

It is hard to watch *Risk* and not compare it with *Citizenfour*. In fact, for a long time Poitras thought they were going to be one and the same film. Assange and Snowden seem such different men, I say. “I don’t feel it’s my job to judge and compare them— but, yes, they have different motivations. Certainly, my feelings that come through in the film are much more conflicted.” Is there a moral purity to what Snowden did? “People would ask me when I was releasing the film: Is he a hero? People are defined by their actions, and he did something deeply heroic. And I think it was selfless. He knew the consequences could be the end of his freedom or the end of his life.”

She says the whistleblower Chelsea Manning would be a more suitable person to compare Snowden with. What is the most annoying thing about Snowden? “He can lecture. He can get a little bit talky, if you watch some of his public appearances, but that’s not something that pissed me off.”

Her life has changed considerably since making *Citizenfour*. At times, she has felt scared for her own safety. “Right after the Snowden stuff, I knew I was being followed

by intelligence agencies. I felt really nervous about threats from the government, private contractors, intelligence agencies all over the world. There are a lot of bad actors out there. But I have to keep doing the work."

She says she's exhausted and could do with a break, but she's hooked on film-making: surveillance and the intelligence services in particular. What would she like to do next? "I'd love to look at what's happening in the investigation into Trump. I don't think I am going to get that access!" she laughs. "I don't think Comey would take my phone call, unfortunately. He'd be top of the list of people I'd love to film at the moment."

But for now, she is focusing on the release of Risk. After Assange complained about the film, Poitras took it away, spent a year re-editing it— and returned with a film that was tougher on him. Was that her response to his intimidation; a form of revenge? Again, she exhales loudly and pauses. "I don't make vengeful films, but I do have to make films that are honest."

Does she think that Assange was right to trust her? "I think that's a question for Julian." I tell her I think it's a fine film, and her response surprises me. She sounds upset— almost heartbroken. **"I don't want to have fallings out with people that I have respect for," she says. "For me it's a tragedy."**

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/jun/29/laura-poitras-wikileaks-film-risk-julian-assange>

Swedish justice minister: 'The blame is on Assange, not Sweden'

After Sweden dropped its investigation into WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, Justice Minister Morgan Johansson has blamed Assange for the lack of progress on DW's "Conflict Zone".

*Caroline Schmitt
Deutsche Welle
28.06.2017*

Despite dropping charges after seven years, Sweden still blames Julian Assange for evading Swedish justice.

"What is looking bad is that Julian Assange did not want to come to Sweden to explain and to be interrogated," the Swedish Justice and Migration Minister Morgan Johansson told DW. *[That is a lie. --A.B.]*

Swedish prosecutors had dropped an investigation into allegations of rape in May 2017, ending a seven-year standoff with Assange's legal team. Sweden had issued a warrant for the Australian's arrest in November 2010. Assange was accused of having raped a woman in Sweden and of having sexually harassed others. He has denied the charges and criticized the prosecutor's case as being politically motivated.

When it was announced that charges were dropped, Assange told reporters from the Ecuadoran embassy balcony in London that he welcomed the decision but added: "The proper war is just commencing."

Asked why it took Sweden seven years to close the case, **Johnsson said: "First of all, it's the prosecutor that is doing this investigation. It's not the government, it's a prosecutor. Second, I mean, the blame is on Julian Assange."**

"There are people that have said that they had been victims of wrongdoing, victims of crime that Julian Assange has committed. These people also actually have the right to (...) be vindicated. And that's why the whole system is working," the minister told DW's Michel Friedman on Conflict Zone....



[Link: <https://t.co/nOLwktcO5X>]

<http://www.dw.com/en/swedish-justice-minister-the-blame-is-on-assange-not-sweden/a-39463741>

Assange hits back at threats from 'tolerant liberals' and brands Hillary Clinton a JOKE

WIKILEAKS founder Julian Assange has taken to Twitter to expose cases of aggression targeted at him by a number of liberal media outlets and commentators, who he claims are calling for him to be executed.

*Sofia Petkar
Express (U.K.)
July 2, 2017*

Using the hashtag #tolerantliberal, Mr Assange has spent a considerable amount of time retweeting articles and posts from senior journalists at organisations who appear to have called for an extrajudicial killing.

In his flurry of tweets, Mr Assange included compilation videos showing both Democrats and Republican politicians in the US, calling for him to be "hanged" or "droned".

A number of videos even show TV pundits calling for the Wikileaks founder to be executed, with the Palmer Report going as far as to compare him to terrorist Osama Bin Laden.

In response, he launched a scathing attack at the mainstream media for their “lack of standards”.

Mr Assange wrote: “These ‘journalists’ love nothing more than to threaten to help assassinate me and my staff and my sources for telling the truth.

“They couldn't dream of our accuracy or independence. I have abiding contempt for their lack of standards and craven characters.”

Mr Assange was once the focus of intense hate from the conservative media following the release of classified security information on his website.

The tables appear to have turned however, with the hate now coming from their liberal counterparts following the publishing of leaked emails from the Democratic National Committee during last year's US presidential election.

In his retaliation, Mr Assange hit out at Hillary Clinton's comments against him, going as far as to label her failed Presidential campaign a “joke”.

He wrote: “She said it was a joke --- a bit like her election campaign? **It's certainly not good to threaten our staff or torture our alleged sources.**”

After retweeting a series of posts from Twitter users calling for him to be tortured and put to death, Mr Assange concluded that “liberals ain't liberal”.

He wrote: “They've fallen into bed with the worst elements of state hard power & love censorship and death.”



Julian Assange took objection to this poster issued by the Washington Times

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/823745/julian-assange-death-threats-tolerant-liberals-twitter-hillary-clinton-joke>

Following Clinton email leaks, 'Assange feels threatened by both Republicans & Democrats'

RT

3 July 2017

The 'tolerant liberals' of the Democratic Party believe the WikiLeaks founder damaged the electoral chances of Hillary Clinton last year and now are attacking him-- much like the Republicans, Annie Machon, former MI5 intelligence officer, told RT.

RT: Assange says people are openly calling for his assassination in the media. Is he right to call this out as extremism in the media, or is he perhaps deliberately mistaking their intent here?

Annie Machon: American politicians have been calling for his assassination, his extrajudicial killing, his life imprisonment, the death penalty, whatever ever since 2010 when WikiLeaks started publishing videos like 'Collateral Murder,' which showed war crimes on the part of the American army. They also published the Iraq dossiers, the diplomatic cables, and all the rest of it in 2010 -- that's what made him a global threat. That is why Julian Assange started to be hunted seriously by the American administration, the American intelligence agencies.

What Assange is doing at the moment is pulling together the record of who precisely has been calling for this ... What he is highlighting at the moment, I think, is that rather than the Republicans in America, who've always been calling for this, now it is also what he calls the 'tolerant liberals' -- the Democratic Party-type people in America, saying exactly the same things. They feel that he damaged the electoral chances of Hillary Clinton in the election last year. Despite what he says, despite the fact he's gone on record many times saying it wasn't a state actor that hacked this information they published -- the Democratic National Congress [DNC] and the Podesta e-mails, which came out before the presidential election last year --- despite other evidence coming out that it was, in fact, a leak, not a hack, the Democratic movement in America seems to be pursuing him much more vigorously than they have in the past. He's probably feeling under threat from **both the Republican establishment and the Democratic establishment. If in fact nowadays we can say that there is actually a difference.**

RT: Assange has been at the receiving end of criticism both from the left and the right ends of the media. Why is he so vilified across the board?

AM: Absolutely. **There is a fundamental hypocrisy about how the mainstream, the old media has always dealt with WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks is a high-tech conduit, a high-tech publisher for whistleblowers that offers them some protection in a way that old mainstream media doesn't do to intelligence whistleblowers, and they have done it very successfully.** We have a situation where over the last few years we've had even the New York Times, for example, which is one of the main beneficiaries of the WikiLeaks publications, has claimed they are a source, not a publisher.

This actually throws into stark relief the vulnerability of all our media now. Because if WikiLeaks is not a publisher and the founder of WikiLeaks Julian Assange

can be prosecuted, as the Americans are trying to do --- they've got a grand jury in Virginia sitting for the last six years trying to find any case they can get him on under the Espionage Act. So if WikiLeaks can be prosecuted for publishing leaked documents, why is the rest of the mainstream media in America not fighting in its corner, because it leaves them very vulnerable, as well.

They have been reporting leaks left, right and center ever since Donald Trump has been elected as president, from the intelligence agencies in America. So they should all be equally vulnerable under the law. So you would think they would all gather together and try to protect themselves under the law. Rather, **they turn on WikiLeaks, because it threatens their business model.**

RT: If similar comments directed at Hillary Clinton were published by some newspaper, what do you think the reaction would likely be?

AM: The Hillary Clinton case is interesting because there does appear to be a *prima facie* case that she did break the law by using a private server to send state confidential and secret e-mails. That was being investigated. That investigation was dropped ahead of the election last year. But yes, there should have been a further investigation into that, because it does seem she may well have broken the law with that.

If people started attacking a former secretary of state in America, presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, saying they should call for her execution, for her assassination, for drone bombing, or whatever. And some people are saying: 'Well, we're doing that in Libya because she has destabilized and the country has become a basket case and a cradle for ISIS.' Yes, there would be an outcry. That outcry would probably be from the very same liberal, tolerant people that are calling for the assassination of Julian Assange at the moment. The irony is huge.

<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/395163-assange-democrats-wikileaks-clinton/>

Intel Vets Challenge 'Russia Hack' Evidence

Consortium News
July 24, 2017

In a memo to President Trump, a group of former U.S. intelligence officers, including NSA specialists, cite new forensic studies to challenge the claim of the key Jan. 6 "assessment" that Russia "hacked" Democratic emails last year.

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

SUBJECT: Was the "Russian Hack" an Inside Job?

Executive Summary

Forensic studies of "Russian hacking" into Democratic National Committee computers last year reveal that on July 5, 2016, **data was leaked (not hacked) by a person with physical access to DNC computer.** After examining metadata from the "Guccifer 2.0"

July 5, 2016 intrusion into the DNC server, **independent cyber investigators have concluded that an insider copied DNC data onto an external storage device.**

Key among the findings of the independent forensic investigations is the conclusion that the DNC data was copied onto a storage device at a speed that far exceeds an Internet capability for a remote hack. Of equal importance, the forensics show that the copying was performed on the East coast of the U.S. Thus far, mainstream media have ignored the findings of these independent studies [see [here](#) and [here](#)].

Independent analyst Skip Folden, who retired after 25 years as the IBM Program Manager for Information Technology, US, who examined the recent forensic findings, is a co-author of this Memorandum. He has drafted a more detailed technical report titled "Cyber-Forensic Investigation of 'Russian Hack' and Missing Intelligence Community Disclaimers," and sent it to the offices of the Special Counsel and the Attorney General. VIPS member **William Binney, a former Technical Director at the National Security Agency**, and other senior NSA "alumni" in VIPS attest to the professionalism of the independent forensic findings.

The recent forensic studies fill in a critical gap. **Why the FBI neglected to perform any independent forensics on the original "Guccifer 2.0" material remains a mystery** — as does the lack of any sign that the "hand-picked analysts" from the FBI, CIA, and NSA, who wrote the "Intelligence Community Assessment" dated January 6, 2017, gave any attention to forensics.

NOTE: There has been so much conflation of charges about hacking that we wish to make very clear the primary focus of this Memorandum. We focus specifically on the July 5, 2016 alleged Guccifer 2.0 "hack" of the DNC server. In earlier VIPS memoranda we addressed the lack of any evidence connecting the Guccifer 2.0 alleged hacks and WikiLeaks, and we asked President Obama specifically to disclose any evidence that WikiLeaks received DNC data from the Russians [see [here](#) and [here](#)].

Addressing this point at his last press conference (January 18), he described "the conclusions of the intelligence community" as "not conclusive," even though the Intelligence Community Assessment of January 6 expressed "high confidence" that Russian intelligence "relayed material it acquired from the DNC ... to WikiLeaks."

Obama's admission came as no surprise to us. **It has long been clear to us that the reason the U.S. government lacks conclusive evidence of a transfer of a "Russian hack" to WikiLeaks is because there was no such transfer.** Based mostly on the cumulatively unique technical experience of our ex-NSA colleagues, we have been saying for almost a year that the DNC data reached WikiLeaks via a copy/leak by a DNC insider (but almost certainly not the same person who copied DNC data on July 5, 2016).

From the information available, we conclude that the same inside-DNC, copy/leak process was used at two different times, by two different entities, for two distinctly different purposes:

(1) an inside leak to WikiLeaks before Julian Assange announced on June 12, 2016, that he had DNC documents and planned to publish them (which he did on July 22) — the presumed objective being to expose strong DNC bias toward the Clinton candidacy; and

(2) a separate leak on July 5, 2016, to pre-emptively taint anything WikiLeaks might later publish by “showing” it came from a “Russian hack.”

* * *

Mr. President:

This is our first VIPS Memorandum for you, but we have a history of letting U.S. Presidents know when we think our former intelligence colleagues have gotten something important wrong, and why. For example, our first such memorandum, a same-day commentary for President George W. Bush on Colin Powell’s U.N. speech on February 5, 2003, warned that the “unintended consequences were likely to be catastrophic,” should the U.S. attack Iraq and “justify” the war on intelligence that we retired intelligence officers could readily see as fraudulent and driven by a war agenda.

Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the United Nations on Feb. 5. 2003, citing satellite photos which supposedly proved that Iraq had WMD, but the evidence proved bogus.

The January 6 “Intelligence Community Assessment” by “hand-picked” analysts from the FBI, CIA, and NSA seems to fit into the same agenda-driven category. It is largely based on an “assessment,” not supported by any apparent evidence, that a shadowy entity with the moniker “Guccifer 2.0” hacked the DNC on behalf of Russian intelligence and gave DNC emails to WikiLeaks.

The recent forensic findings mentioned above have put a huge dent in that assessment and cast serious doubt on the underpinnings of the extraordinarily successful campaign to blame the Russian government for hacking. The pundits and politicians who have led the charge against Russian “meddling” in the U.S. election can be expected to try to cast doubt on the forensic findings, if they ever do bubble up into the mainstream media. But the technical limitations of today’s Internet are widely understood. We are prepared to answer any substantive challenges on their merits.

You may wish to ask CIA Director Mike Pompeo what he knows about this. Our own lengthy intelligence community experience suggests that it is possible that neither former CIA Director John Brennan, nor the cyber-warriors who worked for him, have been completely candid with their new director regarding how this all went down.

Copied, Not Hacked

As indicated above, the independent forensic work just completed focused on data copied (not hacked) by a shadowy persona named “Guccifer 2.0.” The forensics reflect what seems to have been a desperate effort to “blame the Russians” for publishing highly embarrassing DNC emails three days before the Democratic convention last July. Since the content of the DNC emails reeked of pro-Clinton bias, her campaign saw an overriding need to divert attention from content to provenance – as in, who “hacked” those DNC emails? The campaign was enthusiastically supported by compliant “mainstream” media; they are still on a roll.

“The Russians” were the ideal culprit. And, after WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange announced on June 12, 2016, “We have emails related to Hillary Clinton which are

pending publication,” her campaign had more than a month before the convention to insert its own “forensic facts” and prime the media pump to put the blame on “Russian meddling.” Mrs. Clinton’s PR chief Jennifer Palmieri has explained how she used golf carts to make the rounds at the convention. She wrote that her “mission was to get the press to focus on something even we found difficult to process: the prospect that Russia had not only hacked and stolen emails from the DNC, but that it had done so to help Donald Trump and hurt Hillary Clinton.”

Independent cyber-investigators have now completed the kind of forensic work that the intelligence assessment did not do. Oddly, the “hand-picked” intelligence analysts contented themselves with “assessing” this and “assessing” that. In contrast, the investigators dug deep and came up with verifiable evidence from metadata found in the record of the alleged Russian hack.

They found that the purported “hack” of the DNC by Guccifer 2.0 was not a hack, by Russia or anyone else. Rather it originated with a copy (onto an external storage device— a thumb drive, for example) by an insider. The data was leaked to implicate Russia. We do not know who or what the murky Guccifer 2.0 is. You may wish to ask the FBI.

The Time Sequence

June 12, 2016: Assange announces WikiLeaks is about to publish “emails related to Hillary Clinton.”

June 14, 2016: DNC contractor CrowdStrike, (with a dubious professional record and multiple conflicts of interest) announces that malware has been found on the DNC server and claims there is evidence it was injected by Russians.

June 15, 2016: “Guccifer 2.0” affirms the DNC statement; claims responsibility for the “hack;” claims to be a WikiLeaks source; and posts a document that the forensics show was synthetically tainted with “Russian fingerprints.”

We do not think that the June 12, 14, & 15 timing was pure coincidence. Rather, it **suggests the start of a pre-emptive move to associate Russia with anything WikiLeaks might have been about to publish and to “show” that it came from a Russian hack.**

The Key Event

July 5, 2016: In the early evening, Eastern Daylight Time, someone working in the EDT time zone with a computer directly connected to the DNC server or DNC Local Area Network, copied 1,976 MegaBytes of data in 87 seconds onto an external storage device. That speed is much faster than what is physically possible with a hack.

It thus appears that the purported “hack” of the DNC by Guccifer 2.0 (the self-proclaimed WikiLeaks source) was not a hack by Russia or anyone else, but was rather a copy of DNC data onto an external storage device.

“Obfuscation & De-obfuscation”

Mr. President, the disclosure described below may be related. Even if it is not, it is something we think you should be made aware of in this general connection. On March 7, 2017, WikiLeaks began to publish a trove of original CIA documents that WikiLeaks labeled “Vault 7.” WikiLeaks said it got the trove from a current or former CIA contractor and described it as comparable in scale and significance to the information Edward Snowden gave to reporters in 2013.

No one has challenged the authenticity of the original documents of Vault 7, which disclosed a vast array of cyber warfare tools developed, probably with help from NSA, by CIA’s Engineering Development Group. That Group was part of the sprawling CIA Directorate of Digital Innovation — a growth industry established by John Brennan in 2015.

Scarcely imaginable digital tools – that can take control of your car and make it race over 100 mph, for example, or can enable remote spying through a TV – were described and duly reported in the New York Times and other media throughout March. But the Vault 7, part 3 release on March 31 that exposed the “Marble Framework” program apparently was judged too delicate to qualify as “news fit to print” and was kept out of the Times.

The Washington Post’s Ellen Nakashima, it seems, “did not get the memo” in time. Her March 31 article bore the catching (and accurate) headline: “WikiLeaks’ latest release of CIA cyber-tools could blow the cover on agency hacking operations.”

The WikiLeaks release indicated that Marble was designed for flexible and easy-to-use “obfuscation,” and that Marble source code includes a “deobfuscator” to reverse CIA text obfuscation.

More important, the CIA reportedly used Marble during 2016. In her Washington Post report, Nakashima left that out, but did include another significant point made by WikiLeaks; namely, that the obfuscation tool could be used to conduct a “forensic attribution double game” or false-flag operation because it included test samples in Chinese, Russian, Korean, Arabic and Farsi.

The CIA’s reaction was neuralgic. Director Mike Pompeo lashed out two weeks later, calling Assange and his associates “demons,” and insisting; “It’s time to call out WikiLeaks for what it really is, a non-state hostile intelligence service, often abetted by state actors like Russia.”

Mr. President, we do not know if CIA’s Marble Framework, or tools like it, played some kind of role in the campaign to blame Russia for hacking the DNC. Nor do we know how candid the denizens of CIA’s Digital Innovation Directorate have been with you and with Director Pompeo. These are areas that might profit from early White House review.

Putin and the Technology

We also do not know if you have discussed cyber issues in any detail with President Putin. In his interview with NBC’s Megyn Kelly, he seemed quite willing – perhaps even eager – to address issues related to the kind of cyber tools revealed in the Vault 7 disclosures, if only to indicate he has been briefed on them. Putin pointed out that today’s technology enables hacking to be “masked and camouflaged to an extent that

no one can understand the origin” [of the hack] ... And, vice versa, it is possible to set up any entity or any individual that everyone will think that they are the exact source of that attack.”

“Hackers may be anywhere,” he said. “There may be hackers, by the way, in the United States who very craftily and professionally passed the buck to Russia. Can’t you imagine such a scenario? ... I can.”

Full Disclosure: Over recent decades the ethos of our intelligence profession has eroded in the public mind to the point that agenda-free analysis is deemed well nigh impossible. Thus, we add this disclaimer, which applies to everything we in VIPS say and do: We have no political agenda; our sole purpose is to spread truth around and, when necessary, hold to account our former intelligence colleagues.

We speak and write without fear or favor. Consequently, any resemblance between what we say and what presidents, politicians and pundits say is purely coincidental. The fact we find it is necessary to include that reminder speaks volumes about these highly politicized times. This is our 50th VIPS Memorandum since the afternoon of Powell’s speech at the UN. Live links to the 49 past memos can be found at <https://consortiumnews.com/vips-memos/>.

FOR THE STEERING GROUP, VETERAN INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS FOR SANITY

William Binney, former NSA Technical Director for World Geopolitical & Military Analysis; Co-founder of NSA’s Signals Intelligence Automation Research Center

Skip Folden, independent analyst, retired IBM Program Manager for Information Technology US (Associate VIPS)

Matthew Hoh, former Capt., USMC, Iraq & Foreign Service Officer, Afghanistan (associate VIPS)

Larry C Johnson, CIA & State Department (ret.)

Michael S. Kearns, Air Force Intelligence Officer (Ret.), Master SERE Resistance to Interrogation Instructor

John Kiriakou, Former CIA Counterterrorism Officer and former Senior Investigator, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Linda Lewis, WMD preparedness policy analyst, USDA (ret.)

Lisa Ling, TSgt USAF (ret.) (associate VIPS)

Edward Loomis, Jr., former NSA Technical Director for the Office of Signals Processing

David MacMichael, National Intelligence Council (ret.)

Ray McGovern, former U.S. Army Infantry/Intelligence officer and CIA analyst

Elizabeth Murray, former Deputy National Intelligence Officer for Middle East, CIA

Coleen Rowley, FBI Special Agent and former Minneapolis Division Legal Counsel (ret.)

Cian Westmoreland, former USAF Radio Frequency Transmission Systems Technician and Unmanned Aircraft Systems whistleblower (Associate VIPS)

Kirk Wiebe, former Senior Analyst, SIGINT Automation Research Center, NSA

Sarah G. Wilton, Intelligence Officer, DIA (ret.); Commander, US Naval Reserve (ret.)

Ann Wright, U.S. Army Reserve Colonel (ret) and former U.S. Diplomat

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Editor's Note: This VIPS Memo included two mistaken dates. Neither affected the Memo's main conclusion; i.e., that the July 5, 2016 intrusion into DNC emails that was blamed on Russia could not have been a hack – by Russia or anyone else. The portions of the Memo affected by the mistaken dates have been corrected.

A short explanation of the corrections:

(1) June 14, 2016 (not the 15th, as the VIPS memo erroneously stated) was the day CrowdStrike said malware had been found on the DNC server and claimed there was evidence the malware was injected by Russians. (On the following day – the 15th) – “Guccifer 2.0” claimed responsibility for the “hack” and claimed to be a WikiLeaks source.)

(2) Although the VIPS Memo indicated, correctly, that on June 15, 2016, “Guccifer 2.0” ... posts a document that the forensics show was synthetically tainted with ‘Russian fingerprints,’” other language in the Memo was mistaken in indicating that evidence of such tainting was also found in the “Guccifer 2.0” metadata from the copying event on July 5.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/07/24/intel-vets-challenge-russia-hack-evidence/>

WikiLeaks wants to 'take down America any way they can,' says CIA chief

*Andrew Blake
Washington Times
July 21, 2017*

CIA Director Mike Pompeo has doubled down on WikiLeaks and endorsed using antiquated espionage legislation to impede the website's publication of classified U.S. documents.

“WikiLeaks will take down America any way they can and find any willing partner to achieve that end,” Mr. Pompeo said Thursday at a security summit in Aspen,

Colorado, where questions concerning the website's publications and the Trump administration's intended reaction peppered an hourlong discussion on subjects ranging from WikiLeaks and its publisher Julian Assange to Russia's role in last year's election and North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"This is the nature of these non-state hostile intelligence services," he added. "I think our intelligence community has a lot of work in figuring out how to respond to them."

Pressed for possibilities, Mr. Pompeo advocated curbing sensitive disclosures by invoking the Espionage Act, 100-year-old legislation initially used to prosecute spies in World War I. It was used this century against leakers including former NSA contractor Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks source Chelsea Manning, as well as Reality Winner, a 25-year-old woman arrested last month for allegedly leaking classified documents to The Intercept news site.

"You said that we have to recognize that we can no longer let Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us," New York Times columnist Bret Stephens asked Mr. Pompeo. "What does that in your mind imply, legislatively or operationally? **Should we be enforcing the Espionage Act much more?"**

"Yes," Mr. Pompeo responded without hesitation.

When asked if publishers and journalists should be prosecuted for using state secrets, Mr. Pompeo answered: "There's an old aphorism that says that the law is entitled to every man's evidence, and **I'll leave it at that.**" [*Which is what? –A.B.*]

The Obama administration began investigating WikiLeaks following its publication of Defense and State Department documents in 2010, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions' Justice Department is continuing to pursue related charges against Mr. Assange, an Australian citizen currently residing in Ecuador's London embassy after being granted political asylum by Quito in 2012.

Mr. Trump previously praised WikiLeaks prior to taking office, and he widely hailed its publication of stolen documents last summer concerning his former rival, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, famously claiming: "I love WikiLeaks!"

"I don't love WikiLeaks," Mr. Pompeo said Thursday.

Mr. Assange did not respond privately to requests for comment Thursday but reacted to Mr. Pompeo's latest claim in a series of tweets.

"What sort of America can be 'taken down' by the truth?" he tweeted.

[http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jul/21/wikileaks-will-take-down-america-any-way-they-can-](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jul/21/wikileaks-will-take-down-america-any-way-they-can/)

'Putting people at risk': Assange's lawyer criticizes new documentary on WikiLeaks founder

RT

24 July 2017

The recently released documentary on the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, called "Risk," compromises the security of those who appeared in the movie, Assange's lawyer Melinda Taylor told RT.

The documentary "shows persons who never agreed to be in the film," Taylor said, adding that "it is not just the WikiLeaks staff, who are put at risk, it is also the sources and persons they worked with."

She also said that Assange "did withdraw his consent [to being shown in the film] but so did the others: so did his mother, so did [a British journalist, legal researcher, and WikiLeaks section editor] Sarah Harrison, so did [independent American journalist and computer security researcher] Jacob Appelbaum."

Taylor explained that all these people did so "because they were not given an effective opportunity to voice their concerns and in some cases to even see the film before it was shown."

"They were participating in this documentary under the strict conditions that they will receive the protection, that they will have a right to give input and to withdraw as well as to voice their concerns— none of this was respected," she said, adding that the documentary poses a risk "not just for Assange but for the WikiLeaks sources, the people, who put their lives and security on the line to do the work they do."

Taylor then said that the "Risk" director, the American documentary maker Laura Poitras, director of Academy Award winning CitizenFour about US whistleblower Edward Snowden, violated her initial agreement with Assange.

The agreement, under which Poitras was given "privileged access to WikiLeaks and Mr. Assange," particularly said that the footage "was never to be edited in the US," Taylor explained, adding that "Poitras allegedly broke that condition and took the footage to a country where she knew it would be [overseen] by the US authorities, who are waging a war against WikiLeaks."

The lawyer also criticized the film for not showing the real work that WikiLeaks does. "It does not portray the work of WikiLeaks, it does not show the contributions they've made. **There is a lot of scope for showing what WikiLeaks does that is just not there.** If you want to know about WikiLeaks, go to the WikiLeaks page or to Justice For Assange. This documentary just does not show it," Taylor said.

She confirmed that Assange's lawyer, who also represents some other people who appeared in the film, "sent 'cease and desist' letters to the distributors of the film due to the fact that the participants did not authorize the use of their images in the film."

Earlier, the distributors of the documentary said that Assange contacted them and demanded that they "immediately cease the use and distribution of all images of the Named Participants" that appeared in the documentary and "desist from this or any other infringement of the rights" of these people.

<https://www.rt.com/news/397385-assange-lawyer-risk-documentary>

An Interview with WikiLeaks' Assange

CIA Director Pompeo says WikiLeaks will be dealt with as a "hostile intelligence" service, raising the stakes in the long-running U.S. government feud with Julian Assange, interviewed by Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein.

*Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein
Consortium News
2017-07-29*

Wikileaks founder and editor Julian Assange is still under attack with CIA Director Mike Pompeo recently describing the whistleblowing publication as a "non-state hostile intelligence" service and a target of CIA countermeasures.

"I think our intelligence community has a lot of work in figuring out how to respond," Pompeo told a security summit in Aspen, Colorado, on July 20. Despite such threats, Assange continues his WikiLeaks work from inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London where he was given asylum five years ago.

Assange was interviewed as a guest on the WBAI Radio show, Live on the Fly with Randy Credico and guest co-host Dennis Bernstein, executive producer of Flashpoints on Pacifica Radio.

Randy Credico: Julian Assange, I just wanted to mention something that happened to me yesterday. A woman named Laura Krause called me last night. She is the sister of Allison Krause, one of the four students who were killed at Kent State on May 4, 1970, by the National Guard. She expressed her gratitude to WikiLeaks for finding and preserving some very important documents relating to that tragic event.

Julian Assange: Interestingly, we didn't intend to specifically publish Kent State documents. It was part of our large archive of cable documents from the 1970s called "The Kissinger Cables." Often when you take the internal communications of the State Department or another powerful organization, it tends to touch on nearly everything. And the public's ability to spot relevant connections in your material often greatly outstrips your own.

I am always extremely irritated with journalists who sit upon hordes of historical treasure detailing how our institutions actually behave. The public's ability to take this information and connect it to their own personal histories, using it in litigation and political campaigns, is actually much greater than the rather narrow character of any particular journalist or editor, including myself.

Dennis Bernstein: I just got off the phone with Oliver Stone, who is being shredded everywhere because he had the temerity to do a series of interviews with Vladimir Putin. Have you had the opportunity to see any of the interviews?

JA: I've seen all four. The last one was recorded after the US elections so it takes place within the context of this neo-McCarthyist Russia hysteria. Putin is the consummate politician, especially within Russia but also when dealing with the world. You cannot completely hide who you are over the course of four hours, and lots of little interesting things came out.

For example, in the third episode, Oliver Stone shows Vladimir Putin "Dr. Strangelove", which Putin says he has never seen before. If he has genuinely never seen the film before, he has to be careful because he doesn't know how each scene or

the film as a whole is going to pan out. At the end he says, "Well, that's interesting, they even predicted some of the technical issues." And he points out that not much has changed in the dynamics of power.

Oliver Stone hands Putin the DVD case and Putin walks into another room in the Kremlin. When he comes back there is a slight smirk on his face and he shows the empty case to the camera and says, "Typical American gift." Actually, he probably knew already that the case was empty when Stone gave it to him.

DB: Julian, I would love to turn your attention to some of the breaking news around your struggle. I understand that your legal crew has taken your case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Can you talk about the significance of that?

JA: Well, it's significant for refugee law worldwide. I am very proud to have triggered it in some way. It is Ecuador that has formally gone to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Most of the members of the OAS [Organization of American States] respect their rulings, while the US considers them only as advisory. It is one of the most highly regarded legal bodies in the world, two others being the European and UN Human Rights Commissions.

In my case, Ecuador has the view that there are several human rights issues that have developed which require a proper hearing. Of particular concern are the obligations on states to assess refugee status and offer protection and how refugees should be processed outside the domestic territory, for example, in embassies, UN compounds, aboard ships, etc.

This bears on my situation but it also has a strong bearing on the situation in Syria and other places where you have refugees who are fleeing persecution taking long, dangerous treks into neighboring countries. If you process these refugees very close to their places of origin, you are going to save lives. It should be standardized how these people are processed, regardless of embassy or whatever.

I think this is the most significant consideration of refugee law since 1969, when the optional protocol on the 1951 Convention on Refugees was signed by many countries at the UN. There was an attempt in 1975 to reconsider the issue, brought about by Australia. In the early seventies you had many refugees fleeing South Vietnam, coming down through the Indonesian archipelago to Australia. At that time Australia wanted to normalize the processing of refugees at its different embassies. The effort was blocked by the Soviet Union and the United States.

Since that time, human rights law has really developed in earnest as a proper legal field, which puts obligations on states not to arbitrarily detain people and so on. Basically, many of these human rights instruments, when properly executed, force states to protect people, or at the very least, give states the right to protect people. If a state is obligated to protect people who are being persecuted, who are being threatened, then according to human rights law those refugees must be taken in.

There is an interlocking of the 1951 convention, the 1967 protocol, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with obligations under refugee law to enable consistency and avoid conflict. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights understands this and Ecuador has been great in taking on the case. There have been 54 *amicus curiae* from the UNHCR [UN High Commissioner for Refugees], the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Mexico and six other American States, a lot of legal clinics, and so on. We're now waiting on a decision from the Inter-American court but we know that it is definitely going to issue an opinion. They have already decided that this is a very important area of law and a hearing is going to be held in August.

And, like I said, I believe this is the single most important attempt that has been made to harmonize international refugee law. I must say I am happy that something is emerging out of my situation other than just perhaps my freedom.

There is a lot of talk in the United States about the Trump administration's shutting down of migration and tourism to the US from some Muslim countries in the Middle East. I find it strange that there is so little discussion of what I feel is a much more serious situation: the shutting down of all refugee applications for 180 days. It is not reasonable to be accepting tourists from all over the world but not be accepting refugees.

Okay, right now Syria is a very dangerous country to be accepting refugees from, you might have to shut down the system and take some time to reboot the process. But what about refugees from New Zealand or from Mexico? Are these likely to be ISIS people? Absolutely not. And if you are taking tourists from those same countries, it is completely absurd to block refugee processing....

DB: Do you consider the information flow out of the DNC to be a hack or a leak?

JA: Well, this is a sourcing question. There have been a lot of flows out of the DNC over a two-year period, seemingly by five different actors, according to statements coming out of US intelligence. Actually, we haven't seen those repeated in 2017. We don't talk about sourcing in that way. We make sure that our publications are completely accurate and that our information did not come from a state actor. We haven't said anything about them and we probably won't, depending on how things develop. Because if we start giving more details, it makes it easier to catch our sources, which we obviously don't want.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/07/29/an-interview-with-wikileaks-assange/>

The War on WikiLeaks and Assange

Helping government authorities discredit Julian Assange and destroy WikiLeaks, mainstream media outlets twisted a recent interview to make Assange look like a Donald Trump backer, write Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein.

*Randy Credico and Dennis J Bernstein
Consortium News
August 4, 2017*

Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi, who now reports for La Repubblica and has worked on WikiLeaks' releases of secret documents, complains that her recent interview with Julian Assange was distorted by the Guardian, the Washington Post and others to assign Assange a pro-Trump agenda.

The Guardian recently "amended" its reporting on her interview with Assange, but for the feisty, seasoned reporter it wasn't nearly enough. "I appreciate the Guardian amending the article, but at the same time the damage is done and I'm not convinced it was a solution," she said.

Maurizi is going to court in September in Great Britain to fight for the release of key documents that related directly to the process of Assange's treatment and his pursuit by various governments collaborating to shut his operations down.

Before joining *la Repubblica*, Maurizi spent ten years working for the Italian newsmagazine *l'Espresso*. Maurizi also partnered with Glenn Greenwald to reveal the Edward Snowden files as they pertain to Italy. She is author most recently of *Dossier WikiLeaks*.

Dennis Bernstein: Tell us about your multiple struggles to get key documents that will shed light on the entire Assange affair.

Stefania Maurizi: I have spent the past two years struggling to access the documents on the Julian Assange case. I was finally forced to go to court and sue the UK government to get them to hand over the documents. **This is the first time that a reporter has tried to get access to these files, which tells you something about the state of journalism these days.**

Dozens of newspapers have talked with Assange over the past ten years and yet no one has attempted to get full access to these documents about the case. Here we have a high-profile publisher who is being arbitrarily detained by two of the most respected Western democracies, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and no one is trying to get to these documents. It is incredible to me.

Randy Credico: Are any newspapers in London writing amicus briefs on your behalf?

SM: Honestly, I don't know. I can imagine there is some embarrassment about the fact that no newspaper has yet asked for these documents.

DB: What kinds of information do you expect to be in these documents? What could be the case in terms of freeing Julian Assange?

SM: First of all, I want to access the full correspondence between the UK authorities and the Swedish prosecutors. In 2015 I filed a Freedom of Information Act request and I obtained some documents from the Swedish authorities which made very clear that the UK put pressure on the Swedish authorities not to question Mr. Assange in London, which he and his lawyers had requested, but rather to extradite him to Sweden. This is why we have been in this legal quagmire for five years now with Julian stuck in arbitrary detention at the Ecuadorian embassy.

Julian Assange has never refused questioning. He has fought against extradition because he knows that extradition to Sweden would result in extradition to the United States. So the **UK authorities advised the Swedish prosecutor against questioning him in London, which would have avoided this arbitrary detention.**

I know for certain that there are thousands of documents pertaining to this case. I want to be able to access any documents pertaining to the exchange between the US and UK authorities and I want to access any documents about the exchange between the UK and Ecuador. I believe that there is a strong public interest in shedding light on this important and high-profile case. Can you imagine a high-profile editor in Europe under arbitrary detention? And yet no one is asking for the documents in this case!

RC: Why did you write Dossier WikiLeaks?

SM: That book is based on my access from 2009 to 2011 to the WikiLeaks documents about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Guantanamo files and those pertaining to the diplomacy cables. I read something like 13,000 pages of the diplomacy cables.

Basically, I attempted to share with my readers the most important revelations contained in these documents.

For example, I acquired some solid information about how the US tried to stop the Italian prosecutors investigating the extraordinary rendition of Abu Omar. Or how the US authorities tried to pressure the Italian government to buy the Lockheed Martin fighter. Or how they tried to block the International Criminal Court.

This is the kind of information that many reporters dream of getting access to and for the first time with WikiLeaks we were able to. I really appreciate WikiLeaks' publication strategy of making these documents available exclusively to certain media partners like myself and then later to the general public, to activists, journalists, lawyers, etc.

I believe that information needs to be free and accessible to everyone without restrictions. Of course, there is information which should be kept secret, regarding the security of nuclear facilities, for example. But these documents are different. **These secrets are used by countries like the United States to protect themselves from inquiry, from prosecution, from embarrassment.** These secrets are less legitimate.

DB: For the last six months, WikiLeaks has been publishing a series of documents on the CIA which they entitle Vault 7. Could you talk about the significance of Vault 7?

SM: Basically, **Vault 7 consists of documents concerning the cyber weapons the CIA uses to penetrate our computers, our mobile devices, and so on. For the first time we have solid evidence concerning the use of these kinds of weapons by the CIA.** Of course, these documents are of a highly technical nature so we have tried to make them accessible to the general public. But it is very important to have an insight into these tools, so that we can understand what they can and cannot do.

As far as we have been able to determine, they have no magic wand, no wonder weapon. They have come up with some smart solutions, they have some impressive tools, but no magic wand. At the end of the day, we verified the documents as genuine and we made them accessible to the public.

In the case of technical documents, you go to a trusted expert to check whether a procedure makes sense, whether the software makes sense, classification marks, etc. I don't want to go into too much detail on how we verify documents because that might compromise our work. But the tough part of this work is verifying the documents. I can tell you that in my eight years of work with WikiLeaks I have been to court several times and was able to verify that the documents were genuine and my coverage was correct. We have won libel cases in court.

RC: What has motivated you to cover the WikiLeaks case these past eight years?

SM: Before I went into journalism, I got a degree in mathematics. **One of my sources in cryptography put WikiLeaks on my radar screen back in 2008,** when very few journalists had even heard of WikiLeaks. In 2009 they contacted me and wanted me to verify the authenticity of some important documents concerning Italy. That was our first partnership together. Since then I have been involved in all of WikiLeaks' releases.

The reason I am very interested in this work is that, first of all, it gives you access to documents which you would never have access to otherwise. In Italy there are families of people who were massacred who sixty years later are still unable to get access to information about their loved ones, they cannot get to the truth. I believe it is very important to be able to get access to unauthorized disclosures or secret documents like CIA and NSA documents. WikiLeaks provides us with unprecedented access to these documents. People at the CIA and the NSA have no accountability, there is no

serious oversight. In this case there is a real need for unauthorized disclosures. They want to continue to operate in darkness.

DB: Do you feel that your recent interview with Julian Assange has been distorted by publications such as the Guardian and the Washington Post and across the internet to present Assange as a Trump supporter?

SM: Absolutely. **They completely distorted that interview, putting into his mouth things he never said. No one paid any attention to my protests.** They were focused on their own interpretations. Finally it took Glenn Greenwald to expose this. The Guardian was forced to amend their article.

DB: How does this throw a spotlight on the political realities faced by Assange in detention?

SM: I have been there from the beginning so I have seen all kinds of attacks on Julian, with high-profile reporters and the international media just parroting what the Pentagon was saying; That Wikileaks had blood on its hands because they exposed the names of Afghan informants. When the US government began complaining that WikiLeaks was putting diplomats at risk, once again the media adopted the government position. **The latest is they are crucifying Julian because he has not published Russian documents, saying that he is a Russian spy, etc. But I can tell you that WikiLeaks is obsessed about publishing, they will publish whatever they can get.**

There is no way they can kill Julian Assange, it is not possible. We are in Europe, they cannot get to him with drones. **But they can certainly destroy his reputation. And when it comes to journalism, reputation is everything.**

RC: With all of its power and influence, why are the US government and its allies so obsessed with this one individual?

SM: Julian was able to hit them very hard, to expose them, to expose their secrets. **Here you have an organization exposing the truth behind two wars with facts, without resorting to any propaganda. Never before have they faced such revelations.** I can well imagine they are furious.

DB: Why do you think it is so important that Julian Assange be freed and allowed to continue his work?

SM: Access to information is crucial for democracy. Take Afghanistan, we have been there since 2001 and what do we know about what has been going on there? It took Edward Snowden to expose the NSA. Before that we knew very little. This kind of information is crucial for our democracy. Unauthorized disclosures are crucial in the case of democracies and in the case of regimes. WikiLeaks is taking huge legal and extralegal risks to get this information out.

RC: The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has determined that Julian Assange is in fact being arbitrarily detained, that he is a political prisoner and must be released and compensated for all that he has been through. The British have yet to comply with this finding.

SM: This sends a terrible message to other countries which are holding people under arbitrary detention. What can the UK say to Iran or other rogue nations when they detain journalists or political and human rights activists? How can the UK say anything when they have a very high-profile editor under arbitrary detention in London?

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/08/04/the-war-on-wikileaks-and-assange/>

Julian Assange wants to hire the Google engineer who got fired for writing the anti-diversity manifesto

*Julie Bort
Business Insider Australia
Aug. 9, 2017*

Julian Assange has come to the defence of the fired Google engineer.

On Monday Google fired an engineer who wrote a now infamous memo against diversity that went viral within the company, was published by the press and has been the cause of non-stop talk ever since.

But the engineer, James Damore, needn't worry about a job if he needs one.

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has publicly offered to bring him on board:

As you might expect, Assange argued that the guy had a right to express an opinion, however unpopular.

However, Assange went even further and appeared to defend the ex-Google engineer's controversial views by tweeting and linking to various bits of content that seem to be about scientists backing up the engineer's claims. **To recap: the engineer basically argued that many traits generally considered sexist stereotypes are in fact basic attributes baked into human biology.** The engineer also equated his belief system with being a member of the political right.

Later, after the controversy began, **the engineer revised his memo to say that the world is misrepresenting his ideas**, "I value diversity and inclusion, am not denying that sexism exists, and don't endorse using stereotypes," he wrote, and said that he's heard from a lot of Googlers that agreed with him but are afraid to say so for fear of getting fired. (Here's the full copy of the memo.)

It's also worth noting that Assange has a history with Google. In between his defence of the engineer on Tuesday, Assange also fired off a tweet that plugged his book which includes a chapter on Google. Assange believes that Google had a "special relationship" with Hillary Clinton.

The memo enrapt and enraged so many people inside Google and outside that Google CEO Sundar Pichai cut his family vacation short to come back and calm his employees down.

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/julian-assange-wants-to-hire-the-fired-google-engineer-2017-8>

Julian Assange explains how WikiLeaks used an algorithm to catch the Clinton camp off-guard with email dumps

*Eliza Relman
Business Insider Australia
Aug 15, 2017*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange developed an algorithm last year used to randomly select for release emails hacked from Democratic politicians and staffers, according to a lengthy New Yorker report.

The publishing algorithm, which Assange named “Stochastic Terminator,” helped WikiLeaks publish sets of internal documents and communications, including those of Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman John Podesta, with the goal of making it more difficult for the campaign to “to adjust to the problem, to spin, to create antidote news beforehand,” Assange told the New Yorker’s Raffi Khatchadourian.

Assange explained that the algorithm, which he developed leading up to WikiLeaks’ first release of Podesta’s emails last September, “was built on a random-number generator, modified by mathematical weights that reflected the pattern of the news cycle in a typical week,” Khatchadourian wrote.

“Imagine it this way,” Assange said. “The WikiLeaks tank is coming down the road. You can’t tell when it got on the road, when it is going to get off, how fast it is going, how big it is — because it has a decoy exterior. **They know that there are decoy parameters because I say it, and so you never know what’s a decoy and what is not. It kind of paralyzes their thinking.**”

Assange said that he was deliberately non-transparent about what information Wikileaks had before it was released, with the goal of keeping the Clinton camp on its toes. He compared his tactics to those of British intelligence agents during World War II.

“The advantage is greater to be a bit crafty — no, it’s not just being crafty. It comes, really, from what MI5 did in World War Two,” Assange said, recalling Operation Mincemeat, in which the British famously planted fake intelligence documents on a corpse dressed in a British navy uniform, allowing the Germans to discover the body and the disinformation.

“They stuffed secret information in his pockets, and had him wash up on the coast of Spain, and then they made it clear to the Germans that this was what they were doing,” Assange said. “So the Germans went from becoming fooled in one instance to doubting every instance.”

Khatchadourian also reported that a source close to WikiLeaks told him that Guccifer 2.0, a hacker linked to Russian intelligence who claims to have given the Democratic documents to WikiLeaks, pressed Assange to release the first batch of hacked emails before the Democratic National Convention in July. Guccifer 2.0 complained to an American journalist that Assange was “playing for time” and reportedly offered the documents to journalist and researcher Emma Best.

A WikiLeaks staffer told Khatchadourian that the organisation was overwhelmed by the volume of information they received, and Assange said the group missed its original deadline of July 18 — the Monday before the DNC — by four days due to “hiccups.”

“We had these hiccups that delayed us, and we were given a little more time — ” Assange said, halting mid-sentence and then adding, “to grow.”

“It was unclear who had given him time, but whoever it was clearly had leverage over his decisions,” Khatchadourian wrote. Assange later claimed that his source “did not mandate a publication time.”

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/wikileaks-algorithm-dnc-julian-assange-podesta-emails-new-yorker-2017-8>

Julian Assange, a Man Without a Country

From his tiny sanctum in London, the founder of WikiLeaks has interfered with the world’s most powerful institutions.

*Raffi Khatchadourian
The New Yorker
21 August 2017*

The Ecuadorian Embassy in London is situated at the end of a wide brick lane, next to the Harrods department store, in Knightsbridge. Sometimes plainclothes police officers, or vans with tinted windows, can be found outside the building. Sometimes there are throngs of people around it. Sometimes there is virtually no one, which was the case in June, 2012, when Julian Assange, the publisher of WikiLeaks, arrived, disguised as a motorcycle courier, to seek political asylum. In the five years since then, he has not set foot beyond the Embassy. Nonetheless, **he has become a global influence, proving that with simple digital tools a single person can craft a new kind of power**— a distributed, transnational power, which functions outside norms of state sovereignty that have held for centuries. Encouraged by millions of supporters, Assange has interfered with the world’s largest institutions. His releases have helped fuel democratic uprisings— notably in Tunisia, where a revolution sparked the Arab Spring— and they have been submitted as evidence in human-rights cases around the world. At the same time, **Assange’s methodology and his motivations have increasingly come under suspicion**. During the Presidential election last year, he published tens of thousands of hacked e-mails written by Democratic operatives, releasing them at pivotal moments in the campaign. They provoked strikingly disparate receptions. “I love WikiLeaks,” Donald Trump declared, in exultant gratitude. After the election, Hillary Clinton argued that the releases had been instrumental in keeping her from the Oval Office.

Shortly after Trump’s Inauguration, I flew to London, to visit Assange— the first of several trips, and many hours of interviews, to better understand how he runs WikiLeaks, how he has been living, how his political views have changed, and what role Russia has had in his operation. Even as a new inquiry opened into possible collusion between Trump-campaign operatives and Russia, “the WikiLeaks connection,” as James Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, put it last year, remained obscure.

Assange is not an easy man to get on the phone, let alone to see in person. He is protected by a group of loyal staffers and a shroud of organizational secrecy. One friend compared him to the central figure in Philip K. Dick’s “The Man in the High Castle”— a recluse trying to reset the course of history. In many ways, the Embassy has

become a surreal redoubt: a place of extreme seclusion in the center of a bustling world capital; a protective stronghold that few can enter, even though it is the target of millions of dollars' worth of covert surveillance.

The easiest route to the Embassy, if you are using the London Underground, is through the Knightsbridge station, next to Harrods. The building, at 3 Hans Crescent, is a block away. Although Assange has remained in his sanctum for years, he is attuned to his immediate surroundings: real-estate ownership, the Lamborghinis parked nearby, the habits of Arab sheikhs descending on local night spots. The lane between the station and the Embassy is packed with tourists. Assange knows the street artists and buskers there (for years, one has been playing the theme song to "Knots Landing" over and over). At the end of the block, the brick façade of the Embassy is visible— its tricolor flag hanging from the white Juliet balcony where, from time to time, Assange issues proclamations.

Arriving at the building's front entrance, I rang the buzzer, and a heavysset doorman came out, wearing the look of a bouncer accustomed to turning people away.

"I'm here to see Mr. Assange."

"Do you have an appointment?"

"I do."

"Ah," he said, brightening. "Then come in." A guard inside the Embassy had me empty my pockets and my bag onto a coffee table, then scanned my body with a security wand. Assange rarely allows visitors to carry electronics, so I was instructed to turn over my phone. The guard then directed me into a small conference room, closing the door behind me without giving any indication how long I could expect to wait.

Most visitors— even celebrity friends, like PJ Harvey and Brian Eno— meet Assange only here. Like the rest of the Embassy, the room is small, and the windows are cloaked with drapes. There is a poster, published by the Ecuadorian ministry of foreign relations, of a tubby, grinning pre-Columbian figurine. There are cabinets filled with books, including dusty rows of a red-bound series, "Biblioteca Ecuatoriana Mínima" (1960). Near the ceiling, there is a surveillance camera. Hanging above the conference table from thin rods are two curious white orbs, each about the size of a volleyball.

When I first met Assange, seven years ago, he was living out of a backpack. Now he is a man with aides-de-camp. One of them— I will call him Mr. Picabia— entered the conference room. "I'll rouse Julian," he said, smiling. On the way out, he flipped some switches on a tiny black box, and the orbs above filled the room with white noise. "He'll probably want them on," he said.

After a few minutes, Assange walked in. "Mr. Khatchadourian," he said, seriously, as he opened the door. I extended my right hand to shake his, and he responded by giving me his left hand, palm up, redefining the exchange on his terms. He was once rail thin, but, at forty-six, he is softening in the middle. **He looked pale— one close friend described his skin as "translucent."** His hand trembled a little. His hair was short, white, messy.

Assange was wearing a red shirt, tucked into black trousers without a belt, and he seemed groggy. He was fighting battles around the world; **he told me that he has had a hundred and fifty lawyers work on his behalf.** Ecuador's Presidential elections were just weeks away, and a key candidate was vowing to evict him from the Embassy. In Sweden, a criminal investigation into whether he had committed rape in Stockholm, in 2010, was dragging on. In the United States, the possibility loomed of a secret grand-jury indictment, related to documents that he had leaked years earlier. Although WikiLeaks has always been a magnet for criticism, the reaction to his election publications was unusually severe, with Assange gaining a reputation in Washington as a Russian intelligence asset. "Wonderful, isn't it!" he told me. "These motherfuckers have taken on board a rhetorical device, and the rhetorical device is the 'fallen man' or the 'fallen angel.' **It used to be great, and now it's bad.**"

Often, the lulls between major publications are difficult for him. With the 2016 campaign behind him, he was focussing on a new project— a mysterious archive that he called Vault 7. The work was invigorating, but his prolonged isolation was clearly taking a toll. Assange has a fractured tooth, and a shoulder injury that requires an MRI, but if he leaves the Embassy for treatment he will face certain arrest. "At one point, he was looking for an orthopedic doctor, and doctors were basically refusing to go in there," Ben Griffin, a former British Special Forces soldier who volunteers as his personal trainer, told me. As a precaution, Ecuador tried to negotiate a "safe passage" by which Assange could be admitted to a hospital without compromising his diplomatic protections, but the negotiations fell through. In the Embassy, **a whiteboard lists the complex procedures involved should he face a medical emergency.**

Assange's physical universe for the past five years has been roughly three hundred and thirty square feet, comprising his private quarters and a few rooms that he shares with Ecuadorian staff. "It's like living in a space shuttle," a friend of his told me. Out of concerns about security, and also perhaps because paparazzi occasionally wait for him on the street, he rarely parts the drapes in the daytime, or stands at the balcony. He lives in a continuous state of hypervigilance, believing that the Embassy could be stormed at any moment. Shortly after he arrived, British authorities threatened to strip the Embassy of its diplomatic protections and apprehend him by force. Ecuador's foreign minister responded, "We want to be very clear, we're not a British colony." Assange told me that, preparing for imminent arrest, he readied a pair of handcuffs so that he could physically secure himself to the Ecuadorian consul. After that, British officers stationed outside taunted him by banging on the walls at four in the morning, and for a time Assange slept in a different room each night.

The uniformed men were removed in 2015. In their place, Scotland Yard initiated more intensive covert monitoring. Anyone familiar with Assange's world view knows that this was far more psychologically stressful for him. **He does not like to admit vulnerability, but in 2015 a specialist on isolation and trauma visited him and was struck by the way he was changing.** Pointing out clutter accumulating in his bedroom, the doctor asked if Assange registered the mess. Never known for tidiness, Assange explained that his landscape was becoming a blur. "The walls of the Embassy are as familiar as the interior of my eyelids," he said. "I see them, but I do not see them." **With reluctance, he admitted that he has suffered bouts of depression, and that his sleep was disrupted by anxiety.** He often stays awake for eighteen, or twenty, or twenty-two hours, until he collapses from exhaustion. Increasingly, the passage of time is difficult for him to gauge. "Nothing is before or after," he told the doctor. "There are diminishing reference points." Yet Assange has developed an acute sensitivity to his

environment. One evening, he told me, “I have a sixth sense of the dynamics of the Embassy.” He raised a hand in an operative gesture, as if holding a wand. “Just based on environmental—the flow of the air, the little rumbles, people walking, typing.”

Before Assange gained notoriety, he lived a reclusive, rootless life. While he was growing up, in Australia, his mother moved the family dozens of times, and the habit of motion seems to have persisted; he once wrote software on the Trans-Siberian Express. When I first got to know him, in 2010, he was traversing Europe, in possession of what he claimed was a roster of modest international leaks: documents about the BBC, Canadian detainees, Hungarian finance, Romanian police, Israeli diplomacy, and “some Russian and Chinese stuff that I can’t read.” None of it compared, though, to the trove of classified documents that a young Army private, Chelsea Manning, had just provided him: half a million military records from Iraq and Afghanistan, and a quarter of a million diplomatic cables from the State Department, among other things. Suddenly, **he was walking around with gigabytes of secrets belonging to a superpower**, and his worry about being surveilled had grown extreme. “There’s all sorts of aggressive intelligence action happening,” he told me. “Lots of spying.” He was trying to fly to Iceland, to connect with activists there, and he suggested that I come immediately to meet him.

A few days later, I stepped off an airport shuttle bus at Reykjavík’s station a little after dawn, uncertain whether I would find him, but there he was, dressed in a silver full-body snowsuit. (He had been out all night with friends to see a volcano that had recently erupted.) “You didn’t call,” he chided me, in a way that mixed humor and irritation. We climbed a hill from the bus station into town, and on the way to his base, in a rented clapboard house, we got lost; Assange has a terrible sense of direction. That morning, he showed me an Army video that Manning had given him, and we went through it moment by moment. He had known me for only a few hours, but **back then he trusted journalists readily**. A few months later, I wrote about the footage, which he released as “Collateral Murder,” and about his personal history, in a piece for this magazine titled “No Secrets.” I did not imagine that there would be so many secrets to come.

Since then, in addition to Manning’s releases, he has published millions of documents, including hacked e-mails from corporations and public figures, international trade agreements, and foreign government records. Some of these publications have brought real harm to the documents’ owners, some have altered public perceptions about war and state power, and some have been damaging to individual privacy, with no public benefit. In his confinement, Assange has become a quixotic cultural icon, helping to give the solitary act of whistle-blowing the contours of a movement. Dr. Martens has issued boots in his name, sculptors have cast him in alloy, and lyricists have memorialized him in song. He has inspired a **Bond villain**, and the fiction of Jonathan Franzen; he has mixed with A-list musicians, like Lady Gaga, and A-list dissenters, like Noam Chomsky. At the same time, he has had to navigate myriad legal and managerial complications: multiple F.B.I. investigations, crippling staff mutinies, venomous fights with journalists.

Whether you see Assange as a “fallen man” depends on how you viewed him to begin with. He has detractors who believe that he is a criminal, or a maniac, or both, and supporters who consider him an immaculate revolutionary. There have been calls for his assassination, and for him to be given a Nobel Peace Prize. Assange often describes himself in simple terms— as a fearless activist— but his character is complicated, and

hard to reconcile with his considerable power. He is not merely the kind of person who will wear socks with holes; he is the kind of person who will wear socks with holes and rain fury upon anyone who mentions the holes in public.[???] He can be mistrustful to the point of paranoia, but he can be recklessly frank. **He tends to view human behavior as self-interested, driven by a Nietzschean will to power, but he runs an organization founded on the idea that individuals can be selflessly courageous. He is a seeker of hard, objective truths who often appears to be unable to see past his own realities.** He can be quick in the moment, an impressive tactician, and he is often fairly blind to the long arcs of strategy.

Assange is a difficult person, and he knows it. The people who care for him see a driven, obstinate man who has constructed around himself a maze of deflections, but they see this behavior as evidence of vulnerability, rather than of malice or narcissism. They recognize that his urge to resist conformity is often greater than his urge to be understood. Beyond the noise of his persona, they see the chief custodian of a technology that can be used for transformative good; whatever the hostility that he provokes, they maintain that there is no way his work could proceed without angering people.

Assange's harshest critics know him personally, too. They see that, beneath his maze of deflections, there is a man with no core beliefs except in augmenting his own power. They see someone with a romantic view of himself in the world—he once wrote, “The surest escape from the mundane is to teleport into the tragic realm” — who is also titanically self-absorbed, and desperate never to appear reactive. **Assange told me in 2010, “When you are much brighter than the people you are hanging around with, which I was as a teen-ager, two things happen. First of all, you develop an enormous ego. Secondly, you start to think that everything can be solved with just a bit of thinking— but ideology is too simple to address how things work.”**

At the start of this year, as the allegations grew that Assange had facilitated an act of Russian information warfare, his closest friends strove to offer a protective circle of support. “This wholesale campaign to portray Julian as a supporter of Trump has done a great deal of damage,” Yanis Varoufakis, the former Greek finance minister, told me. His defenders have had to withstand blistering attacks from critics. “I don't let them win,” another friend assured Assange.

One afternoon, while I was at the Embassy, Pamela Anderson, the former “Baywatch” star and a vegan activist, walked in, dressed in a demure tweed overcoat, and took a seat in the lobby. Since last October, Anderson has been stopping by the Embassy regularly. Assange led her to the conference room, and they spoke for about an hour—their conversation disguised by white noise, though Assange's voice dominated, in long soliloquies. (“I'm being persecuted!” he declared at one point, loud enough to be audible through the walls.) After their meeting, the two emerged. Anderson held a notebook and a pen. “Hours go by, and I take a lot of notes,” she later told me.

Anderson and Assange have been dropping hints to fuel speculation of a romance; certainly, a juicy tabloid story would make for a convenient diversion from a run of withering press. But, as a close Assange supporter explained, “The Ecuadorians are trying to run their Embassy. They are quite a Catholic nation, and so the idea of him having his girlfriends come in is quite a difficult one. I don't think it really happens.” In the conference room, Assange and Anderson had met under the unblinking gaze of the surveillance camera.

Anderson told me that she was a “bridge” between Assange’s cloistered world and life beyond it. But it was a bridge that primarily went one way. “I was in the rain forest in Brunei, and I was at home in Canada and it was snowing, and I made these videos and sent them to him, and it devastated him,” she said. **“Seeing the great outdoors is very difficult for him.** So that’s something that I did wrong.” She defended him as a visionary, a David casting stones at Goliaths. “He’s a political prisoner,” she said. “He is the hard line— and I always say that there has to be an extreme for there to be a middle ground.” She shared some adoring odes that she had been writing:

As for Romance
 How impossible it is to
 have feelings for
 Someone completely
 Unavailable
 Not because of his heart
 But his circumstances.
 Constantly under threat
 Threatened to be killed.

As Anderson left, Assange asked me, “Have you met my cat?” It darted past us.

“Is this the one with the Twitter account?” I said.

“It is,” he said. “It’s Michi, which is Ecuadorian for ‘cat.’ ” The animal’s name was in flux, he explained. “When Castro died, we started calling it Cat-stro.” Assange had told the tabloids that the cat was a gift from **his children. (He has several, some of whom live in France, under assumed names.)** But someone who knows him well told me a different story: “Julian stared at the cat for about half an hour, trying to figure out how it could be useful, and then came up with this: Yeah, let’s say it’s from my children. For a time, he said it didn’t have a name because there was a competition in Ecuador, with schoolchildren, on what to name him. Everything is P.R. — everything.”

“Who’s been nibbling at my kale house?”

An hour into my first visit, Mr. Picabia interrupted to tell Assange that guests had arrived: George Gittoes, an Australian artist, and his wife, Hellen Rose. The plan was for Assange to set aside his work and allow Gittoes, an old family friend, to paint his portrait. Gittoes has spent his life in war-torn countries— Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Nicaragua— and currently lives in Afghanistan. “He is way more interesting than me— way more,” Assange said.

Gittoes was dressed in black. With a graying, neatly groomed beard and long hair draping over his shoulders, he looked like an elderly member of the Allman Brothers Band. Rose has dark hair and an easy smile. The two greeted Assange with hugs, and Gittoes handed him a book: “Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein,” by John Nixon, a former C.I.A. agent who interviewed the Iraqi leader and came to believe that he had been misunderstood. “I know you’ll love it,” Gittoes said.

For the next three hours, he photographed Assange, making studies for an oversized diptych: two canvases, each seven feet tall and about as wide. They spent a good deal of time trying to figure out where his hands should go, to avoid any unwanted symbolism.

One half of the diptych was based on a conversation that Assange had with Gittoes and Rose, one evening in 2015. They sat around a toolbox that Assange was using for a table in his bedroom, and ate takeout sushi and drank sake, and after the sake was finished Assange produced an armful of half-consumed bottles of liquor— gifts from other visitors. Late in the evening, with everyone sprawled on a rug, he spoke about Edgewalkers. “It’s a Julian thing,” Gittoes explained to me. “He reckons that many people think they walk on the edge, living a risky life, but an Edgewalker really walks on the edge, and that he is a real Edgewalker.” Gittoes had worked out a painting that would depict this by having Assange gaze over a precipice that was crafted from smashed bits of mirror.

The other half of the diptych was intended to capture a curious existential quality of Assange’s confinement: on the one hand, he was estranged from the hundred and ninety-seven million square miles of the planet outside the Embassy; on the other, his likeness and his words were continuously circling the globe in digital form, refracted through the biases of supporters and detractors. Last October, just before the U.S. election, the degree to which the two realities were intertwined became evident when the Embassy cut off Assange’s access to the Internet. With Assange’s digital self gone, conspiracy theories spread that he had been kidnapped or killed. (The Daily Star reported, “SHOCK CLAIMS: Julian Assange ‘murdered by CIA who have hijacked WikiLeaks.’”) Assange at first regarded the theories as silly, but then he became concerned that they were discouraging supporters from donating, or whistle-blowers from submitting material. He considered distributing a video of himself reading sports scores, but videos could be faked. Supporters requested that he stand at the balcony, but that didn’t really solve the problem, since the “proof” for most people would be a photo, and this could be doctored. His two selves could not be reconciled.

“I can see the painting,” Gittoes wrote in his diary. He imagined Assange surrounded by images of himself on television screens. “It will have a mystical quality with the screens seeming both like ghosts and a personal nightmare.” For several days, he lugged the canvases across London— to the Frontline Club, where he painted in a private dining salon until he was asked to pack up, and then to a studio on the city’s outskirts. Eventually, he lugged them to the Embassy, to paint Assange’s eyes from life.

“Wow,” Assange said, pointing to the half of the diptych featuring the many versions of himself. Each was painted to represent a different emotion. “The angry Julian looks a bit like terrified Julian. I don’t know if it could be made to look less frightened.”

“I was kind of in a state of shock when I saw you,” Gittoes said. “You’ve got a much deeper face right now. You’ve changed a bit because you are under so much pressure— the furrows.”

“I don’t mind looking old,” Assange said. “That’s not where my value is. My value is looking tough.”

“You want to look tough?” Gittoes asked. He set up tins of acrylic on newspapers, while Rose went to get takeout from a local chef who wanted to support Assange by

making them all crab linguine. When she returned, she asked if she could film Gittoes painting Assange for a documentary about the project which was in development. "I'd like to have a moment where you say to George, 'Oh, that's a great painting,'" she said. "And George just says—"

"I would never aspire to have a great painting," Assange said. "That's vain."

"O.K.," Rose said, and suggested that the two men merely greet each other.

"It can't be public," Assange said, his tone sharpening. "There cannot be an image of Julian Assange looking at himself in a painting. That's madness— absolute madness. That image is much worse for me than the painting is positive. Understand?" After much discussion, someone suggested that the two men be photographed together, with the canvas turned toward a wall, and Assange assented. "I think it's not too bad," he said. "And it's O.K. that my character is broader a bit, as someone who appreciates art."

"I'm going to get some forks for the linguine," Rose said.

While everyone ate pasta from Styrofoam containers, Assange explained the mechanics of his diet. Usually, someone he trusts brings him food. "It has to be brought in discreetly," he said. "If it is all from the same place, it is a security risk." He rolled some linguine around his fork. "I don't want to sound paranoid. **The Embassy has security staff, and they have concluded that it is too dangerous.** The worry is not that he will be fatally poisoned, he said; it is that he will become ill enough to require a trip to the hospital and thus lose his asylum status. He ate his forkful, and added, "It's the best linguine in Ecuador in London."

II.

For some time, Assange has adopted the media habits of the powerful, restricting his appearances to brief, high-profile television interviews, conversations with friendly interlocutors, managed press events, and Twitter. On November 5th, days before the election, in a TV interview with one of his fiercest defenders, he declared, "We can say that the Russian government is not the source" of the election e-mails — a denial that did nothing to quell a growing suspicion, even among close supporters, that he was not being honest. "He says they're not Russians," one of them told me. "Well, he can't know that. It could be his source was a front for the Russians. I think the truth is important, however it's acquired, but if he knew it was the Russians, and didn't declare it, that would be a problem for me."

The problem was obvious. WikiLeaks, like many journalistic organizations, has long insisted on keeping its sources secret. However, Assange was not merely maintaining silence; he was actively pushing a narrative about his sourcing, in which Russia was not involved. He once told me, "WikiLeaks is providing a reference set to undeniably true information about the world." But what if, in the interest of source protection, he was advancing a falsehood that was more significant than the reference set itself? Arguably, his election publications only underscored what was known about the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton. His denials, meanwhile, potentially obfuscated an act of information warfare between two nuclear-armed powers.[???

That the stakes were so high was a potent indication of the immense power that WikiLeaks has acquired since it was founded, in 2006. Assange projects an image of his organization as small and embattled — as if it had not changed much since the days when he and a few friends were the only people involved. **But today, he told me, the WikiLeaks annual budget runs in the millions of dollars, supplied partly by donations that are funnelled through N.G.O.s.** In 2016 alone, WikiLeaks raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from donors in the United States. “He has money in tax havens,” one colleague told me. “They have so much money in bitcoin it’s ridiculous — meanwhile, there are all these poor people who are chipping in money who feel like he is not getting enough support to eat.” In Assange’s view, the donations provide a level of editorial independence that few mainstream competitors have.

Assange has increasingly used the money to offer rewards for information: fifty thousand dollars for footage of a hospital bombed in Afghanistan; a hundred and twenty thousand for documents about international trade negotiations. When Trump implied that he had taped his White House meetings with James Comey, Assange tweeted, “WikiLeaks offers US \$100K for the Trump-Comey tapes.” At one stroke, he appeared to endorse Trump’s bogus claim about the tapes and also implied that WikiLeaks was politically agnostic by seeking them. More significantly, he used the occasion to encourage supporters to donate, so that he could purchase the tapes—which, unsurprisingly, proved not to exist.

The idea that WikiLeaks has problems with accountability sends Assange into angry fits. “Look at all the accountability that is thrown at us!” he told me in the Embassy one evening, nodding at the walls to indicate hidden surveillance devices. “Every second of every day!” He cited the government scrutiny, and relentless journalists, always ready to pounce when he makes a misstep. Raising his voice, he said, **“WikiLeaks is probably the most held-to-account organization on earth!”**

When WikiLeaks was small, Assange was less angry. His general view of American power was one of suspicion rather than contempt. His wry sense of humor was more readily apparent, as was his optimism. During my visit to Iceland, in 2010, we were seated side by side when a submission came into the anonymous WikiLeaks in-box. He giggled and, in a mock-sober tone, announced its importance: someone had submitted the Declaration of Independence.

A few weeks earlier, just as Chelsea Manning was uploading the last of her disclosures to him, he had assured her that they were remaking the world for the better.

“I’ll slip into darkness for a few years,” she said. “Let the heat die down.”

“Won’t take a few years at the present rate of change,” he assured her.

“True,” she said.

“Almost feels like the Singularity is coming, there’s such acceleration,” he said. Assange was once a member of a transhumanist discussion group; given the right software, he believed, a revolutionary reordering of human affairs could be possible. His vision for WikiLeaks resembled a Silicon Valley startup— a technological creation intended to disrupt the normal way of doing business.

Conventional journalism is often an incremental, inefficient process, built on chains of personal trust: between sources and reporters, reporters and editors, editors and readers. Assange has difficulties with the messiness of trust, and in WikiLeaks he invented a system that made it largely unnecessary. **By design, the WikiLeaks site prevents him from knowing where submissions come from, so there is no need to trust that he will keep a source's identity a secret. (In practice, he readily accepts material in less than anonymous ways.) There is no need to trust his editorial judgment, either, because he has vowed to publish everything in full, in as pristine a form as possible.** WikiLeaks, in Assange's ideal, is a populist machine, delivering unmediated secret information directly to readers.

With the authority of his publications anchored in validating rather than in editing, Assange can do things that no newspaper editor can. He could say that the Smurfs built the pyramids, and the documents he posts would seem no less valid. This made it easy for him to take on the role of activist impresario, to frame his releases around his world view, even to use deception. Tellingly, he often calls the official reaction to his publications "counter-spin."

The release of "Collateral Murder," in 2010— and the knowledge that there were more consequential releases from Manning's cache to come— sent Assange on an exhilarated high as he visited cable-news studios in Washington and New York. In a hired car taking him to "The Colbert Report," he spoke to me about **developing a public persona. "It's going to take a lot of effort to maintain sensibly— so that it promotes the goals of the organization,"** he said. Assange was a man accustomed to wearing a T-shirt until the people around him asked him to change it. Now he was suddenly attuned to fashion. Backstage, he asked a stylist about his shirt. "It looks good," she said.

"I always look good in this shirt," he told her. "It's me! It's not the shirt."

"You look great," she said.

But two months later his triumphant mood abruptly ended. In June, Wired reported that Manning had been arrested because of her work with WikiLeaks. She had confessed to a well-known former hacker that she had submitted records in bulk to Assange; the hacker, in turn, routed the information to military counter-intelligence, and then shared her confessions— written on an encrypted chat service— with the magazine. **Assange was furious. "Wired needs a bullet,"** he told me. Manning, he indicated, was likely able to take care of herself. "Anti-interrogation training probably kicked in immediately," he said. What worried him was that the government now knew which documents he had. The magazine had reported that the cache contained at least two hundred and sixty thousand State Department cables. "If this crazy statement about 260K diplomatic cables is believed, we'll be fucked," he said.

"Is the 260K true, anyway?" I asked.

"I've already denied it," he said.

"I know. I mean in its essence."

"Not really," he said. Before the end of the year, Assange himself proved this to be untrue: Manning had merely rounded up from 251,287.

“I’ll be in hiding now,” he told me. The Pentagon had indicated that it was trying to find him— *“We’d like his coöperation in this,”* an official said— and he thought he was being hunted. He backed out of an event in Las Vegas, where he was scheduled to speak. If he did not act, he feared, he would be an easy target for an illegal attack. He was ready to publish everything Manning had given him— hundreds of classified records that could have endangered people around the world. *“They can see my only option is publish or perish,”* he said. *“Hence, we have our fingers on the go button.”*

“Is there an in-between?” I asked. *“Partially publishing to show that you are holding back bits that might endanger?”*

“We’d like to,” he said. *“There’s no time for harm minimization.”* He indicated that he would not allow himself to be captured before releasing all that Manning had submitted— even if it meant causing the destruction of WikiLeaks.

“Is that good chess?” I asked, perplexed.

“Sure,” he said. *“If you are good at leading with unpredictability, then create a board arrangement that suits your abilities better than your opponent.”*

Assange left the United States. His anxieties relaxed a little, and he appeared at an event in Brussels. Journalists from the Guardian found him there, and, after arranging a meeting at his hotel, they pitched a collaboration to publish the rest of the Manning material. *“We are going to put you on the moral high ground— so high that you’ll need an oxygen mask,”* one of them told him. *“You’ll be up there with Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. They won’t be able to arrest you. Nor can they shut down your Web site.”* [*In fact, The Guardian has done just the opposite. –A.B.*]

Assange listened, sipping orange juice. Just before the meeting, **he had told me that he had no interest in turning WikiLeaks into a journalistic operation—that the idea of journalism made him want to reach for a gun. “We come not to save journalism but to destroy it,”** he said. **“Doesn’t deserve to live. Too debased. Has to be ground down into ashes before a new structure can be formed. The basic asymmetric information between writer and reader just encourages lying.”** But he believed that his affiliation with the Guardian— and, soon afterward, with the Times, among other publications — offered him a shield, that he was creating a patronage network.

The first of Manning’s databases, published as the Afghan War Diary, came out that summer, and were understandably controversial. Redactions were done hastily, in large part because Assange did not prioritize them. At the last moment, under pressure from his collaborators, he withheld fifteen thousand reports that were most likely to contain details about Afghan informants, until they could be carefully analyzed. But hundreds of Afghan people, many living in remote places, were still identifiable. The release **prompted the Secretary of Defense to set up a task force of more than a hundred people, linked to agencies across the federal government, who worked around the clock, seven days a week.** Assange portrayed the task force as a “war room” plotting offensive measures against him; in fact, its focus was to mitigate harmful repercussions of his publications. The unit searched the database for people who had been put at risk and forwarded the information to commanders in Afghanistan, who sent soldiers to find them, sometimes in hostile places. They located many people, but many could not be found, or were in environments too dangerous to

reach. Their fate is unknown. “I think there was harm,” a key member of the task force told me. “There was tremendous cost and risk. We added additional risk because we had a moral obligation to notify people.”

At the same time, the records offered an unprecedented systemic view of the military’s operations in Afghanistan. Journalists used them to produce stories about the Taliban’s rising aggressiveness and the shifting American response, which relied increasingly on drone strikes and C.I.A. paramilitary operations. They found data on a Special Forces unit that hunted down seventy top militants— and on how such operations, along with everyday patrols, often went deadly wrong. From the documents, one could discern a portrait of the conflict that was bleaker than the official account.

After the release, Assange, again in a triumphant mood, travelled to Sweden, which has a strong tradition of media freedom. In Stockholm, he met with politicians, hoping to secure support for him to establish a base of operations for WikiLeaks there. But the trip proved to be fateful in a way that he had not anticipated. Assange slept with two women, who later reached out to each other and together went to the police to see if Assange could be compelled to take an H.I.V. test. Hearing the descriptions of their experiences, **the police decided** to draw up a criminal complaint— for rape in one instance and molestation in the other. A prosecutor reviewed the details and decided to downgrade the rape investigation, explaining, “I don’t believe there is reason to suspect that he has committed rape.” But the inquiry did not end there. In Sweden, about ten per cent of discontinued investigations that are appealed are reopened by another prosecutor. In Assange’s case, the women [???] appealed, and the investigation was revived, on September 1, 2010. Speaking with a reporter, Assange said, “We have been warned that the Pentagon, for example, is thinking of deploying dirty tricks to ruin us.” **His attorney spoke of “dark forces” that were behind the investigation, noting, “The honeytrap has been sprung.”**

What happened in Sweden began a long argument, which has become central to Assange’s current legal uncertainty and to his public persona. Joseph Campbell, the scholar of mythology, once sketched the fundamental structure of the hero’s journey: departure, initiation, return. Assange takes a quasi-neo-Marxist view of religion, but he is attuned to master narratives. He has framed the events in Sweden as his initiation, a nearly supernatural ordeal, to be overcome on his path back to the everyday world.

In his telling, the “dark forces” emanate from Washington, which was attempting to take revenge for his publications, and to keep him from releasing the rest of the Manning archive. Assange left Sweden on September 27th. The Swedish prosecution authority had informed him that there were no legal obstacles to his leaving, but that the investigation was ongoing. Back in London, he focussed on the Manning submissions. In late November, he promised followers, “The coming months will see a new world, where global history is redefined.” A week later, he began to release the State Department cables.

The publication, which became known as Cablegate, was perhaps the most significant of the Manning releases. The contents of the documents had obvious news value— a secret bombing campaign in Yemen, or the massacre of a family by U.S. troops in Iraq— but, unlike with Manning’s other submissions, the richly detailed nature of the material made the trove an enduring resource for journalists, activists, and historians. Assange told me that among his favorite cables was one that documented how an independent Kurdish TV station in Denmark became a pawn among European

countries vying for influence in NATO. He saw in the cable a clear expression of Realpolitik at work.

For American officials around the world, the publication created immediate disturbances in delicate relationships. Ecuador's leftist President, Rafael Correa, for instance, expelled the U.S. Ambassador over a cable that described high-level police corruption there. In the United States, political figures from the two major parties delivered a fusillade of criticism, with both Mitch McConnell and Joe Biden calling Assange a "high-tech terrorist." Conservative commentators on Fox News and in the Washington Times called for his assassination. **Hillary Clinton declared, "Let's be clear. This disclosure is not just an attack on America's foreign-policy interests. It is an attack on the international community."**

Meanwhile, the Justice Department launched a criminal investigation, seeking to prosecute Assange as a co-conspirator to Manning under the Espionage Act — a hundred-year-old law, designed to prosecute spying, that the Obama Administration had revived to deter government whistle-blowing. A grand jury was impanelled in Virginia, and subpoenas were filed to obtain private communications. Agents questioned people who were affiliated with Assange. Suddenly, the surveillance that he often imagined was becoming real.

The Espionage Act had never been applied to a publisher, and with good reason. Sources who leak classified secrets are breaking the law; they make a judgment that exposing the information is worth the risk of prosecution. But an investigation that targeted WikiLeaks would necessarily be based on a different idea: that the act of publication was also criminal, a principle that would inevitably interfere with core First Amendment protections. Many journalists—myself included—argued against the investigation. Whether Assange handled the Manning releases well or poorly, his work on it was not criminal.

The Justice Department, it turns out, held the same misgivings about the Espionage Act that journalists did. "The biggest problem was what some of us called 'the New York Times problem,'" Matthew Miller, a former Justice Department official, told me. "How do you prosecute Julian Assange for publishing classified information and not the New York Times? I think it went on for a long time because prosecutors were hoping they would find some obvious criminal act that could support a charge, but it was evident pretty early that, absent that, there was no clear way to bring this case." Within months, the department had quietly allowed the case to stall.

Assange began to cast the Swedish investigation as an extension of the angry American response to his work. "The Swedes, we understand, have said if he comes to Sweden they will defer their interest in him to the Americans," his lawyer, Mark Stephens, argued at the time. "So it does seem to me what we have here is nothing more than holding charges." Assange refused to return to Sweden, explaining that he feared that he would be delivered to the United States. The day after he published Cablegate, Sweden issued a European warrant for his arrest, and the United Kingdom initiated proceedings to extradite him.

The day that the arrest warrant was announced, Assange sent me a message with a smiley-face emoticon. "I'm in my element," he told me. "Battles with governments come easy. Battles with treacherous women are another matter." It was our first conversation about the investigation in Sweden, and I asked him what the case was

about. "It perplexed me to begin with," he said. "I understand where they're at now, though." **He spoke of Sweden's "very, very poor judicial system," weakened by external political meddling, careerism, and a culture of "crazed radical feminist ideology." More important, though, the case was a matter of international politics. "Sweden is a U.S. satrapy," he said....**

Internally, Assange had been coping with an organization in turmoil. As the stress grew, he threatened volunteers, and elevated people who served him poorly. One of his closest collaborators, after being pushed out, disabled the WikiLeaks submission system and blocked him from reaching the submissions stored there. "We went through an absolute bath of fire," Assange later told me, apportioning no blame to himself. "Those people who were not fireproof burnt to a crisp."

Pressures mounted from the outside, too. MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal stopped servicing WikiLeaks, making donations difficult—a response that Assange calls a "banking blockade." Mark Stephens, with whom he eventually parted ways, charged him hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees. To help pay them, Assange agreed to produce a memoir that he did not want to write, and his relationship with his ghostwriter ended in disaster. Assange was out of his depth. **"I was a decent colonial boy who came to a town that specializes in lying and climbing the class ladder, so I was fresh meat to be exploited," he told me. "I needed a trusted introducer—especially because this has been the dark heart of empire for four hundred years, and I was dealing with the outraged security structure of a superpower."**

Hoping to keep WikiLeaks vital while its anonymous-submission system was down, Assange was seeking material through alternative channels, in some instances taking remarkable risks. Unbeknownst to him, the F.B.I. had opened a second WikiLeaks investigation, this one a possible hacking-conspiracy case. When an Icelandic WikiLeaks volunteer reached out to an offshoot of the hacking group Anonymous to ask its crew to hack the Icelandic government, it turned out that the hacker he was talking with was an informant. Eventually, the Icelandic volunteer was drawn into the F.B.I. investigation, too. Assange, though, began communicating directly with the hacking crew. Its members provided him with reams of material, including e-mails belonging to Stratfor, a private intelligence firm, and to the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad. For Assange, there is no real difference between a hack and a leak; in both instances, individuals are taking risks to expose the secrets of institutions. What did it matter how the information came to light? Either way, he would publish it.

In May, 2012, Assange's appeals of the extradition order had gone to the British Supreme Court—and there, too, he had lost. Fearing that he had no further legal recourse, he decided to apply for political asylum with a friendly country. He told me that he was already informally exploring the idea with a number of diplomats, as a way out of his legal mess, and that a representative of the Ecuadorian government had sent encouraging signals.

Assange prepared a disguise—a motorcycle-courier outfit—to wear as he fled, and rented a hotel room on the way to the Embassy, where he could change without being seen. The intrigue was necessary, he believed, because he might be followed. "We had concern that, because there was a lot of intelligence activity on me, that maybe there would be an understanding that I might come here," he told me. In the room, he put on the costume, along with colored contact lenses and large earrings, and dyed his hair. At the last minute, however, he decided to abort the plan, because his lawyers informed

him that there still might be a remaining legal avenue to pursue: the European Court of Human Rights.

While his lawyers and the opposing side wrangled over his petition, Assange said, he had a distressing experience: **the company that maintained his security bracelet arrived to change the batteries, in a way that he thought was suspiciously ahead of schedule.** He decided that it was time to act. On June 19th, he told me, he rushed over to the Embassy, wearing his disguise and carrying a motorcycle helmet. “There was actually someone waiting on the steps,” he said. “But a good disguise is mostly body language— I put a stone in my shoe, so I didn’t walk the same way— and this forty-eight-year-old, heavyset white guy who was waiting, he did a ‘Who is that guy?’ But I could see that he had so much information to process, and by the time he processed it I was already in.” Assange told me that he rushed across the lobby and knocked on the door, but he had not realized that it was lunchtime, and key staff were out. “That was a bit disturbing,” he recalled. “I had gotten past that guy on the front step, into the interior, but the people who came to the door didn’t recognize me.”

Assange’s asylum request had nothing to do with Sweden— at least directly. It reflected the belief that if Assange were to be sent to the United States he would face a risk of cruel and inhumane punishment— an assessment based primarily on a vague sense of what he would face in court, since it was still unclear if he had even been charged. Nonetheless, he told me, “It put my physical circumstance back into interstate domain, as opposed to, you know, the everyday criminality.”

When the Ecuadorian Ambassador, Ana Albán, learned of his arrival, she was uncertain that his asylum was a good idea for her embassy: what would its end point be? **Soon, the building was besieged.** There were police cordons. There were threats— someone sent a bloody shark’s jaw. Assange, she recalled, initially behaved like a celebrity brat. (They later became friends.) For weeks, the Ecuadorians reviewed his application; after British authorities threatened to storm the Embassy, Albán recalled, **Ecuador’s President quickly approved it**, validating Assange’s narrative. Assange told me, “It was a very serious conflict between a small publishing organization and a superpower— very serious conflict.”

III.

One evening this spring, in the Embassy, Assange held a glossy magazine in his hands and deliberately placed it face down on a table, so that I could not see what it was. He was going to get us coffee, and wanted to show it to me after he returned, but he could not wait; halfway to the door, he rushed back and dramatically flipped it over, revealing it to be a commemorative edition of Newsweek, with Hillary Clinton posed beneath the words “Madam President”—a “DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN” headline from 2016. “They had to pulp it!” he declared, gleefully. Then he looked at the magazine with disgust. “It’s hagiographic,” he said.

For nearly half a decade, Assange had been cultivating a dislike of Clinton that was partly personal and partly philosophical. Clinton, he suspected, had wanted to assassinate him, and was instrumental in aggravating his conflict with Sweden. Moreover, he saw her as the main gear of a political machine that encompassed Wall Street, the intelligence agencies, the State Department, and overseas client nations, like Saudi Arabia. “She’s the smooth central representation of all that,” he once said. “And ‘all that’ is more or less what is in power now in the United States.”

In his view, Clinton was corrupt, pathetically driven by personal ambition, a neoliberal interventionist destined to take the United States into war— the epitome of a political establishment that deserved to be permanently ousted. In February, 2016, he wrote a rare editorial on the WikiLeaks Web site declaring Clinton unfit for office. The piece cited video footage, from 2011, which showed Clinton learning that Muammar Qaddafi had been killed. “We came! We saw! He died!” she declared, laughing— a reaction that prompted Assange to write, “Hillary’s problem is not just that she’s a war hawk. **She’s a war hawk with bad judgment who gets an unseemly emotional rush out of killing people. She shouldn’t be let near a gun shop, let alone an army. And she certainly should not become president of the United States.**” Only Assange knows whether sexism informed his dislike of her. But he often speaks with disdain about feminism generally, and in unguarded moments he is liable to comment on essential distinctions between the sexes. In 2010, when Julia Gillard became Australia’s Prime Minister, he told me scornfully that the incumbent, Kevin Rudd, “just got rolled . . . by a woman.”

Friends of Assange say that he was animated in the days leading up to the election. “There were two forces that were energizing Julian,” **Yanis Varoufakis, the Greek politician, told me. “The person who might become President of the United States was targeting him, and at the same time he had material over her. He was exhilarated.”**

Because Assange’s Internet access had been cut off several weeks before voting day, he was forced to watch the returns on the Embassy’s television, which, it turned out, was not hooked up to cable. A staff member had to run out to buy an antenna. “I rigged up the TV with an old-fashioned aerial,” Assange told me. He began watching at around midnight, when the first polling stations were closing. The preëlection assessments suggested that Clinton was likely to win, and Assange, watching the early returns, became irked by the smugness that he detected among the BBC presenters.

When Trump took the lead, he recalled, the smugness disappeared. **“It took a good fifteen minutes for the BBC staff to adapt,”** he said. “They were looking off balance, as if someone had poured opiate gas into the room, and they remained that way for about forty minutes or so. But then, remarkably, they got back into their groove, and adapted. What they saw was that a new power structure had come about— and I just thought, This is the true nature of a worker of a large institution.” (Another term for it: professionalism.) He told me that **he, too, had expected Clinton to win, and that his own reaction was “This isn’t happening, is it?”**

I asked if he had thought: I did this. “I’m not sure,” he said. “While it is in vogue now to talk up WikiLeaks, and its significance, at the time there was serious suppression of the reporting in establishment publications, because the Democrat-aligned journalists were behind the campaign.” But then he brought up, as he often did, the impact of his campaign publications— e-mails from the D.N.C. and from John Podesta, Clinton’s campaign manager. “During the last five weeks of the election, WikiLeaks was the most referenced political term on Facebook— and, in fact, the second most referenced term of all terms!” (Facebook disputes these numbers but confirms that the term was popular.) After the campaign, Assange helped produce an annotated anthology of his election publications. It is titled “How I Lost: By Hillary Clinton.”

The degree to which WikiLeaks affected the election's outcome will likely take years to sort out; **aside from the leaked e-mails, Clinton's campaign was also beset by strategic errors, an unpopular candidate, and a prolonged inquiry into the details of her personal e-mail server. But, for Assange, a far more serious question looms: How did he get that material in the first place?** Months *after [unsubstantiated –A.B.]* intelligence assessments in Washington concluded that the Democratic e-mails were hacked by the Russian government in a coordinated propaganda effort, Assange has not allowed the matter to stand. He has turned the official assessment— at best, a declaration that he had been used— into a symbol of American failure, establishment mendacity, Democratic hysteria, neo-McCarthyism, and fake news, in this way stoking partisan anger and needless institutional mistrust.

The extent to which Assange has developed close ties with Russia remains a matter of controversy, too. At the Embassy one night, Assange expressed fury over an article in the Times, titled "How Russia Often Benefits When Julian Assange Reveals the West's Secrets." The story sought to track a pattern of common interest, unfolding across the years, between two secretive entities: the Kremlin and WikiLeaks. Assange regarded it as unfair and even fraudulent. "It's in my blood not to get pushed around when there's criticism— especially associational criticism," he told me....

This spring, George Gittoes drew my attention to a speech that Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations gave about the civil war in Syria; after the United States had mistakenly bombed Syrian forces, the Ambassador took to a podium and framed the error as a parable of American hubris, misjudgment, and bad faith. Gittoes told me that Assange was moved. "He admired him so much," he said. "You'd think it was Chomsky on the box." **Assange downplayed this, but told me, "There's a Russian perspective on global politics, and they have become not shy at saying it, and it is good that they say it. I guess Russia eventually thought, There is nothing we can say, so we can say the truth. There's nothing to lose. There's no reputation to burn, no relationship to scrap. So they twist things in relation to Ukraine and to their immediate neighborhood, but, in terms of their broader description, then they are free to say what, in my view, is pretty accurate."**

Assange once told me about his life in the Embassy, **"I have always said that the most counterproductive thing is to keep me here— I have nothing to do but work."** But during his first year of diplomatic captivity the work began to seem marginal. WikiLeaks still published material, but none of it was as significant as the trove that Chelsea Manning had leaked to him. In isolation, Assange came to resemble the Wizard of Oz, a pallid inventor hidden behind a grand machine. *[Because no other Chelsea Mannings turned up? –A.B.]*

In 2013, Edward Snowden walked out of an N.S.A. facility in Hawaii with tens of thousands of records about American global electronic surveillance, including a sweeping system to monitor and store phone calls by millions of Americans. The material— voluminous, technical, classified— had the potential to transform not merely perceptions about the N.S.A. but also the law. It was, in many ways, the ultimate WikiLeaks submission. When Snowden mailed a drive containing the trove to the filmmaker Laura Poitras, another collaborator, he wrote his name as "Manning" in the return address.

Snowden flew from Hawaii to Hong Kong, where he decided to identify himself—immediately causing American authorities to seek his extradition. Assange stepped in. From the Ecuadorian Embassy, he sent the WikiLeaks investigations editor, Sarah Harrison, to guide Snowden to a sanctuary where the United States could not reach him. The plan was to smuggle him to Moscow, and then on to a sympathetic Latin-American country, but en route his U.S. passport was revoked. After a month, Russia granted him asylum.

Even as Assange was striving to lead a movement, his publication model was increasingly regarded with suspicion. Glenn Greenwald, a longtime WikiLeaks defender, and one of the journalists who worked with Snowden, told me that Snowden did not want the material handled in the WikiLeaks way. “He was vehement,” he recalled. “He said, ‘I don’t want you to dump it. Curate it.’ ”

When Assange was denied access to the trove, his frustration boiled over. A story based on the Snowden files ran on the Intercept, describing an N.S.A. program that worked with locals in two foreign countries to vacuum up every phone call placed there. After consulting with the N.S.A., the Intercept decided not to name one of the countries, fearing that locals would be killed as a result. Assange learned the name of the redacted country, and declared on Twitter that if the Intercept did not reveal it within seventy-two hours he would do so unilaterally. He eventually made good on the threat, explaining that he could not stand by and watch “an ongoing crime of mass espionage” being covered up. When I asked Assange about his interference, he told me, “We feel some sense of responsibility in relation to the Snowden stuff. We are part of this history, and we feel we have a right to see that it is properly done.”

It was not hard to see that he was desperate for attention-grabbing material [*nor is there any reason why it should be hard to see* —A.B.]. **In May, 2015, the WikiLeaks online submission system— offline since 2010— was finally restored.** A month later, he published a large database of government information: half a million cables from Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry. Perhaps more significant than the trove itself was the attribution. For the first time, it seems, a state had sought to use WikiLeaks to release a database. An entity called the Yemen Cyber Army had taken credit for the breach, and a Web site called WikiSaudiLeaks, which published some of the material, claimed to have given the bulk of the trove to Assange. Cybersecurity analysts **believe** that both were fronts. The consensus view is that Iran created them to weaken an adversary, but this assessment is not universally accepted. An expert familiar with the forensics told me that several indicators also point to Russia. [*In short, there is no evidence that “a state had sought to use WikiLeaks to release a database”.* --- A.B.]

This spring, a few days after Assange showed me the Newsweek special edition on Hillary Clinton, I saw him again. “I think that’s very mischievous— the claim that the Russians hacked the D.N.C. in order to increase the chance that Donald Trump would win,” he told me. “Because, if you actually look at the chronology, the claim is that the initial hack is in 2015.” Evidence of a hack meant nothing, he said, because prominent institutions are often hacked. “The major political parties in the rest of the world— the U.S. government hacks them. So you would expect that the Chinese, Israel, France, Russia, maybe India, had hacked various U.S. political institutions— because everybody is. **But there can’t have been some plan by the Russians to hack the D.N.C. to help elect Donald Trump, because Donald Trump wasn’t even on the radar at the time.**”

I began to ask whether such a plan might have evolved gradually, but he cut in: “That’s not the claim! The claim is irrational, just completely irrational!”

In one way, Assange was right. The D.N.C. was hacked in 2015— by an entity called Cozy Bear, which cybersecurity analysts suspect is controlled by Russia’s Federal Security Service. Once inside the network, Cozy Bear used a technique that exploited vulnerability built into the computer’s operating system. Assange was also correct that this breach predated Trump’s candidacy, so it could not have been part of an effort to get him elected....

Twenty thousand D.N.C. e-mails arrived at WikiLeaks. Once they were in Assange’s hands, **his overriding concern was to insure that they were genuine.** “We had quite some difficulties to overcome, in terms of the technical aspects, and making sure we were comfortable with the forensics,” he recalled. As an Australian, he had only a vague grasp of the way the D.N.C. operated, which made deciphering the political significance of the e-mails difficult. “It’s like looking at a very complex Hieronymus Bosch painting from a distance,” he told me. “You have to get close and interact with it, then you start to get a feel.” **Often, a first encounter with a WikiLeaks database submission can be overwhelming—** as one former staffer told me, “My heart sinks a bit.”

To work on the material, Assange had to coördinate with operatives outside the building, and avoid surveillance inside it. “I have a lot of security issues in the Embassy,” he told me. “It’s not like you can be comfortable with your source material and read it.” He would not tell me how many people worked on the project, except that the number was small. “We’re all secret squirrels now,” he said.

For many of his previous publications, Assange had brought in partners from the mainstream media, but, with the Democratic National Convention fast approaching, he decided that the time pressure was too great to permit collaboration. He also maintains that all his potential collaborators were too partisan. **“I thought, Great material! Which media to partner with in the United States? And I couldn’t think of one!”** he said. Assange feared that the Times and the Post would downplay what he believed were explosive stories buried in the archive. He recalled thinking, “The material is broadly critical of the Clinton campaign, so should we go with a publication like Fox News? But that’s not credible, either!” **Ultimately, he decided to work alone.**

On July 22nd, Assange published the e-mails on the WikiLeaks site. Depending on one’s perspective, they contained either a shocking exposé of political corruption or an affirmation of the rough-and-tumble nature of politics. When Assange was asked in an interview about the most important stories in the cache, his first example was a spreadsheet that kept track of donor contributions— all of it previously public. In some of the e-mails, staff members who believed Clinton to be a stronger candidate than Bernie Sanders questioned what they saw as his electoral weaknesses— his religion, his poll numbers. It was unclear if the Party had acted on any of the remarks, or if the e-mails merely reflected Democratic insiders’ frustration with Sanders for not ceding the race, despite near-impossible electoral math. But, as the story spread, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the D.N.C. chairman, resigned, along with three other employees. At one point, in an ecstatic tweet, Trump wrote, “The Democrats are in a total meltdown!”

On the day that WikiLeaks released the e-mails, Guccifer 2.0 took credit for the trove—the “docs I’d given them!!!” It quickly became apparent that the persona was a problem for Assange. Throughout June, cybersecurity analysts built a case that it was a Russian front—a conclusion that was amplified by Democratic operatives. Forensic traces in the records on WordPress, and in the persona’s linguistic quirks, linked it to Russia. Its handlers had also provided the Smoking Gun with the password to the Clinton press aide’s e-mails posted on DCLeaks, demonstrating its unique access to the site, and, by extension, its ties to a coordinated propaganda effort.

Assange’s closest peers began to debate how to push back. Some argued that WikiLeaks should never discuss sourcing, adhering to the organization’s general policy on the matter. Others argued that the mounting allegations were too damaging to ignore. **“Within WikiLeaks, there’s a number of people who are ideologically, and in some cases culturally, very opposed to any hint of fascism or the Russian state,”** Assange recalled. **“They have been oppressed by Russian behavior, so they were eager to produce some balance, or perception of balance, or a counternarrative.”** He made appeals for Trump’s tax returns, and, he told me, scoured the dark Web for verifiable hacked material tied to Trump or Russia. **“But enormous scoops about a state don’t come about that often.** If you look, how many documents did CNN publish about Trump? The New York Times managed to get one extract of one old tax return. We were aware of the building narrative that was being pushed by the Democratic-aligned interests. We did attempt to combat it. But here’s the problem. By saying that we don’t talk about sources, we left an enormous vacuum. I felt that we had to not permit this. Otherwise, we would have the space filled by a narrative that was bad for the publication and for WikiLeaks.”

In public, Assange tried several things. He asserted that he was the only one who knew the source. He implied that DCLeaks and Guccifer 2.0 were likely not what they seemed, and were instead the manifestation of a crafty double game—possibly orchestrated by Ukrainian state hackers. (“Those look very much like the Russians, but in some ways they look very amateur, and they look too much like it.”) He also promoted a theory that Guccifer 2.0 was exactly what it seemed, an entity run by Eastern European hackers. By the time I met Assange in the Embassy, the C.I.A., the N.S.A., and the F.B.I. had jointly assessed *[and provided no evidence –A.B.]* that Russian military intelligence was behind Guccifer 2.0 and DCLeaks. When I asked him what he thought of this, he said, “The whole thing is extremely lame,” as if he were talking about the ramblings of a crazy uncle.

Assange also pursued a simpler rhetorical tactic. He argued that any attempt to associate WikiLeaks with Guccifer 2.0 was pernicious spin—trying to turn a coincidence into a conspiracy. Unlike documents that Guccifer 2.0 had published, none of the campaign e-mails that appeared on WikiLeaks contained traces of Russian metadata; therefore, he said, any links one could find binding the persona to Russia did not extend to his work. **“There’s no forensic traces on our publications at all tying them to Russia—** at all! It’s clearly completely different material, and there’s been a very sneaky attempt to conflate various hacks that have occurred with our publications.”

For a substantial constituency—supporters of WikiLeaks, of Bernie Sanders, of Trump—this argument struck a chord, and allowed conspiracy theories about the true source of the WikiLeaks e-mails to grow. Assange, of course, was happy to encourage these theories. In August, 2016, he suggested during a television interview that his

source might have been a young D.N.C. employee named Seth Rich, who was murdered in Washington twelve days before WikiLeaks began publishing. “We have to understand how high the stakes are in the United States, and that our sources face serious risks,” he said. Assange offered a cash reward for information leading to a conviction in the murder—a gesture that sent alt-right sleuths, convinced that Clinton had masterminded the killing, into a frenzy worthy of Area 51, and which caused pain for Rich’s family. **When I asked him about it, he said, “I would never name a source. People have their own interpretations about that.”**

More theories began to surface. Ambassador Craig Murray, the friend to WikiLeaks, insisted that Russia was not the source of the D.N.C. e-mails; he knew firsthand, he said, because he had met Assange’s source in the woods behind a chapel at American University. Kim Dotcom, a flamboyant Internet entrepreneur and a close associate of Assange, told me in April that he had firsthand knowledge of the source: an insider who had smuggled in a USB stick with malware on it. “It’s not a Russian hack,” he insisted. Anthony Shaffer, a retired lieutenant colonel, knew firsthand, too; he told me about an intricate conspiracy of retired intelligence workers, unhappy about Clinton’s handling of her State Department e-mails, who formed a “task organization” to dig up material. **When I mentioned the theories to Assange, he laughed. “They totally contradict each other!”** he said.

Once, when Assange had directed me to a comment that Dotcom had made about the source of the D.N.C. e-mails, I asked him why it was important. “I’ll just say that other people should not get the credit for our epic scoop,” he told me. This was an idea that I noticed he was road-testing. “It’s very irritating that Putin is getting the credit!” he declared on another occasion. “They are giving him credit for our hard work!” Although Pamela Anderson stenographically repeated the notion once on her blog, I never heard Assange use it publicly. It seemed like a risky way to convey an outraged denial, with its conflation of roles—publisher and source. The implication was not so much I received this as I did this.

Throughout August, DCLeaks published nothing about the Presidential election, and Guccifer 2.0 appeared to focus on swing states, releasing documents that were relevant only to local races. But in September, as Election Day neared, both Russian fronts actively shifted back to the campaign at the national level. Assange dismissed the new releases, telling me, “It was only the WikiLeaks publications that had impact.” But this was not quite true. On September 13th, Guccifer 2.0 dumped six hundred and seventy-eight megabytes of D.N.C. information online. A day later, DCLeaks began to post hacked e-mails belonging to Colin Powell and a number of Clinton aides, all from Gmail accounts. One e-mail, pulled from a campaign staffer, contained audio of Clinton describing Sanders supporters as educated young people who were uncertain about their futures. “They’re children of the Great Recession, and they are living in their parents’ basement,” she said. In Trump’s hands, this became a cudgel: “Hillary Clinton thinks Bernie supporters are hopeless and ignorant basement dwellers.”

A pattern that was set in June appeared to recur: just before DCLeaks became active with election publications, WikiLeaks began to prepare another tranche of e-mails, this time culled from John Podesta’s Gmail account. “We are working around the clock,” Assange told Fox News in late August. “We have received quite a lot of material.” It is unclear how long Assange had been in possession of the e-mails, but a staffer assigned to the project suggested that he had received them in the late summer: “As soon as we got them, we started working on them, and then we started publishing them. From

when we received them to when we published them, it was a real crunch. **My only wish is that we had the equivalent from the Republicans.**"

All of the raw e-mail files that WikiLeaks published from Podesta's account are dated September 19th, which appears to indicate the day that they were copied or modified for some purpose. Assange told me that in mid-September, a week or two before he began publishing the e-mails, he devised a way to weaponize the information. If his releases followed a predictable pattern, he reasoned, Clinton's campaign would be able to prepare. So he worked out an algorithm, which he called the Stochastic Terminator, to help staff members select e-mails for each day's release. He told me that the algorithm was built on a random-number generator, modified by mathematical weights that reflected the pattern of the news cycle in a typical week. By introducing randomness into the process, he hoped to make it impossible for the Clinton war room "to adjust to the problem, to spin, to create antidote news beforehand."

"Imagine it this way," Assange told me. "The WikiLeaks tank is coming down the road. You can't tell when it got on the road, when it is going to get off, how fast it is going, how big it is— because it has a decoy exterior. They know that there are decoy parameters because I say it, and so you never know what's a decoy and what is not. It kind of paralyzes their thinking." He recalled how a Clinton supporter noted that there were no Podesta e-mails later than March 25th. "We said, 'Well spotted, something to look forward to!' And this just spread around that there was a next phase."

For a few minutes, Assange spoke proudly about the way he often bent the truth. He seemed unconcerned that such tactics might harm his credibility. "It could become an issue, but what is it?" he told me. "So we can't address an irritating question as much as we can offer protection for our publications? The advantage is greater to be a bit crafty— no, it's not just being crafty. It comes, really, from what M.I.5 did in World War Two." He described a British operation to use a corpse dressed in a Royal Marines uniform as a decoy, disguising the real target of an invasion. "They stuffed secret information in his pockets, and had him wash up on the coast of Spain, and then they made it clear to the Germans that this was what they were doing. So the Germans went from becoming fooled in one instance to doubting every instance...."

IV.

Late on a Thursday afternoon this spring, Assange sent word for me to fly to London and meet him at the Embassy that Sunday morning. Three days later, I was sitting in the conference room waiting for him. He appeared dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt that commemorated the five-hundredth episode of "The Simpsons," in which he had a cameo. (While grilling steaks, the cartoon Assange tells Homer Simpson, "You know, you should really get out less!," then he dashes into a bunker.) He was holding a black leather-bound ledger the size of a dinner tray, which he peered into occasionally but would not explain. "It's a book," he said, when I asked about it. Standing at the door, he was about to speak, then he held a finger in the air, as if he had forgotten something, and scurried off. He returned and led me down a narrow hallway and into a tiny room. Assange turned on an everyday machine— he has asked me not to describe it, but it was about as loud as a blender— to overwhelm any listening devices targeting him. Standing there, we whispered. After a while, I began to worry that the unit would overheat.

He was planning one of his riskiest disclosures: a trove of C.I.A. hacking tools—gigabytes of malware and related records—composing the “largest ever leak in the agency’s history.” The archive contained actionable code, which meant that Assange was in possession of an arsenal, and some of his staffers were rattled. One of them recalled, **“Everyone immediately was super terrified: ‘What’s he doing?’ ‘It’s so dangerous— these are the people who make people disappear!’ ”** Assange understood the risks, too. **“This might get me kicked out of here,”** he told me.

Last summer, when a supporter urged him to push back harder against allegations about Russia, Assange indicated that he had a new publication in the works that would likely alter people’s views. “You can’t see the longer strategy,” he said. But, in such matters, Assange seemed to be playing on a Daliesque chess board that allowed for just one piece, just one move. He once wrote that a person should always follow his own instincts, rather than do what appears good in the abstract: “Being on a path true to your character carries with it a state of flow, where the thoughts about your next step come upon waking, unbidden, but welcome.”

Two weeks after Trump’s Inauguration, he wrote a series of tweets about a mysterious entity that he had labelled Vault 7. Each tweet was accompanied by a dramatic, and seemingly unrelated, image: the doomsday seed bank in Norway, an old jet-propulsion engine. The tweets were a cryptic way to tease his release of the C.I.A.’s tools—Assange loves puzzles— but, he told me, they also had a deeper marketing purpose. “We wanted the name Vault 7 to stick, so it was also a strategy to pre-introduce the name, so that, when counterattack publicity came out, they” — the C.I.A.— “couldn’t introduce another name,” he said.

For more than a year, Assange appears to have developed a source with access to high-level electronic surveillance. Beginning in the summer of 2015, WikiLeaks published several classified N.S.A. intercepts of world leaders from Brazil, Japan, Germany, and France. Given the nature of the records, the motivation behind the leaks appeared to expose the reach and the breadth of U.S. signals-intelligence capabilities, and not wrongdoing. Assange’s source for the C.I.A. hacking tools appeared to have an identical motivation; Vault 7 documented no criminality, no corruption, no bulk spying, only the reach of the agency’s targeted cyber operations. Whoever had decided to make the tools public knew that their actions would render the arsenal useless.

Assange told me that a key reason to release the tools was that they were already out of the C.I.A.’s control, and were being passed among contractors, who were deploying them for personal use. If true, it constituted a frightening, newsworthy breach. But beyond his word there was no way to know. For months, I kept an eye out for anyone professing to have heard of the tools being shared among contractors, as he had described. I could find no one.

For Assange, this probably did not make much difference. **Vault 7, even more than his previous publications, reflected a sharpening view of American global power.** A few years ago, a journalist asked him if he thought he would be leaving the Embassy soon. “Where would I go?” Assange shot back. “I would end up in the outside world where you are, but what is happening to the outside world?” **He described Western democracies as approaching full-on Orwellian societies. “The internet, our greatest tool of emancipation, has been transformed into the most dangerous facilitator of totalitarianism we have ever seen,”** Assange had written in 2012. “Left to its own trajectory, within a few years, global civilization will be a postmodern surveillance

dystopia, from which escape for all but the most skilled individuals will be impossible. In fact, we may already be there.”

Assange has long been preoccupied with electronic surveillance— a real and growing problem— but he has become increasingly vehement that Western democracies have become nascent totalitarian states. It is an urgent view, and as a general framework for understanding world affairs it upends distinctions that would otherwise seem obvious: **if you believe that the foundations of a global dystopia are being erected by Washington or London, you might well regard those developments as a greater priority than conventional crackdowns in Minsk or Moscow.**

Assange walked me to a small office, resembling an A.V. room, where staffers were preparing for a press conference to accompany the release of Vault 7. There was a computer with two large monitors, with their built-in cameras taped over. A row of metal shelves stocked with supplies doubled as a rack for a large felt drape, which Assange uses as a green screen. There were bookcases that held DVDs, some of Assange’s publications, memoirs (Mandela’s “Long Walk to Freedom,” Vivienne Westwood’s “Get a Life!”), and cat toys.

A technician was cuing up a sample from a song by Laibach, a Slovenian group that fuses totalitarian imagery with pop culture, to subversive effect. In 2014, Laibach released a song called “The Whistleblowers,” which featured a chorus of whistlers juxtaposed with lyrics about a rising army— giving the solitary, often fraught and vulnerable act of whistle-blowing a neo-fascist feel. Assange wanted audio of the whistling to cycle on repeat while people waited for the press conference to begin. Over and over, the militaristic sample filled the room. “It’s working!” he said gleefully. Then he showed me the song’s video, which features children dressed like Soviet gymnasts training to blow up ceramic pots with superpowered whistling. Behind them, a Stalinesque painting of Assange loomed. Laughing, he said, “It’s obnoxious, but funny.”

Assange took a seat before the monitors. “Do you want to see the weather?” he asked me. I knelt beside him as he logged on to Twitter and plugged in search terms about WikiLeaks— filtering out any comments that were not from verified Twitter accounts, the social-media elite.

“The weekends are usually terrible,” he said. “I call it troll o’clock.”

He stumbled on a tweet from Roger Stone, a Republican political operative who was close to Trump and who, during the campaign, appeared to have advance knowledge of the WikiLeaks release of Podesta’s e-mails. Stone had written a tweet to a critic that was burning up the Internet that weekend: “You stupid stupid bitch. Never denied a perfectly legal back channel to Assange who indeed had the goods on #CrookedHillary.” Assange smirked, and told me there was no back channel. Earlier in the year, **he had written to Stone, he said, urging him to stop making the false claim. Stone, he recalled, had told him, “The more you deny it, the more they’ll believe it.”**

Twitter does not serve Assange well. “It hasn’t always done me favors, tactically!” he said, laughing. He acknowledged that many supporters, and even some staff, are uncomfortable with his tweets, especially those in which he seems to support Trump. **“They live in a community, and I live in an embassy!” he told me. “I don’t have to take my kids to school, whereas they have to interact with people.”**

Assange has called Trump a populist authoritarian, but his rejection of the liberal establishment, it seemed, had almost forced him to refrain from criticizing Trump. “When there is a moment of intense conformity, then there is a lot of competitive advantage in not being a part of that,” he told me. “When there’s a mob attacking a particular subject, then to join that mob is, usually, almost always an act of cowardice. It’s to fit in.” This was inexplicable. His stated intent for WikiLeaks was to advance truthful political discourse. **How could he not criticize Trump for his serial lying? “It feels weak to me,” he explained. “We’re not saying anything new, therefore we are just aping the conventional view— therefore it has no intellectual basis.”**

In a later conversation, I urged him to articulate a coherent view of Trump, but the prospect seemed to pain him. “It’s hard to sum up in the current climate of polarization,” he told me. **It seemed his main concern was that by criticizing Trump he would somehow appear to validate the previous norms of American politics.** “Governments are evil,” he told me. “The last government was evil. This government is evil. **Does the Trump Administration appear to have a potential to be uniquely bad? Maybe. But in many other respects it’s the same problem that existed under Obama.** The difference is that now everyone is talking about it. What is associated with this Administration is a certain aggressive rhetoric, which can make the problem worse if people accept it; on the other hand, it also makes everyone pay attention to problems that have been there for a long time.” He told me that, whatever Trump’s flaws, his Administration had the capacity to challenge entrenched power in Washington, and to disrupt the structure of American power overseas. “I will give you a list of counterintuitive structural positives,” he told me. Several days later, he presented a set of ideas that could be distilled into one: “A complaint from civil libertarians and constitutional scholars is that the power of the Presidency is too strong. O.K., it has been reduced now.”

“We are under attack!” Assange yelled. It was the day of the press conference to launch Vault 7, and the A.V. room, transformed into an on-air studio, was so jammed with equipment it was barely possible to enter. There were halogen lamps, and a camera pointed toward a tiny step stool beside a table with a laptop and a highlighted press release. Several cell phones were on a table. As a security measure, WikiLeaks sends transmissions for broadcast interviews through mobile phones. “Nothing is working,” a technician said.

“Any phone that had access does not have any,” Mr. Picabia said.

Wryly, the technician added, “But the music is playing!” The Laibach song was on repeat. Embassy staff were humming it in the hallways.

As Assange tried to work out the system failure, he also considered how to turn it to his advantage. “It could work out well, because it is proof of what we’ve been saying,” he said. He was certain that his enemies in the intelligence community were sending a message: they would not watch passively as their secrets were distributed. There would be no press conference, but he had launched Vault 7 anyway. “We still have a chance to respond to whatever garbage they come up with today,” he said. “We might be more reactive, but we had a contingency plan for this. It’s on the Web— the archive is out. I have a backup link. We can tweet.”

During the Presidential campaign, Assange had become a Republican darling. Once he launched Vault 7, the love cooled. “Assange should spend the rest of his life wearing an orange jumpsuit,” the Republican senator Ben Sasse declared on March 9th. That night, Assange was dressed in an orange jumpsuit, and padding around the Embassy with a pint of yogurt. “He said he wanted me to wear a jumpsuit for the rest of my life,” he told me, and grinned. “I’m already there! I wanted to get one that was more like a velvet orange catsuit— and to look very relaxed and accomplished— but this is the best we could get.”

Pressure from the Trump Administration was beginning to build. A few weeks later, Mike Pompeo, the C.I.A. director— another partisan WikiLeaks fan during the election— declared the organization to be a “hostile non-state intelligence agency.” In a press conference, he bluntly criticized Assange and his staff, and made a case for aggressive action against WikiLeaks. “We can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free-speech values against us. To give them the space to crush us with misappropriated secrets is a perversion of what our great Constitution stands for. It ends now.”

The next day, I sat in the conference room while Assange paced around me with a coffee mug in hand. “I’m in the process of managing a response,” he said. “So there was his new legal interpretation— the head of the C.I.A. deciding to redefine the law— and then there was a statement in relation to WikiLeaks: ‘This ends now!’ ” he said. “Which, coming from the C.I.A., is a menacing statement. Given that the C.I.A. doesn’t engage in prosecutions and court action, what is meant by ‘This ends now’? Why so coy? Is it a threat against my staff?”

A week later, the Justice Department indicated that the Espionage Act case against Assange— left dormant by the Obama Administration [*not entirely –A.B.*] — was being revived. “Even Americans who may have serious doubts and disagreements with WikiLeaks’ conduct should be concerned about legal efforts directed against them,” Ben Wizner, an A.C.L.U. attorney, told me. “Never in the history of the United States has there been a prosecution of a publisher for publishing truthful information. A successful prosecution of WikiLeaks will be a precedent that is used to support a much broader crackdown against mainstream news organizations.”

At the same time, Wizner said, it was becoming harder to identify the principles guiding WikiLeaks. Assange’s provocations— his indifference to facilitating information warfare, his willingness to pay for secrets, his encouraging millennials to take C.I.A. internships as “whistle-blowing opportunities” — were recasting the difficult moral act of exposing institutional abuse as something that began to look like espionage [*as investigative journalism often does –A.B.*]. When the Trump Administration’s Justice Department began a campaign to crack down on leaks, Assange had so politicized his position that he had lost the authority to speak convincingly on the matter— even though he had in many ways redefined the conversation about whistle-blowers. “He has done damage to the whole movement of digital rights,” a former supporter told me, asking for anonymity out of fear of reprisal, like many others who did not want to identify themselves.

In London, I asked Assange about criticism he had received for insufficient redactions, or exposing personal information. Over the years, WikiLeaks documents have revealed the identities of teen-age rape victims in Saudi Arabia, anti-government activists in Syria, and dissident academics in China. “It’s nearly all bogus,” he said. “In any case, we have to understand the reality that privacy is dead.”

“If someone gave you all of Facebook’s chats, would you publish them?”

He paused. “All of them?” he asked. I knew he had been pondering the question. He had once described Facebook as “the most appalling spying machine that has ever been invented.” He told me that he was unsure how he would approach such a submission, but that he thought it could be socially transformational. “It would change what people should say, what people shouldn’t say, how unusual is betrayal and backstabbing,” he said. “It would change the norms of private human behavior. Something like that would need a lot of careful thought. It’s not obvious.”

“Would every name be anonymized?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “It’s a hypothetical.”

Throughout the spring, Assange was in the mood for war. **Almost every time I heard from him there was a conflict to discuss.** Laura Poitras, the filmmaker, had made a documentary about him that he felt was unfair, and so he sent cease-and-desist letters, and plotted to sue her for twelve million pounds in damages. There were new fronts in his legal battles and new skirmishes with journalists and critics; on one Twitter jag, Assange posted thirty different links to people who had called for his assassination. There were claimed victories: when Donald Trump, Jr., decided to tweet out e-mails that he had received about the meeting with Russians, Assange took credit for persuading him to do so: “Did you see our incredible result with Trump Jr.?”

In May, Kim Dotcom poured accelerant on the conspiracy that Seth Rich was Assange’s source for the D.N.C. e-mails by claiming that he had evidence to back it up. The stunt was magnified by Fox News, which ran a follow-up story, reportedly with the President’s involvement, which was so packed with fabrications that the network was forced to retract it. Every time the story exploded into the news, Assange gave it life by retweeting the latest iteration. He either did not care or did not recognize that he appeared to be using Seth Rich as a pawn. When I told him that I thought he had opened the discussion about Rich as a diversion, he accused me of being a conspiracy theorist, and said that it was not his problem that the story had metastasized across the right-wing media. “My actions are more than appropriate,” he told me. “The issue is how to prevent them from being distorted.”

Assange’s popular support now included Sarah Palin and Sean Hannity, along with a coterie of alt-right trolls. He was pleased to have the alt-right involved in the WikiLeaks project. In his view, people at the margins of political life were becoming energetic seekers of truth, as they combed through primary source material on his Web site.

The more his public influence took on the features of populism, the more Assange was forced to accept the support of people no matter their views. George Gittoes told me about seeing an Australian newspaper headline announcing that Pauline Hanson, a politician known for anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim views, had declared her support for Assange. “She’s a monster,” Gittoes said. “I got onto Julian real fast. I said, ‘This is no good.’ And he said, ‘But she’s the first politician to support me! I don’t like going against my one supporter.’ ” Later, from Afghanistan, **Gittoes explained the complexity of his own support for Assange: “His thinking on Trump is beyond my comprehension, but I can give him the benefit of the doubt on that because the whole Trump phenomenon is so fluid. The reason why I support Julian and see him**

as an inspiration is very simple. He proves that one individual can still stand up against the powers we all feel oppressed by.”

On May 19th, the Swedish prosecutor announced that, after much delay, she was dropping the case; without vindicating Assange or charging him, she had decided that the status quo had no other pragmatic resolution. Even though he had politicized the case, it had also, over the years, developed its own unfair contortions, and everything about the announcement was a loss— for the women who had been involved, for Assange, who was unable to prove his side, and for Sweden, unable to serve justice [*“justice” has little or nothing to do with it –A.B.*].

That afternoon, after more than a year of continuous indoor existence, Assange emerged to make a statement on the balcony. He hoped to manufacture an “iconic” image; facing a few hundred journalists, he looked out stoically, with a squint, and then pumped his fist. “While today was an important victory, and an important vindication, the road is far from over,” he said. “The war— the proper war— is just commencing.” He cited his years in the Embassy without sunlight and his estrangement from his children. Afterward, referring to the investigation, he told me, “I don’t know how forgiving Gandhi was, **but this is not something I choose to forgive, or that I want to forgive, or that I think is appropriate to forgive.**” I said that he sounded angry. “**I would put it more bluntly: the desire for revenge,**” he said.

Still, his legal circumstances had barely changed. Scotland Yard was maintaining an arrest warrant for him, based on the violation of his bail. Assange was fighting the warrant, but he told me that even if it was dropped immediately he would not walk out. What he wanted, it seemed, was immunity: a guarantee that he would never be called to the United States to face any trial. Without it, he was going to stay put. “The question is: where do you stage your conflict?” he had once said, as he assessed his tactical situation. “**I think in the center of London, at an embassy that is connected to the traditions of Latin America, is quite a good place.**”

Leaving Assange in the Embassy was always a vexed experience. Sometimes he abruptly ended our conversation, ran to his bedroom, and closed the door, and I let myself out. Sometimes he walked me to the lobby. Once, I stopped halfway to the exit, realizing that I had forgotten my passport, and said, “Oh, I can’t leave without that!” He was silent for a moment, and then began, “At least you—” In his face, his slouching physique, he seemed the saddest I had ever seen him. Whether he had made the Embassy his prison, or others had done this to him, he was trapped.

During my last visit to London, I stayed with Assange until midnight. As I got ready to leave, he stood to see me to the door, but before taking a step he stopped and became lost in thought. He whispered something I could not fully hear. Then, speaking as if he were observing the fall of Rome, he explained that he thought America’s empire might finally be collapsing. With a long gaze and a faint smile, he again whispered what he had said: “This could be the beginning.” ♦

Raffi Khatchadourian is a staff writer at The New Yorker.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/08/21/julian-assange-a-man-without-a-country>

Assange blasts ‘absurd’ bid to class

WikiLeaks a hostile intelligence service

RT

25 Aug. 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange slammed efforts to officially class his whistleblowing organization as a “non-state hostile intelligence service” -- branding it an attempt to put the ‘Pompeo Doctrine’ into law.

The Senate Intelligence Committee is proposing a provision in its annual ‘intelligence authorisation’ bill to declare WikiLeaks as such.

“It is the sense of Congress that WikiLeaks and the senior leadership of WikiLeaks resemble a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors and should be treated as such a service by the United States,” the bill states.

Published Friday, the bill was passed by the committee late last month on a 14-1 vote. Democrat Ron Wyden of Oregon voted against the measure citing the “legal, constitutional and policy implications” that the WikiLeaks provision may entail.



Assange tweeted a statement describing it as “absurd” to brand media organizations in such a way.

“It is equivalent to suggesting that the CIA is a media organization. Publishers publish what they obtain,” Assange said. “Intelligence agencies do not.”

“It is an interesting thought experiment to consider where other media outlets lay on this spectrum. It is clear that if the ‘Pompeo doctrine’ applies to WikiLeaks then it applies equally if not more so to other serious outlets,” he added.

US intelligence agencies have accused Russia of hacking emails from the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and relaying the data to WikiLeaks for publication.

In April, CIA Director Mike Pompeo branded WikiLeaks a "hostile non-state intelligence agency" which should not be afforded the protections of the First Amendment under the constitution.

In March, WikiLeaks began publishing a series of leaks – codenamed ‘Vault 7,’ allegedly from the CIA, revealing the agency’s arsenal of hacking tools.

<https://www.rt.com/usa/400770-assange-wikileaks-hostile-intelligence/>

Global bar association defends Assange appearance

*Michael Cross
Law Society Gazette
14 September 2017*

The body promoting the rule of law on behalf of the worldwide legal profession has defended its decision to feature an appearance by Julian Assange, the fugitive founder of Wikileaks, at its flagship annual event.

Assange, currently the subject of a UK arrest warrant for failure to surrender to bail, is due to speak to the annual conference of the International Bar Association (IBA) in Sydney, Australia, next month. He will appear by video link with the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has lived after being granted asylum in 2012.

Assange is lined up as a guest for the conference's popular 'in conversation' slot, along with Australian former prime minister John Howard and former US secretary of defense Robert Gates. However, Law Society council member and former secretary general of the European council of bar associations (CCBE) Jonathan Goldsmith has questioned whether Assange's appearance is appropriate.

Writing in the Gazette, Goldsmith reminds the IBA of its commitment to upholding the rule of law. 'The IBA should not be saying that it is OK for some to ignore the rule of law and not others.'

Last year, UK judges withdrew from the Commonwealth Lawyers Conference in Glasgow after Assange was booked to speak by video link. The judicial office said at the time: 'Mr Assange is, as a matter of law, currently a fugitive from justice, and it would therefore not be appropriate for judges to be addressed by him.' [*Thereby rejecting the principle of political asylum. –A.B.*]

It is not clear whether any members of the judiciary have withdrawn from the IBA conference. Mark Ellis, the IBA’s executive director, said: 'Each year at the International Bar Association’s Annual Conference, a series of ‘conversations with...’ are held with individuals notable on the world stage. They offer unique insight on an array of legal issues that can often be controversial but remain of great interest to the association’s diverse membership and of importance to debate.'

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/global-bar-association-defends-assange-appearance/5062777.article>

Republican Congressman Proposes Pardon Deal For Julian Assange

*Tyler Durden
Zero Hedge
Sept. 15, 2017*

Late on Friday, the Wall Street Journal reported that Julian Assange might be able to provide proof that there's no truth to the Russia collusion narrative --- even as Facebook's claim it may have sold \$100,000 worth of ads to Russians supposedly seeking to bolster Trump's campaign has revived the narrative in the eyes of Trump's political opponents.

According to WSJ, US congressman Dana Rohrabacher approached Trump's Chief of Staff John Kelly this week and offered him a deal: in exchange for a presidential pardon, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange would share evidence that could refute the narrative of Russian hacking into the DNC servers which released a trove of emails revealing that the DNC favored Clinton over rival Bernie Sanders during the 2016 primary. The leaked emails were widely blamed by liberals (and, of course, Hillary Clinton herself) for helping Trump win the 2016 election.

If, on the other hand Assange provided no definitive evidence, there would be no deal.

“The possible ‘deal’ — a term used by Mr. Rohrabacher during the Wednesday phone call — would involve a pardon of Mr. Assange or ‘something like that’, Mr. Rohrabacher said. In exchange, Mr. Assange would probably present a computer drive or other data-storage device that Mr. Rohrabacher said would exonerate Russia in the long-running controversy about who was the source of hacked and stolen material aimed at embarrassing the Democratic Party during the 2016 election.”

“He would get nothing, obviously, if what he gave us was not proof”, Mr. Rohrabacher said.

During the call, Rohrabacher pushed for a meeting between Assange and a Trump representative, preferably someone with direct communication with the president. While WSJ didn't speculate about who Assange's source might be, the Australian-born hacker has repeatedly hinted that he received the emails from deceased Democratic staffer Seth Rich. Rich was shot and killed last year during a robbery, according to the DC police, however, the circumstances of his death have fostered suspicions that he may have been murdered as revenge for the leaks.

Rohrabacher travelled to London unofficially early last month for a meeting with Assange. At the meeting, Rohrabacher said Assange offered him "firsthand" information purportedly proving that the Trump campaign did not collude with Russia. **Rohrabacher is the chairman of the subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats, which has jurisdiction over Russia-related issues within the House Foreign Affairs Committee.**

Rohrabacher confirmed that he spoke to Trump's chief of staff earlier this week, but declined to elaborate on the subject of their discussion. “I can't confirm or deny anything about a private conversation at that level” the WSJ adds.

A Trump administration official confirmed to WSJ that Rohrabacher had spoken to Kelly about Assange, and that Kelly told him his proposal “was best directed to the intelligence community.” Trump was never made aware of the phone call, according to WSJ. For the record, that’s the same intelligence community that relied on an error-laden dossier compiled by a former British intelligence officer to kick-start its investigation into whether members of the Trump campaign actively conspired with Russian agents to swing the vote to Trump.

Rohrabacher was understandably skeptical about involving the intelligence community, as Kelly had suggested.

“I would be happy to go with somebody you trust whether it is somebody at the FBI; somebody on your staff,” Mr. Rohrabacher said. The California congressman said he would be pleased to talk to CIA Director Mike Pompeo, but that the agency “has its limitations” and wanted “to cover their butt by having gone along with this big lie.” The CIA was one of the intelligence agencies that helped determine in January that emails from prominent Democrats were stolen by Russian intelligence and given to WikiLeaks.

Mr. Pompeo has said that WikiLeaks is akin to a foreign hostile intelligence service and is an adversary of the U.S. “WikiLeaks walks like a hostile intelligence service and talks like a hostile intelligence service,” Mr. Pompeo said in an April speech where he criticized the organization for stealing secrets from democratic governments all while receiving the backing of authoritarian states.

AS WSJ further adds, US authorities have launched an investigation into the disclosure of classified material to WikiLeaks. The investigation was reportedly opened after the publication of hundreds of thousands of classified US government documents in 2010. However, neither Assange nor his organization have never [???] been publicly accused of wrongdoing. Assange has defended the group’s actions, saying they were important acts of journalism and that the American public had a right to know that the DNC essentially conspired to tilt the primary in Clinton’s favor.

Rohrabacher added that the WikiLeaks founder never formally asked him to seek a pardon on his behalf.

“Mr. Assange explained that the ongoing attempts to bring a prosecution against WikiLeaks and its staff for its work documenting the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are unconstitutional, widely condemned, should immediately cease and that the continuation is an abuse of process for improper purposes,” WikiLeaks said in a statement about the August meeting between Mr. Assange and Mr. Rohrabacher.

After the visit to London, Mr. Rohrabacher said in a statement that Mr. Assange “emphatically stated that the Russians were not involved in the hacking or disclosure of those emails.”

Trump has already made one controversial commutation --- pardoning former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio --- since taking office. Like Arpaio, Assange, who isn't a US citizen and was not eligible to vote during the election, was vocal in his support of the Trump campaign. And Trump, for his part, has praised Wikileaks for its journalistic efforts.

But as Special Counsel Robert Mueller continues to dig into the financial records of Trump's inner circle, the administration would definitely benefit from Assange's disclosure --- particularly if it proves reliable enough to forestall, or even end, the multiple inquiries which have so far turned up little in the way of legitimate evidence that Trump associates conspired with Russian. Instead, the inquiry is largely being used as a vessel to funnel damaging leaks about the administration to the press.

In short, Assange who as recently as a few months ago was worried the CIA would do everything in its power to do away with him for good, may have found some last minute leverage.

And now we await a response from Trump, who we imagine would be keen to hear what Assange has to say-- despite his chief of staff's efforts to prevent the meeting.

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-09-15/julian-assange-offers-trump-evidence-russia-didnt-hack-dnc>

Ecuador will extend Assange's asylum over fears for his life — President Moreno

RT
25 Sept. 2017

Ecuador has decided to extend the political asylum granted to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange amid ongoing fears for his safety.

"Ecuador decided to provide political asylum to Assange because it thought that his life is in danger and Assange thought the same," President Lenin Moreno said speaking to RT Español.

"There is no death penalty in Ecuador, so our country has the right to grant asylum to Assange. We will continue to give him patronage for as long as we assume that his life may be in danger."

Assange has resided in the Ecuadorean embassy in London since 2012, after seeking refuge there to avoid extradition to Sweden over rape charges.

Swedish authorities withdrew the allegations earlier this year, however, UK police said Assange would still be arrested if he left the embassy because he had broken the conditions of his bail and failed to surrender to authorities.

Moreno noted that his government has urged Assange not to comment on Ecuadorian politics, which the Australian has ignored.

"He continued to express his opinion on this issue and we let him to do that in order to avoid restriction of freedom of speech, but we earnestly urge him to abstain from that," Moreno said.

In May, Assange tweeted that WikiLeaks will publish evidence of corruption in Ecuador if it receives it.

In the interview, Moreno also discussed his country's relationship with Russia **saying Ecuador needs to "get a lot closer to countries like Russia."** He thanked the Russian government for allowing thousands of Ecuadorian students to study in Russia.

<https://www.rt.com/news/404374-ecuador-president-asylum-assange>

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange now in war of words with the country protecting him

*Tim Johnson
McClatchy
September 29, 2017*

A vigorous campaign by WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to break Catalonia off from Spain, further splintering Europe, is landing him in hot water with the government of Ecuador that has provided him with diplomatic refuge in its embassy in London.

Assange and Ecuadorean President Lenin Moreno have traded barbs this week over whether his behavior comports with that of someone granted political asylum.

Assange challenged Moreno Thursday to try to silence him.

"If President Moreno wants to gag my reporting of human rights abuses in Spain he should say so explicitly— together with the legal basis," Assange tweeted.

Friction between Assange and his Ecuadorean hosts has grown since May, when Moreno took office and surprised his nation's voters by departing sharply from the path set by his predecessor, the fiery populist Rafael Correa. Moreno was considered Correa's protégé.

Moreno has told two international television networks in the past week that Assange should watch his tongue and not harm Ecuador's relations with its allies.

Assange has resided in Ecuador's Embassy in London since 2012, granted asylum by the Andean nation to sidestep possible espionage charges that he feared the U.S. government sought to bring against him for publicizing classified U.S. government documents and cables.

"We gave him asylum but we have asked him in a cordial way to stop commenting on the politics of Ecuador and that of friendly countries because his status as an asylum seeker does not allow it. So he is surpassing that condition," Moreno told CNN en Español.

Moreno offered similar sentiments in an interview late last week with RT, the Russian state network.

Assange has taken a fierce interest in the Catalonia independence drive, and has tweeted more than 100 times in multiple languages in the past three days about the independence referendum set for Sunday.

Earlier Friday, Assange tweeted: "The Spanish government in Madrid is trying every way it can to stop Catalonia's independence referendum Sunday."

Spain's Constitutional Court ruled Sept. 6 that the Catalan independence referendum was unconstitutional, and that ruling was followed by weeks of protests in the autonomous region's capital, Barcelona. Last week, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy deployed 4,000 police officers to Catalonia with orders to suppress what Spain considers an illegal referendum.

What may come of the referendum is uncertain, given Spain's insistence that the vote is illegal. Some analysts say it may be a step toward Spain's disintegration and a further challenge to broader Europe's unity.

Ecuador, like most Latin American countries that won independence from Spain two centuries ago, maintains vigorous, even emotional, relations with Madrid.[???

The friction in Catalonia drew the attention of U.N. experts, who on Thursday called on Spain to respect freedom of expression and assembly ahead of the scheduled vote. **"Regardless of the lawfulness of the referendum, the Spanish authorities have a responsibility to respect those rights that are essential to democratic societies," said the two U.N. experts, David Kaye and Alfred de Zayas.**

Kaye is the U.N.'s special rapporteur on freedom of expression while de Zayas is an independent expert on promotion of a democratic international order.

The frictions between Assange and Moreno appear unlikely to lead Ecuador to end his status in its London embassy. But the personal antipathy between the two appears to be growing.

Shortly after taking office, Moreno dismissed Assange as a "hacker" and said hacking is an activity "I personally reject." Moreno affirmed that Assange would be allowed to remain in the Ecuadorean embassy but warned him not to interfere in Ecuador's relations with other countries.

Assange responded by saying that Moreno had slandered [???] him as a hacker.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article176070931.html#navlink=SecList>

John Kelly is blocking a pro-Russia congressman from talking to Trump

*Joe Perticone
Business Insider — Australia
Oct. 4, 2017*

WASHINGTON — California Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, a **Republican** known for his fondness [???] of the Russian government and ties to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, said he is unable to even speak to President Donald Trump due to barriers put in place by White House Chief of Staff John Kelly.

Rohrabacher told Business Insider on Tuesday that Kelly and “a coalition of people in the White House” are preventing him from having a conversation with Trump that would entail clearing Assange and the Russian government from allegations they meddled in the 2016 presidential election.

Several government agencies expressed “high confidence” that Russian government agents directly attempted to interfere in the 2016 election, according to a January report from the Director of National Intelligence.

But Rohrabacher is unconvinced. Last month during a phone call with Kelly, Rohrabacher requested a pardon of Assange in exchange for evidence that would clear the fugitive’s name.

Weeks later, he is still unable to speak directly with Trump, but said that “there are others involved who are talking to Trump” about Assange.

Rohrabacher added that he is imploring a similar strategy in talking to Assange, who currently lives in asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

“I have not spoken to [Assange] directly, but we’re going through a period of time where a lot’s getting done one person removed in a lot of different ways,” he said.

According to Rohrabacher, the end arounds are necessary because Trump’s top advisors are preventing him from reaching the president.

“The White House staff and other top people in the administration are trying to protect the president from himself,” Rohrabacher said. “That’s what they think and in fact they are usurping his authority to make decisions — the important decisions — himself.”

On Tuesday, it was also revealed that Rohrabacher met with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya during a trip to Moscow last year, according to Foreign Policy. Veselnitskaya is known for her meeting with Donald Trump, Jr. at Trump Tower in New York, where she supposedly discussed potentially damaging information about Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/john-kelly-blocking-rep-dana-rohrabacher-from-talking-to-trump-2017-10>

Rafael Correa: Lenin Moreno is a 'Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' who was 'With the Opposition'

Telesur
5 October 2017

Ecuador's former president defended Vice President Jorge Glas, who faces corruption accusations, and blasted President Moreno as a "traitor."

Former President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, denounced his Alianza Pais successor Lenin Moreno as a “wolf in sheep's clothing,” and expressed support for the current Vice President who is accused of alleged corruption.

In an interview with CNN Español following President Moreno's decision to place Vice President Jorge Glas in pre-trial detention to face corruption accusations, Correa called the charges against Glas “a vulgar political persecution” that is **the same thing “they used in Brazil against Dilma,”** referring to the ousting of Brazil's elected president, Dilma Rousseff on the basis of corruption charges in a move many called an “institutional coup.”

He defended the Vice President, saying that the accusations are without evidence. “Glas is a person that does not steal or allow theft, but for this one makes enemies,” he said.

As for President Moreno, **Correa said that the current President had deceived him for ten years as a close political ally, who served in his government only to turn on him as a “wolf in sheep's clothing” once assuming power himself.**

The founding leader of Ecuador's Citizen's Revolution argues that Moreno and his allies “were never with us, but were with the opposition.”

“Moreno cheated me for ten years. He is a person that was with the opposition,” Correa said.

Moreno had previously served as Correa's Vice President from 2007 to 2013.

Underscoring the abrupt shift that Moreno took after assuming office, Correa said “I went from being the ‘eternal president’ to the ‘corrupt,’” referring to Lenin's praising words at the inauguration dubbing Correa Ecuador's “eternal president.”

Correa also criticized Moreno's upcoming consultation, which he said had the ultimate aim of preventing Correa from returning to power by eliminating indefinite presidential reelections through constitutional changes.

With Glas relieved of his duties, it was announced on Wednesday that former Housing Minister Maria Alejandra Vicuna would be taking on the role as acting Vice President.

The prosecuted Vice President, Jorge Glas, is a close supporter of Correa, and has said that the charges against him are simply a “retaliation” for criticizing the direction Moreno was taking the country.

Moreno has promoted a policy of “dialogue” with the country's right-wing opposition,” and announced on Wednesday that the International Monetary Fund would be visiting the country to assess the economic situation. The decision marks a departure from Correa's policies, which largely rejected the influence of international organizations in Ecuador's economy in favor of independence.

“A wide range of measures” need to be taken, Moreno said about the upcoming IMF visit.

<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Rafael-Correa-Lenin-Moreno-is-a-Wolf-in-Sheeps-Clothing-who-was-With-the-Opposition-20171005-0002.html>

'Enslaved to US politics': Assange seeks encrypted Twitter alternative

RT

6 Oct. 2017

Julian Assange hit out at Twitter for marking pictures he posts as “sensitive media,” with the WikiLeaks editor threatening to quit the site because it’s “enslaved to its US jurisdiction and politics.”

Assange told his 439,000 Twitter followers on Friday that he is looking for a “decentralized/cryptographic alternative” to the social media giant.

Twitter says it’s obliged to hand over user data to law enforcement, saying in its guidelines that it does so after undergoing a legal process, like a subpoena or court order.

Assange expressed his concern over Twitter’s privacy regulations and their impact on freedom of expression.

“Twitter’s freedom of expression has been on an inexorable decline. It’s enslaved to its US jurisdiction and politics. Although it is substantially better than Facebook that is a very low standard indeed,” Assange said online.

Assange also complained on Friday that the social media site is censoring his images. One of the posts seemingly censored was an image of a Catalan independence demonstration.

The WikiLeaks editor has been living inside the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012, despite a UN panel criticizing his arbitrary detention by UK and Swedish authorities.

In a post aimed at Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Assange included an image of the site’s “sensitive media” warning, which requires the user to click through before viewing the two pictures he had posted.

The warning is added to pictures that Twitter deems graphic but acceptable to post online. The picture screen may also be added by individual users themselves.

It’s not clear how or when the warning was added to Assange’s account, but he accused the social media company of ticking the option in their settings without being informed.

“Twitter added this to my account without my authorization,” he said.

Jack Dorsey has yet to reply to the WikiLeaks co-founder online.

<https://www.rt.com/news/405878-assange-twitter-censorship-row/>

Blame Russia: Assange outlines how to be a journalist in 2017

RT

7 Oct. 2017

Haven't you heard? The Russians did it. Julian Assange has outlined the key element to being a "Western journalist in 2017" and it's quite simple: blame Russia.

Seemingly behind every major news event in the last number of years, Russia has been busy influencing world events simply by reporting on them, just like everyone else. And this, according to Assange, is key, as outlined in his three-point strategy on Friday.

First, "Pick a globally newsworthy event" which the Russian press "will also be reporting it by definition."

Second, **"Write story: Russian state secretly behind globally newsworthy event as proved by their press reporting it."**

And finally "Profit!"

Assange's comments echo that of The Intercept's Glenn Greenwald who, on September 28, reported on the demise of "yet another major Russia story" that most major US media outlets ran with as fact, despite the lack of any evidence whatsoever.

The story in question— "Russians attempted to hack elections systems in 21 states in the run-up to last year's presidential election" -- predictably went viral, having been reported by USA Today.

The ruse fell apart, however, when the Associated Press reported that one of the states included in the list of 21, Wisconsin, did not have its election systems targeted by Russian hackers.

According to Greenwald, this is far from an isolated incident. Such reporting, he notes, "has happened over and over and over again."

"Inflammatory claims about Russia get mindlessly hyped by media outlets, almost always based on nothing more than evidence-free claims from government officials, only to collapse under the slightest scrutiny, because they are entirely lacking in evidence," Greenwald writes.

Despite the fact that 'Russia did it' stories have been consistently debunked, the Catalan independence referendum seems to have been the latest target, according to the MSM.

In the face of a brutal state crackdown by Spanish forces, Catalans voted overwhelmingly to leave Spain. **But, of course, this was not an action taken by the Catalan people but a result of Russian meddling.**

"Russian propagandists scored a victory in Spain this weekend after 'boldly injecting fake news and disinformation' into the debate over Catalan independence and seemingly influencing the election results," the Washington Post's Dan Boylan wrote, citing "U.S. information warfare experts."

Elections seem to be a favourite target for Russian meddlers. France and Germany, and now Catalonia, were all influenced by Russia, despite the fact that in France, an anti-Russia candidate (Macron) won, and in Germany, the Angela Merkel status quo held out.

Those allegations come after alleged Russian interference in the US presidential election in 2016.

Following on from the election of Donald Trump and the seeming influence of RT in particular, RT America has been told it needs to register itself as a 'foreign agent' under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), adopted in 1938 to counter pro-Nazi agitation on US soil.

According to Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Richard Burr, the investigation into Russian meddling in the election will ultimately show that "quite a few" news outlets in the US ran stories that were not factual.

"We're not going to investigate news organizations, but we will use the findings of our report to let the American people hold every news organization accountable for what they portrayed as fact, in many cases without sources — at least, no sources that would admit to it," Burr told Politico on Thursday

<https://www.rt.com/news/405975-assange-western-journalist-russia>

Julian Assange is squabbling with Ecuador's new president.

That could put his London refuge at risk.

*Simeon Tegel
Washington Post
October 14, 2017*

You might think that the world's best-known fugitive from U.S. law would want to stay on good terms with the government that is shielding him. But that's not the way Julian Assange operates.

The WikiLeaks founder, who has been holed up in Ecuador's London embassy since 2012, is embroiled in a spat with the South American country's new president, Lenín Moreno, about Assange's vocal support for Catalan separatists.

Moreno, who assumed office in January, has asked Assange to stay out of the constitutional crisis in Spain, prompting this riposte from the self-styled freedom-of-information champion: "If President Moreno wants to gag my reporting of human rights abuses in Spain he should say so explicitly-- together with the legal basis."

But Assange, who is wanted in Sweden for alleged sex offenses and potentially in the United States for publishing state secrets, might want to think twice before antagonizing Moreno. The new president seems bent on charting a different course than his

mentor and predecessor, Rafael Correa, the brash leftist who first gave refuge to the Australian activist.

Moreno is openly seeking to replace Correa's confrontational approach with "dialogue," is encouraging corruption investigations of the former president's inner circle and has largely stopped enforcing a law that once caused human rights groups to label Ecuador's media the least free — other than Cuba's — in the Western Hemisphere. He has also described his predecessor as an authoritarian with an "obsession with maintaining power" and has just proposed a plebiscite on limits to presidential reelection that would effectively quash any bid by Correa to return to power in 2021.

Correa has responded with a string of characteristically outspoken attacks on Moreno, calling him a "traitor," "mediocre" and a "wolf in sheep's clothing."

All in all, Moreno appears to be trying to reposition Ecuador away from Venezuela's "Bolivarian socialist" axis while modeling himself on impeccably democratic Latin American leftists such as Chile's Michelle Bachelet and the former Uruguayan leader José Mujica.

That could spell trouble for Assange, whose continued residence in the London embassy brings Moreno scant domestic political benefits while defining Ecuador as a geopolitical outlier antagonistic to the United States and other major Western powers.

Moreno has publicly stated that he will maintain Assange's asylum. But he has included a highly specific caveat: "as long as we assume his life may be in danger." The president has also previously dismissed the WikiLeaks boss as a "hacker."

Among those who think Moreno may already be wondering how to end the impasse over Assange is César Ricaurte, head of Fundamedios, a Quito-based nonprofit that advocates for press freedom and had numerous run-ins with Correa.

"The situation of Assange in the embassy is unsustainable," Ricaurte said. "He has converted himself into this great conspirator against the **major democracies**. I think the government is looking for a way out."

Ramiro Crespo, a financial analyst in Quito, predicts that the president will bide his time, first focusing on winning his war with Correa.

Moreno has approval ratings touching 80 percent but no clear legislative majority, given that his Alianza País (Country Alliance) party is split between Correa supporters and **reformists**. Correa loyalists also still control the courts and many other public institutions.

"Moreno has to pick his battles and dismantle Correa's machinery bit by bit," Crespo said. "He is being cautious. Dealing with Assange is not the priority right now, but Moreno could decide to make a move once he feels stronger."

Exit strategies could include the president pressuring Assange to leave the embassy voluntarily. He might also seek an assurance from Washington, with whom he has a warming relationship, that capital punishment be ruled out in any potential trial.

Or he might simply suspend indefinitely the WikiLeaks activist's Internet connection-- as Correa briefly did ahead of the 2016 U.S. presidential election — citing his refusal to refrain from political activity.

For now, Moreno has his hands full battling to break his predecessor's grip on Ecuador's many branches of power. Assange, however, would be wise to prepare for a new reality in which he can no longer depend on a steadfast protector in Quito.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/14/julian-assange-is-squabbling-with-ecuadors-new-president-that-could-put-his-london-refugee-at-risk/>

50,000% return: Assange thanks US authorities who forced him to invest in Bitcoin

RT

15 Oct. 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange posted a sardonic 'thank you' note addressing US authorities who forced the whistleblowing website into investing in Bitcoin in 2010. The cryptocurrency has seen a 50,000 percent bump in value in the interim.

"My deepest thanks to the US government, Senator McCain and Senator Lieberman for pushing Visa, MasterCard, Payal, AmEx, Mooneybookers, et al, into erecting an illegal banking blockade against @WikiLeaks starting in 2010. It caused us to invest in Bitcoin --- with > 50000% return," Assange tweeted.

For context, Bitcoin reached highs of up to \$5,746.51 this week in yet another unprecedented surge in value, The Coin Telegraph reports.

Following the release of sensitive documents regarding US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, sanctions were imposed against WikiLeaks, which severely curtailed funding and forced the website to seek alternative methods of funding.

In his tweet, Assange called out current and former senators John McCain and Joe Lieberman, respectively, for forcing him into seeking alternative sources of funding which turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

At the time, Lieberman called for the Department of Justice to indict Assange under the 1917 Espionage Act and sought his extradition from the UK for leaking US Embassy cables.

"I think this is the most serious violation of the Espionage Act in our history," Lieberman said at the time, as cited by The Guardian. "It sure looks to me that Assange and WikiLeaks have violated the Espionage Act."

Assange has been exiled in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since 2012.

<https://www.rt.com/usa/406729-assange-wikileaks-bitcoin-investment/>

'Cold creepiness' — Assange on Clinton after she calls WikiLeaks 'Russian intelligence subsidiary'

RT

16 Oct. 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has accused Hillary Clinton of “constant lying,” after the former US presidential candidate told Australia’s ABC TV that his organization was just a “subsidiary of Russian intelligence.” There is “something wrong with Hillary Clinton,” Assange tweeted.

“It is not just her constant lying,” he wrote on Monday. “It is not just that she throws off menacing glares and seethes thwarted entitlement.

“Something much darker rides along with it. A cold creepiness rarely seen.”



Hillary Clinton claimed in an interview with the ABC’s Four Corners program that Assange colluded with the Russian government in the lead-up to the 2016 US presidential election.

“Assange has become a kind of nihilistic opportunist who does the bidding of a dictator,” she said.

“WikiLeaks is unfortunately now practically a fully owned subsidiary of Russian intelligence.”

Clinton claimed that in a bid to disrupt the election and derail her presidential campaign, Assange teamed up with none other than Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“I think that their intention, coming from the very top with Putin, was to hurt me and to help [then-presidential hopeful Donald] Trump,” she said.

“Our intelligence community and other observers of Russia and Putin have said he held a grudge against me because as secretary of state, I stood up against some of his actions, his authoritarianism,” Clinton said.

“If he’s such a martyr of free speech, why doesn’t WikiLeaks ever publish anything coming out of Russia? You don’t see damaging, negative information coming out about the Kremlin on WikiLeaks,” she added.

Assange tweeted in response that WikiLeaks’ “last Russian exposé” actually came out just three weeks ago, and that his organization has a “pristine record for accuracy.”

Clinton alleged that the actions of WikiLeaks and Russia played a major role in her losing the race.

“There was a concerted operation between WikiLeaks and Russia and most likely people in the United States to... weaponize that information, to make up stories, outlandish, often terrible stories that had no basis in fact... which were used to denigrate me, my campaign, people who supported me, and to help Trump.”

According to Clinton, WikiLeaks was driven by Assange’s personal dislike of her.

“I had a lot of history with him because I was secretary of state when WikiLeaks published a lot of very sensitive information from our State Department and our Defense Department,” she said.

The US government has accused Moscow of interfering in the 2016 US election by hacking and leaking emails of Democratic Party operatives, as well as correspondences of Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman John Podesta. Moscow has repeatedly denied meddling in the election, noting that no evidence has been provided to support the accusations.

<https://www.rt.com/news/406797-assange-clinton-lying-wikileaks/>

Clinton: Wikileaks samarbetade med Ryssland

Hillary Clinton, som förlorade presidentvalet i USA, attackerar nu Wikileaks för att ha hjälpt Donald Trump till makten.

– Assange har blivit en nihilistisk opportunist som springer ärenden åt en diktator, säger Clinton i australisk tv.

Enligt AFP anklagar Clinton Wikileaks, med grundaren Julian Assange i spetsen, för att med ryskt bistånd hjälpt till att rikta uppmärksamheten bort från avslöjandet om presidents Trumps kvinnoförnedrande uttalanden.

På inspelningarna, som gjordes under Trumps år som dokusåpakändis, hörs han skryta om att han kan göra vad som helst med kvinnor.

Nyheten drunknade dock till stor del, eftersom Wikileaks bara timmar efter att den publicerades släppte mer än 2.000 mejl som läckt ut från Clintons valkampanj. Mejl som avslöjade att Clinton och Demokraternas valrörelse var allt annat än fläckfri.

– Wikileaks har tyvärr blivit ett helägt dotterbolag till den ryska underrättelsetjänsten, säger Hillary Clinton i en intervju med australiska ABC:s Sarah Ferguson.

Johan Juhlin
SVT
16 oktober 2017

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/utrikes/clinton-wikileaks-samarbetade-med-ryssland>

Hillary Clinton Just Told Five Blatant Lies About WikiLeaks

Caitlin Johnstone
Medium
Oct. 16, 2017

As part of her ongoing “Thank God You Didn’t Elect Me” tour, Hillary Clinton made her debut on Australian television last night in an interview with the ABC’s Sarah Ferguson. Though she didn’t repeat her infamous “17 intelligence agencies” lie, which she’d continued to regurgitate long after that claim had been conclusively debunked, there were still plenty of whoppers to be heard.

From her ridiculous claim that the aggressively protested DNC convention was “very positive” to her completely baseless assertion that Bernie Sanders “couldn’t explain his programs” during the primaries, Clinton did a fine job of reminding us all why the average American finds her about as trustworthy as a hungry crocodile. **But while she has blamed her loss on James Comey and Barack Obama and Bernie Sanders and self-hating women and the media and uninformed voters and voter suppression and her campaign staff and the DNC and campaign finance laws and Jill Stein and the Electoral College and Anthony Weiner and sexism and Vladimir Putin, Hillary Clinton reserved the lion’s share of her deceit for the organization she hates most of all: WikiLeaks.**

Here are five lies that Clinton told about the outlet during her ABC interview:

Lie 1: Claims WikiLeaks never publishes anything about Russia

“And if he’s such a, you know, martyr of free speech, why doesn’t WikiLeaks ever publish anything coming out of Russia?” Clinton asks of WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange, mere weeks after WikiLeaks published a massive leak drop on Russian domestic surveillance. Prior to that WikiLeaks had published hundreds of thousands of critical documents pertaining to Russia. She lied, and there’s no way she didn’t know she was lying.

Lie 2: Podesta leaks were timed to eclipse the Access Hollywood “grab them by the pussy” October surprise.

“WikiLeaks, which in the world in which we find ourselves promised hidden information, promised some kind of secret that might be of influence, was a very clever, diabolical response to the Hollywood Access [sic] tape,” said Clinton in response to a question by Ferguson about the fact that WikiLeaks dropped the first Podesta emails shortly after the “grab them by the pussy” audio leak surfaced on October 7.

This is another blatant lie. Assange had been promoting an incoming leak drop for days prior to October 7, as evidenced in articles like this one by Reuters titled “WikiLeaks’ Assange signals release of documents before U.S. election”. Everyone knew the leaks were coming. According to NBC sources who spoke with TMZ, it was the release of the Access Hollywood tape that was moved forward to the 7th.

Lie 3: Implying that there was nothing incriminating in the Democratic party emails that WikiLeaks published.

Throughout the interview, Clinton babbled about the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, babbled about Russian propaganda, babbled about the content of the leaked emails being twisted into something false— babbled about everything except the undeniably incriminating things found in those documents. Whenever you get Clinton talking about WikiLeaks, she insists that the problem wasn’t the revelation of an appalling amount of corruption, but a Kremlin-backed propaganda campaign to make perfectly innocuous emails look bad.

This has been a longstanding tactic by the Democratic establishment in response to the embarrassing 2016 leak drops. The absurd narrative that the DNC and Podesta emails were squeaky clean and only painted to look incriminating by Russian propaganda is required in order for the Democrats to have their “WikiLeaks cost us the election” narrative while also keeping their “we did absolutely nothing wrong” narrative. It’s the only way they can have their cake and eat it too.

In reality, the conspiring and “us vs. them” language between DNC officials in their leaked emails unquestionably reveals a blatant violation of Article 5, Section 4 of the DNC Charter, which promises the American people that the DNC Chairperson (who was included in and participated in many of these emails) “shall be responsible for ensuring that the national officers and staff of the Democratic National Committee maintain impartiality and evenhandedness during the Democratic Party Presidential nominating process.” This plainly did not happen, as a glance at some of the nastiest emails reveals. The DNC Charter was revised with this promise to prevent a DemExit after the 1968 fiasco in Chicago, and in 2016 they undeniably broke this promise.

And as bad as the DNC Leaks were, the later leak drops were far more incriminating. From Donna Brazile serving as a mole against the Sanders campaign and passing multiple debate questions in advance to Hillary Clinton, to an email from a CitiGroup executive instructing Obama what cabinet picks (who would then go on the shape policy for dealing with Wall Street crooks after they caused the 2008 global financial crisis) he was permitted to choose from prior to his election in 2008, to the Clintons taking bribes from Qatar and Morocco and knowingly accepting funds from political bodies that arm ISIS, to evidence that the DNC was stacking the deck for Clinton as early as 2014, to a suggestion that the Clinton campaign had some sort of “leverage” over Bernie Sanders, to Clinton promising a group of Goldman Sachs executives that she would lie to the American people for their benefit by assuring them that she understood the importance of having both a “public position and a private position” when it comes to economic matters, there was more than enough shocking data there to rightly hurt Clinton’s approval rating.

So this notion that fake news and Russian propaganda were needed in order for the WikiLeaks releases to hurt the Clinton campaign are blatantly deceitful. Clinton wasn't hurt by fake news and Russian propaganda, Clinton was hurt by the truth.

Lie 4: Julian Assange is “a tool of Russian intelligence” who “does the bidding of a dictator.”

Intelligence officials for the Obama administration, including Obama himself, have been clear that there is no clear tie between WikiLeaks and Russian intelligence. In reality, WikiLeaks has been publishing dirt on Russia for many years, has stood in solidarity with dissident Russian activists, and is not doing the bidding of Kremlin intelligence anywhere outside the psychotic delusions of Clintonists whose cognitive comfort depends on seeing Darth Putin lurking in every shadow.

Lie 5: Claiming WikiLeaks helped spread lies and is therefore not protected by the First Amendment.

SARAH FERGUSON: Isn't he just doing what journalists do, which is publish information when they get it?

HILLARY CLINTON: I don't think so.

I think for number one, it's one stolen information, ah and number two, if all you did was publish it, that would be one thing.

But there was a concerted operation ah between ah WikiLeaks and Russia and most likely people in the United States to, as I say, weaponise that information, to make up stories, outlandish, often terrible stories that had no basis in fact, no basis even in the emails themselves, but which were used to ah denigrate me, my campaign, ah people who supported me, and to help Trump....

A total outright lie! So, I think that, you know, I have no objection to accurate information being ah published; I mean that's what a First Amendment, that's what freedom of information is.

Contrary to lies circulated by establishment propagandists like Malcolm Nance, **WikiLeaks has a pristine record for publishing authentic documents and has never had to retract any of its material due to inauthenticity.** If Clinton's claim that WikiLeaks influenced “the perceptions and views of millions of voters” is true, then those perceptions and views were influenced by truth.

WikiLeaks, like the New York Times or the Washington Post or any other outlet which publishes leaked documents, is indeed protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. This extends to international outlets because the Constitution does not bestow rights upon US citizens but actually forbids the US government from restricting any press. Contrary to what CIA scumbucket Mike Pompeo has suggested, free speech is an inalienable human right that every human being is naturally entitled to, not something the government magnanimously grants some people but not others.

As we've discussed previously, Hillary Clinton needs to keep coming back in and lying her ass off because her campaign promised the end of the world if she lost. Since they can't just admit that Trump is actually just a garden variety Republican hack like any Bush or Reagan, and that they lied about the entire thing to scare everyone into supporting her, she needs to keep lying to everyone so they don't blame her for helping to elect a walking armageddon. People are scared, and Clinton is legacy-minded, so she needs to keep lying to stave off the embarrassment of being blamed for losing to Trump.

That's all this is. That's all this has ever been.

<https://medium.com/@caityjohnstone/hillary-clinton-just-told-five-blatant-lies-about-wikileaks-f463d66b63ef>

DN: 2017-10-16



Assange offers €20K reward for finding killers of Malta's 'one-woman WikiLeaks'

RT
17 Oct. 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will pay €20,000 to anyone providing information leading to the conviction of the killers of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who died in a car bomb.

The investigative journalist died after the car she was travelling in exploded near her home in Bidnija, northern Malta, at around 3pm on Monday. Maltese police have opened a murder inquiry.

The 53 year old ran the hugely popular 'Running Commentary' blog which led Malta's Panama Papers investigation and highlighted several other corruption scandals in the Mediterranean island nation.

In a post on Twitter Assange expressed his horror at Caruana Galizia's death. "Outraged to hear that Maltese investigative journalist and blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia has been murdered this afternoon not far from her home with a car bomb," he said. Assange also added information about the proposed reward.

The blog's most recent revelations took aim at Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and two of his closest aides.

"Everyone knows Ms Caruana Galizia was a harsh critic of mine both politically and personally, but nobody can justify this barbaric act in any way," Muscat said at a press conference.

In a lengthy and emotional post on Facebook, Daphne's son, Matthew Caruana Galizia, described in vivid detail what happened in the aftermath of the explosion. He also lashed out at several Maltese politicians, including Muscat, and attacked the "culture of impunity (which) has been allowed to flourish by the government in Malta."

Maltese TV station TVM reported that Caruana Galizia had filed a complaint to the police two weeks before her killing to say she had received threats but gave no further information.

In 2016 the blogger was named as one of Politico's "28 people who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe," The American news outlet described Caruana Galizia as a "one-woman WikiLeaks."

<https://www.rt.com/news/406963-assange-reward-caruana-galizia-death/>

Four Corners host Sarah Ferguson admits she didn't ask Hillary Clinton about Bill's cheating because 'she's been through enough' — as producer tweets that Julian Assange is 'Putin's b**'**

Julian Assange has hit back at the ABC after Monday's interview on Four Corners. He accused ABC of breaching their code of practice by not seeking his response. Assange also called retweet by the show's producer 'extreme unprofessionality.'

*Sam Duncan
Daily Mail Australia
17 October 2017*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has slammed the ABC, accusing the national broadcaster of breaching their own code of practice.

Assange said he should have been asked for a response to comments made about him by Hillary Clinton during an interview which aired in Australia on Monday.

The WikiLeaks founder's criticism comes as Four Corners interviewer Sarah Ferguson revealed on radio she thought Hillary Clinton 'has been through enough'.

'A sad day for Four Corners,' Assange told Daily Mail Australia, 'WikiLeaks has a pristine record for accuracy. Clinton stands alone in suggesting otherwise.'

'There was no push back on Clinton's ridiculous conspiracy theories or use of weasel words. The single greatest contributor to Clinton's downfall was not brought up: her strategy to elevate Donald Trump. **We were not contacted to rebut.'**

After first attacking Clinton for calling him a 'tool of Russian intelligence' and a 'nihilistic opportunist', Assange then took aim at the taxpayer-funded broadcaster.

In response to a retweet by Four Corners producer Sally Neighbour, Assange said it was 'pathetic' and showed the 'extreme unprofessionality' of the ABC.

The retweet, since deleted, was a link to the Four Corners interview captioned 'Assange is Putins (sic) b**. We all know it!'**

Assange cited the ABC's own code of practice, which states: 'Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.'

Describing himself as an 'Australian political refugee', Assange first hit back at Clinton's claims in the interview.

He called Clinton a 'notorious liar' and her statements 'defamatory', disputing her claims about the timing of WikiLeaks releases during the election.

Interviewer Sarah Ferguson appeared on radio on Monday, where she revealed she deliberately avoided asking Hillary about Bill Clinton.

'I reckon she's been through enough,' she said when asked whether the pair discussed Bill Clinton's infidelity by Jonesy and Amanda on WFSM.

'You know it's a very interesting relationship. It's a very interesting marriage, but I don't think every time she sits in a chair she needs to be asked about her husband.'

Earlier in the interview Ms Ferguson mentioned Bill's opposition to her recent book *What Happened*, and his desire to change her schedule at the end of her campaign.

Ms Ferguson was then asked whether she raised those issues with Hillary Clinton, or whether she mentioned Bill's cheating.

Former Labor leader Mark Latham said Ms Ferguson's refusal to ask Clinton about her husband is evidence of left wing bias at the broadcaster.

'This interview with the far left journalist Sarah Ferguson tells you everything you need to know about the fake news media and the massive decline in journalistic ethics,' said Mr Latham.

In response to Assange's remarks on social media, Ms Neighbour **called the offensive tweet 'a mistake, since undone'** and offered him full right of reply.

'We're not going to reward the ABC for breaching its own code of conduct,' said Assange.

'It's a typical yellow journalism tactic to defame someone who won't give you an interview --- then to offer them a 'right of reply'.'

Ms Neighbour then claimed an interview request was made on September 19, to which Assange said that request was not an opportunity for right of reply.

Assange has been living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012, and has been a vocal critic of Hillary Clinton.

After the Four Corners interview aired Assange tweeted a link to it captioned: 'There's something wrong with Hillary Clinton'.

'It is not just her constant lying. It is not just that she throws off menacing glares and seethes thwarted entitlement'.

'Something much darker rides along with it. A cold creepiness rarely seen' he said.

WikiLeaks released emails and documents from the Democratic National Committee during the 2016 US presidential election.

Assange has consistently denied accusations the releases were made on behalf of the Russian government, and has said the Russians were not the source of the leaks.

Clinton has claimed WikiLeaks has never released anything about Russia, but Assange claims his organisation has published hundreds of thousands of documents pertaining to that nation.

An ABC spokesperson told Daily Mail Australia: 'As Sally Neighbour stated on Twitter straight away, the retweet was a mistake and quickly undone. *[How does one undo 'Assange is Putin's b****. We all know it!'] ?]*

'The program contacted Julian Assange regarding an interview well in advance, and the offer remains open.

'Hillary Clinton has spoken a lot about issues relating to her marriage over the past decades — Sarah Ferguson had a lot of fresh ground to cover in her interview, which was more relevant to the news cycle' *[and which was not the basis of Assange's criticism -- A.B.]*.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4987144/Julian-Assange-hits-extremely-unprofessional-ABC.html>

Initiativtagare till #prataomdet: "Sexuella övergrepp trivs i tystnad"

Harvey Weinstein-skandalen växer och ger ringar på internets vatten. Under hashtagen #Metoo delar många kvinnor med sig av upplevelser av sexuella övergrepp. Vad kan de här berättelserna leda till? 2010 startades #prataomdet, som var en liknande kampanj. Kulturnyhetera träffade en av initiativtagarna.

Efter våldtäktsanklagelserna mot Julian Assange började svenska kvinnor dela sina erfarenheter av sexuella gråzoner under hashtagen #prataomdet.

Sonja Schwarzenberger var, tillsammans med Johanna Koljonen och Sofia Mirjamsdotter, en av initiativtagarna.

– Jag tror att sexuella övergrepp trivs väldigt bra i tystnad. Trivs väldigt bra när människor skäms. Det är vad vi är uppfostrade att göra: till att ifrågasätta vår upplevelse, skämmas över den. Tänka: tänk om jag inte sagt det här, om jag varit tyst, om jag bråkat i stället, om jag sagt nej. Vi sätter lampan på oss själva hela tiden. Jag tror att de där berättelserna gjorde att vi insåg att skulden inte var vår, säger hon till Kulturnyhetera.

Initiativet #prataomdet blev förutom en hashtag och krönikor också en bok och en teaterföreställning, och belönades senare med stora journalistpriset.

— Det var en motbild till idén om en våldtäkt och våldtäktsmannen som den främmande, onda skurken, som kan förstöra hela livet för kvinnan det händer. I stället började vi höra vardagliga berättelser om pojkvänner, släktingar, klasskompisar och kollegor, säger Sonja Schwarzenberger till Kulturnyhetera.

På internet finns i dag stora möjligheter att, genom exempelvis gemensamma hashtags, samla erfarenheter för att skapa ett kollektiv av röster.

Men hashtagar som #metoo och #prataomdet bär faktiskt ett idéhistoriskt arv från 1970-talets kvinnorörelse och parollen att det privata är politiskt. Att dela erfarenheter av förtryck har länge varit en viktig feministisk strategi.

– Det är min upplevelse att när man förstod att man inte var ensam så släpper känslan av skuld och man kan lägga det bakom sig. Och man kan se att problemet är större än mig, säger Sonja Schwarzenberger till Kulturnyhetera.

Rebecca Lundberg
SVT
17 oktober 2017

<https://www.svt.se/kultur/sexuella-overgrepp-trivs-valdigt-bra-i-tystnad>

Julian Assange hits back after CIA director likens WikiLeaks to Isis and Hezbollah

Assange: "The CIA hasn't just jumped the shark here -- it has gone into orbit."

Jason Murdock
International Business Times
October 20, 2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has clashed with CIA director Mike Pompeo after the high-ranking US official said he was "working to take down" the whistleblowing website.

Speaking at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) National Security Summit this week (19 October), Pompeo likened the anti-secrecy website to other examples of what he has dubbed "non-state intelligence services" — comparing it to Hezbollah, Isis and Al-Qaeda.

"They are an enormous threat, we are working to take down that threat to the United States — to reduce the threat," he said during the Washington DC conference.

He discussed Russia's alleged state-sponsored hacking operation during the US election last year and promised that the clandestine CIA is set to become a "much more vicious agency" in the near future.

Referencing the alleged similarities between the three terror groups and WikiLeaks, he commented: "**None of them sit at the UN** — these are all non-state actors each of which not only have cyber-capacity but they look and feel like very good intelligence organisations."

Pompeo said "the world has moved" and pledged that his agency will refine how it works to combat "non-state threats" and "state intelligence adversaries."

His comments come as WikiLeaks is releasing documents detailing a variety of CIA cyber-tools, disclosed under the codename "Vault7". The source of the leak remains unknown.

After the director's speech, Assange, from his personal Twitter account, hit back: "WikiLeaks = ISIS. The CIA hasn't just jumped the shark here — it has gone into orbit."

It's far from the first time the two men have butted heads. Assange, who remains living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London under political asylum, was the subject of Pompeo's ire in April this year, not long after he took the position of top chief.

In his first speech, the newly-appointed director called the WikiLeaks boss a "coward hiding behind a screen" and asserted that his website's output was "abetted by state actors like Russia".

Indeed, the US intelligence community believes that is accurate — that it helped to influence the outcome of 2016's election via a series of damaging leaks. Assange has denied that claim. *[Only 3 of 17 agencies have been willing to state that, and it is doubtful that any of them "believe" it. --A.B.]*

"When the director of the CIA, an unelected public servant, publicly demonises a publisher such as WikiLeaks as a 'fraud,' 'coward' and 'enemy', it puts all journalists on notice, **or should,**" Assange responded in an op-ed for *The Washington Post* on 25 April this year.

At one point in recent history, you wouldn't have been criticised for asserting that Pompeo was actually a fan of Assange's work. Last August, he tweeted a direct link to its publications.

"Need further proof that the fix was in from Pres. Obama on down? BUSTED: 19,252 Emails from DNC leaked by WikiLeaks," he wrote in July 2016. It's clear that is no longer the stance.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/julian-assange-hits-back-after-cia-director-likens-wikileaks-isis-hezbollah-1643966>

Blaming Russia for the Internet ‘Sewer’

As the Russia-gate hysteria spirals down from the implausible to the absurd, almost every bad thing is blamed on the Russians, even how they turned the previously pristine Internet into a “sewer,” reports Robert Parry.

*Robert Parry
Information Clearing House
October 20, 2017*

With the U.S. government offering tens of millions of dollars to combat Russian “propaganda and disinformation,” it’s perhaps not surprising that we see “researchers” such as Jonathan Albright of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University making the absurd accusation that the Russians have “basically turned [the Internet] into a sewer.”

I’ve been operating on the Internet since 1995 and I can assure you that the Internet has always been “a sewer” — in that it has been home to crazy conspiracy theories, ugly personal insults, click-bait tabloid “news,” and pretty much every vile prejudice you can think of. Whatever some Russians may or may not have done in buying \$100,000 in ads on Facebook (compared to its \$27 billion in annual revenue) or opening 201 Twitter accounts (out of Twitter’s 328 million monthly users), the Russians are not responsible for the sewage coursing through the Internet.

Americans, Europeans, Asians, Africans and pretty much every other segment of the world’s population didn’t need Russian help to turn the Internet into an informational “sewer.” But, of course, fairness and proportionality have no place in today’s Russia-gate frenzy.

After all, your “non-governmental organization” or your scholarly “think tank” is not likely to get a piece of the \$160 million that the U.S. government authorized last December to counter primarily Russian “propaganda and disinformation” if you explain that the Russians are at most responsible for a tiny trickle of “sewage” compared to the vast rivers of “sewage” coming from many other sources.

If you put the Russia-gate controversy in context, you also are not likely to have your “research” cited by The Washington Post as Albright did on Thursday because he **supposedly found some links at the home-décor/fashion site Pinterest** to a few articles that derived from a few of the 470 Facebook accounts and pages that Facebook suspects of having a link to Russia and shut them down. (To put that 470 number into perspective, Facebook has about two billion monthly users.)

Albright’s full quote about the Russians allegedly exploiting various social media platforms on the Internet was: “They’ve gone to every possible medium and basically turned it into a sewer.”

But let’s look at the facts. According to Facebook, the suspected “Russian-linked” accounts purchased \$100,000 in ads from 2015 to 2017 (compared to Facebook’s annual revenue of about \$27 billion), **with only 44 percent of those ads appearing before the 2016 election and many having little or nothing to do with politics, which is curious if the Kremlin’s goal was to help elect Donald Trump and defeat Hillary Clinton.**

Even former Clinton political strategist Mark Penn has acknowledged the absurdity of thinking that such piddling amounts could have any impact on a \$2.4 billion presidential campaign, plus all the billions of dollars worth of free-media attention to the conventions, debates, etc. **Based on what's known about the Facebook ads, Penn calculated that "the actual electioneering [in battleground states] amounts to about \$6,500."**

In a Wall Street Journal op-ed on Monday, Penn added, "I have 40 years of experience in politics, and this Russian ad buy mostly after the election anyway, simply does not add up to a carefully targeted campaign to move voters. It takes tens of millions of dollars to deliver meaningful messages to the contested portion of the electorate."

Puppies and Pokemon

And, then there is the curious content. According to The New York Times, one of these "Russian-linked" Facebook groups was dedicated to photos of "adorable puppies." Of course, **the Times tried hard to detect some sinister motive behind the "puppies" page.**

Similarly, CNN went wild over its own "discovery" that one of the "Russian-linked" pages offered Amazon gift cards to people who found "Pokémon Go" sites near scenes where police shot unarmed black men — if you would name the Pokémon after the victims.

"It's unclear what the people behind the contest hoped to accomplish, though it **may have been** to remind people living near places where these incidents had taken place of what had happened and to upset or anger them," CNN mused, adding:

"CNN has not found any evidence that any Pokémon Go users attempted to enter the contest, or whether any of the Amazon Gift Cards that were promised were ever awarded — or, indeed, whether the people who designed the contest ever had any intention of awarding the prizes."

So, these dastardly Russians are [*No: They "may have been" --A.B.*] exploiting "adorable puppies" and want to "remind people" about unarmed victims of police violence, clearly a masterful strategy to undermine American democracy or — according to the original Russia-gate narrative — to elect Donald Trump.

A New York Times article on Wednesday acknowledged another inconvenient truth that unintentionally added more perspective to the Russia-gate hysteria.

It turns out that some of the mainstream media's favorite "fact-checking" organizations are home to Google ads that look like news items and lead readers to phony sites dressed up to resemble People, Vogue or other legitimate content providers.

"None of the stories were true," the Times reported. "Yet as recently as late last week, they were being promoted with prominent ads served by Google on PolitiFact and Snopes, fact-checking sites created precisely to dispel such falsehoods."

There is obvious irony in PolitiFact and Snopes profiting off "fake news" by taking money for these Google ads. But this reality also underscores the larger reality that

fabricated news articles — whether peddling lies about Melania Trump or a hot new celebrity or outlandish Russian plots — are **driven principally by the profit motive**.

The Truth About Fake News

Occasionally, the U.S. mainstream media even acknowledges that fact. For instance, last November, The New York Times, which was then flogging the Russia-linked “fake news” theme, ran a relatively responsible article about a leading “fake news” Web site that the Times tracked down. It turned out to be an entrepreneurial effort by an unemployed Georgian student using a Web site in Tbilisi to make some money by promoting pro-Trump stories, whether true or not.

The owner of the Web site, 22-year-old Beqa Latsabidse, said he had initially tried to push stories favorable to Hillary Clinton but that proved unprofitable so he switched to publishing anti-Clinton and pro-Trump articles, including made-up stories. In other words, the Times found no Russian connection.

The Times article on Wednesday revealed the additional problem of Google ads placed on mainstream Internet sites leading readers to bogus news sites to get clicks and thus advertising dollars. And, it turns out that PolitiFact and Snopes were at least unwittingly profiting off these entrepreneurial ventures by running their ads. Again, there was no claim here of Russian “links.” It was all about good old American greed.

But the even larger Internet problem is that many “reputable” news sites, such as AOL, lure readers into clicking on some sensationalistic or misleading headline, which takes readers to a story that is often tabloid trash or an extreme exaggeration of what the headline promised.

This reality about the Internet should be the larger context in which the Russia-gate story plays out, the miniscule nature of this Russian “meddling” even if these “suspected ... links to Russia” — as the Times initially described the 470 Facebook pages — turn out to be true.

But there are no lucrative grants going to “researchers” who would put the trickle of alleged Russian “sewage” into the context of the vast flow of Internet “sewage” that is even flowing through the esteemed “fact-checking” sites of PolitiFact and Snopes.

There are also higher newspaper sales and better TV ratings if the mainstream media keeps turning up new angles on Russia-gate, even as some of the old ones fall away as inconsequential or meaningless (such as the Senate Intelligence Committee dismissing earlier controversies over Sen. Jeff Sessions’s brief meeting with the Russian ambassador at the Mayflower Hotel and minor changes in the Republican platform).

Saying ‘False’ Is ‘True’

And, there is the issue of who decides what’s true. PolitiFact continues to defend its false claim that Hillary Clinton was speaking the truth when — in referencing leaked Democratic emails last October — she claimed that the 17 U.S. intelligence agencies “have all concluded that these espionage attacks, these cyberattacks, come from the highest levels of the Kremlin, and they are designed to influence our election.”

That claim was always untrue because a reference to a consensus of the 17 intelligence agencies suggests a National Intelligence Estimate or similar product that seeks the

judgments of the entire intelligence community. **No NIE or community-wide study was ever done on this topic.**

Only later — in January 2017 — did a small subset of the intelligence community, what Director of National Intelligence James Clapper described as “hand-picked” analysts from three agencies — the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation — issue an “assessment” blaming the Russians while acknowledging a lack of actual evidence.

In other words, the Jan. 6 “assessment” was comparable to the “stovepiped” intelligence that influenced many of the mistaken judgments of President George W. Bush’s administration. In “stovepiped” intelligence, **a selected group of analysts is closeted away and develops judgments without the benefit of other experts who might offer contradictory evidence or question the groupthink.**

So, in many ways, Clinton’s statement was the opposite of true both when she said it in 2016 and later in 2017 when she repeated it in direct reference to the Jan. 6 assessment. If PolitiFact really cared about facts, it would have corrected its earlier claim that Clinton was telling the truth, but the fact-checking organization wouldn’t budge — even after The New York Times and The Associated Press ran corrections.

In this context, PolitiFact showed its contempt even for conclusive evidence — testimony from former DNI Clapper (corroborated by former CIA Director John Brennan) that the 17-agency claim was false. Instead, PolitiFact was determined to protect Clinton’s false statement from being described for what it was: false.

Of course, maybe PolitiFact is suffering from the arrogance of its elite status as an arbiter of truth with its position on Google’s First Draft coalition, a collection of mainstream news outlets and fact-checkers which gets to decide what information is true and what is not true — for algorithms that then will exclude or downplay what’s deemed “false.”

So, if PolitiFact says something is true — even if it’s false — it becomes “true.” Thus, it’s perhaps not entirely ironic that PolitiFact would collect money from Google ads placed on its site by advertisers of fake news.

- *Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s.*

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/48040.htm>

Hillary Clinton, Julian Assange and the media war on the truth

The ABC Four Corners interview with Hillary Clinton, aired this week, is an outstanding example of smear and censorship by omission, writes John Pilger.

*John Pilger
Independent Australia
21 October 2017*

ON 16 OCTOBER, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation aired an interview with Hillary Clinton — one of many to promote her score-settling book about why she was not elected President of the United States.

Wading through the Clinton book, *What Happened*, is an unpleasant experience, like a stomach upset. Smears and tears. Threats and enemies. “They” (voters) were brainwashed and herded against her by the odious Donald Trump in cahoots with sinister Slavs sent from the great darkness known as Russia, assisted by an Australian “nihilist”, Julian Assange.

In the New York Times, there was a striking photograph of a female reporter consoling Clinton, having just interviewed her. The lost leader was, above all, 'absolutely a feminist'. **The thousands of women’s lives this “feminist” destroyed while in government — Libya, Syria, Honduras — were of no interest.**

In the New York magazine, Rebecca Trainster wrote that Clinton was finally 'expressing some righteous anger'. It was even hard for her to smile: 'so hard that the muscles in her face ache'. Surely, she concluded, 'if we allowed women’s resentments the same bearing we allow men’s grudges, America would be forced to reckon with the fact that all these angry women might just have a point'.

Drivel such as this, trivialising women’s struggles, marks the media hagiographies of Hillary Clinton. **Her political extremism and warmongering are of no consequence. Her problem, wrote Trainster, was a 'damaging infatuation with the email story'. The truth, in other words.**

The leaked emails of Clinton’s campaign manager, John Podesta, revealed a direct connection between Clinton and the Foundation and funding of organised jihadism in the Middle East and Islamic State (IS). The ultimate source of most Islamic terrorism, Saudi Arabia, was central to her career.

One email, in 2014, sent by Clinton to Podesta soon after she stepped down as U.S. Secretary of State, discloses that Islamic State is funded by the governments of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Clinton accepted huge donations from both governments for the Clinton Foundation.

As Secretary of State, she approved the world’s biggest ever arms sale to her benefactors in Saudi Arabia, worth more than \$80 billion. Thanks to her, U.S. arms sales to the world — for use in stricken countries like Yemen — doubled.

This was revealed by WikiLeaks and published by The New York Times. **No one doubts the emails are authentic. The subsequent campaign to smear WikiLeaks and its editor-in-chief, Julian Assange, as “agents of Russia”, has grown into a spectacular fantasy known as “Russiagate”.** The “plot” is said to have been signed off by Vladimir Putin himself. There is not a shred of real evidence.

The ABC (Australia) interview with Clinton is an outstanding example of smear and censorship by omission. I would say it is a model.

“No one,” the interviewer, Sarah Ferguson, says to Clinton, “could fail to be moved by the pain on your face at that moment [of the inauguration of Trump] Do you remember how visceral it was for you?”

Having established Clinton's visceral suffering, Ferguson asks about "Russia's role".

CLINTON: I think Russia affected the perceptions and views of millions of voters, we now know. I think that their intention coming from the very top with Putin was to hurt me and to help Trump.

FERGUSON: How much of that was a personal vendetta by Vladimir Putin against you?

CLINTON: ... I mean he wants to destabilise democracy. He wants to undermine America, he wants to go after the Atlantic Alliance and we consider Australia kind of a ... an extension of that ...

The opposite is true. It is Western armies that are massing on Russia's border for the first time since the Russian Revolution, 100 years ago.

FERGUSON: How much damage did [Julian Assange] do personally to you?

CLINTON: Well, I had a lot of history with him because I was Secretary of State when ah WikiLeaks published a lot of very sensitive ah information from our State Department and our Defence Department.

What Clinton fails to say — and her interviewer fails to remind her — is that in 2010, WikiLeaks revealed that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had ordered a secret intelligence campaign targeted at the United Nations leadership, including the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon and the permanent Security Council representatives from China, Russia, France and the UK.

A classified directive, signed by Clinton, was issued to U.S. diplomats in July 2009, demanding forensic technical details about the communications systems used by top U.N. officials, including passwords and personal encryption keys used in private and commercial networks.

This was known as Cablegate. It was lawless spying.

A classified directive which appears to blur the line between diplomacy and spying was issued to US diplomats under Hillary Clinton's name in July 2009, demanding forensic technical details about the communications systems used by top UN officials, including passwords and personal encryption keys used in private and commercial networks for official communications.

It called for detailed biometric information "on key UN officials, to include undersecretaries, heads of specialised agencies and their chief advisers, top SYG [secretary general] aides, heads of peace operations and political field missions, including force commanders" as well as intelligence on Ban's "management and decision-making style and his influence on the secretariat". A parallel intelligence directive sent to diplomats in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi said biometric data included DNA, fingerprints and iris scans.

Washington also wanted credit card numbers, email addresses, phone, fax and pager numbers and even frequent-flyer account numbers for UN figures and "biographic and biometric information on UN Security Council permanent representatives".

The secret "national human intelligence collection directive" was sent to US missions at the UN in New York, Vienna and Rome; 33 embassies and consulates, including those in London, Paris and Moscow.



Mr Ivan Johnson

@MrIvanJohnson



@ChrisCuomo @JustinRaimondo re #podestaemails how about them apples?

"US diplomats spied on UN leadership"theguardian.com/world/2010/nov...

11:22 AM - Oct 17, 2016



CLINTON: He [Assange] is very clearly a tool of Russian intelligence. And ah, he has done their bidding.

Clinton offered no evidence to back up this serious accusation, nor did Ferguson challenge her.

CLINTON: You don't see damaging negative information coming out about the Kremlin on WikiLeaks. You didn't see any of that published.

This was false. **WikiLeaks has published a massive number of documents on Russia — more than 800,000, most of them critical, many of them used in books and as evidence in court cases.**

CLINTON: So I think Assange has become a kind of nihilistic opportunist who does the bidding of a dictator.

FERGUSON: Lots of people, including in Australia, think that Assange is a martyr for free speech and freedom of information. How would you describe him? Well, you've just described him as a nihilist.

CLINTON: Yeah, well, and a tool. I mean he's a tool of Russian intelligence. And if he's such a, you know, martyr of free speech, why doesn't WikiLeaks ever publish anything coming out of Russia?

Again, Ferguson said nothing to challenge this or correct her.

(Video: <https://independentaustralia.net/business/business-display/clinton-assange-and-the-war-on-truth,10845>)

CLINTON: **There was a concerted operation between WikiLeaks and Russia** and most likely people in the United States to weaponise that information, to make up stories ... to help Trump.

FERGUSON: Now, along with some of those outlandish stories, there was information that was revealed about the Clinton Foundation that at least in some of the voters' minds seemed to associate you

CLINTON: Yeah, but it was false!

FERGUSON: ... with the peddling of information ...

CLINTON: It was false! It was totally false!

FERGUSON: Do you understand how difficult it was for some voters to understand the amounts of money that the [Clinton] Foundation is raising, the confusion with the consultancy that was also raising money, getting gifts and travel and so on for Bill Clinton that even Chelsea had some issues with?

CLINTON: Well you know, I'm sorry, Sarah, I mean I, I know the facts

The ABC interviewer lauded Clinton as “the icon of your generation”. She asked her nothing about the enormous sums she creamed off from Wall Street, such as the \$675,000 she received for speaking at Goldman Sachs, one of the banks at the centre of the 2008 crash. Clinton's greed deeply upset the kind of voters she abused as “deplorables”.

Clearly looking for a cheap headline in the Australian press, Ferguson asked her if Trump was “a clear and present danger to Australia” and got her predictable response.

This high-profile journalist made no mention of Clinton’s own “clear and present danger” to the people of Iran whom she once threatened to “obliterate totally”, and the 40,000 Libyans who died in the attack on Libya in 2011 that Clinton orchestrated. Flushed with excitement, the Secretary of State rejoiced at the gruesome murder of the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi. [\[Video\]](#)

“Libya was Hillary Clinton's war”, Julian Assange said in a filmed interview with me last year.

“Barack Obama initially opposed it. Who was the person championing it? Hillary Clinton. That's documented throughout her emails ... there's more than 1,700 emails out of the 33,000 Hillary Clinton emails that we've published, just about Libya. It's not that Libya has cheap oil. She perceived the removal of Gaddafi and the overthrow of the Libyan state — **something that she would use in her run-up to the general election for president.**”

“So, in late 2011, there is an internal document called the Libya Tick Tock that was produced for Hillary Clinton, and it's the chronological description of how she was the central figure in the destruction of the Libyan state, which resulted in around 40,000 deaths within Libya; jihadists moved in, ISIS moved in, **leading to the European refugee and migrant crisis.**”

“Not only did you have people fleeing Libya, people fleeing Syria, the destabilisation of other African countries as a result of arms flows, but the Libyan state itself was no longer able to control the movement of people through it.”

This — not Clinton’s “visceral” pain in losing to Trump nor the rest of the self-serving scuttlebutt in her ABC interview — was the story. Clinton shared responsibility for massively de-stabilising the Middle East, which led to the death, suffering and flight of thousands of women, men and children.

Ferguson raised not a word of it. Clinton repeatedly defamed Assange, who was neither defended nor offered a right of reply on his own country’s State broadcaster.

In a tweet from London, Assange cited the ABC's own Code of Practice, which states: 'Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.'



Following the ABC broadcast, Ferguson's executive producer, Sally Neighbour, retweeted the following: 'Assange is Putin's bitch. We all know it!'

The slander, since deleted, was even used as a link to the ABC interview captioned 'Assange is Putins (sic) b****. We all know it!'



In the years I have known Julian Assange, I have watched a vituperative personal campaign try to stop him and WikiLeaks. It has been a frontal assault on whistleblowing, on free speech and free journalism, all of which are now under sustained attack from governments and corporate internet controllers.

The first serious attacks on Assange came from *The Guardian*, which, like a spurned lover, turned on its besieged former source, having hugely profited from WikiLeaks' disclosures. With not a penny going to Assange or WikiLeaks, a *Guardian* book led to a lucrative Hollywood movie deal. Assange was portrayed as "callous" and a "damaged personality".

It was as if a rampant jealousy could not accept that his remarkable achievements stood in marked contrast to that of his detractors in the "mainstream" media. It is like watching the guardians of the *status quo*, regardless of age, struggling to silence real dissent and prevent the emergence of the new and hopeful.

Today, Assange remains a political refugee from the war-making dark state of which Donald Trump is a caricature and Hillary Clinton the embodiment. **His resilience and courage are astonishing.** Unlike him, his tormentors are cowards.

[Video](#): Assange on Hillary Clinton and the destruction of Libya

<https://independentaustralia.net/business/business-display/clinton-assange-and-the-war-on-truth,10845>

Journalist who called Assange ‘criminal’ over rape claims faces own sex assault allegations

RT

24 Oct. 2017

A journalist with Swedish daily Aftonbladet who reportedly referred to WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange as a “criminal” is himself in hot water. He’s accused of rape and sexual assault—including of underage girls.

The allegations against **Fredrik Virtanen**, who also hosts his own talk show on Swedish TV8, emerged as part of the #MeToo social media campaign. The campaign, which surged in popularity after the sex scandal surrounding Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, encourages women to speak up to share their experiences of sexual harassment.

The first accusation against Virtanen was made by Swedish feminist activist, journalist and actress Cissi Wallin, who claimed last week that Virtanen raped her back in 2006, when she was 21. In 2010, Wallin said an “older media man with power” had sexually assaulted her and **wanted** to push his genitals into her mouth, but did not give his name, Nyheter24 reported.

“I cannot be quiet anymore,” Wallin said in her Instagram post. The journalist added that she should “have screamed his name long ago,” but was silent as the journalist’s representative called her “bosses and so on, and dubbed me a ‘crazy mythomaniac.’”

Virtanen himself was a critic of Assange over rape charges, which were subsequently dropped. But before the case was abandoned, the journalist had referred to the whistleblower as “criminal” and said he seemed to become “more and more cracked,” according to Swedish Doctors for Human Rights (SWEDHR).

Swedish crime writer Camilla Läckberg voiced her support to Wallin and said she was ashamed that she had also been silent for years over many other testimonies against Virtanen.

“Cissi is not alone, I’ve heard from so many others about the same man. For years. Still silence,” Läckberg wrote on Instagram.

Following the posts several more cases came into light, claiming that the journalist sexually assaulted 14, 16 and 19-year-old victims.

Fridah Jönsson who runs a podcast on contraception, stepped up to support Wallin’s accusations against Virtanen. Jönsson said that Virtanen asked if she wanted to lie with him when she was just 14, as she wrote him on Facebook. The woman attached the screenshot of the message to her Instagram post.

Swedish media reported about two more women, who claimed that the journalist raped or sexually assaulted them. One of them, now a 26-year-old woman, said that 10 years ago Virtanen was trying to **force** her to go to his apartment and to drink alcohol, despite being just 16. Another testimony reportedly says that Virtanen **tried** to rape a 19-year-old woman in the southern Swedish city of Eskilstuna 17 years ago, according to Samhällsnytt website.

As the story emerged, the #virtanengate hashtag has begun spreading on social media, with some users accusing Swedish mainstream media of being silent over the scandal.

Meanwhile, Aftonbladet has launched an internal investigation, Swedish SVT reports citing the newspaper's chief editor Sofia Olsson Olsén. She also said their employee has taken a timeout in the wake of the scandal.

<https://www.rt.com/news/407615-assange-critic-rape-allegations/>

WHISTLEBLOWER JULIAN ASSANGE SOUNDS OFF ON #METOO TWITTER CAMPAIGN

BEATRICE DUPUY
NEWSWEEK
10/23/2017

Julian Assange, the whistleblower once accused of rape, compared the men accused by sexual assault victims in the #MeToo campaign to black men being lynched after being wrongly accused of raping white women. *[Not really. He suggests that "a hell of a lot more black men" would have been lynched if the current mood and ethos prevailed in those days. – A.B.]*

Assange posted on Twitter asking how women posting with the #MeToo hashtag would have reacted back when the lynching of black men accused of sexual misconduct against white women was a common occurrence.

"All I can say is thank god the Twittermob wasn't around in the Old South: there would have been a hell of a lot more black men swinging from trees as tweeters said: 'I believe the woman. He's definitely a rapist. #metoo,'" Assange tweeted.

Many people called out the founder of WikiLeaks for his tweet, with some reminding him that he was accused of rape and molestation in two incidents in 2010.

"Is that why you're hiding in a cupboard from being questioned on sex abuse allegations?" said Twitter user Art Steventon. "You have zero agency on this subject." *[Actually, having been victimized by false accusations of sexual abuse, he has considerable "agency" on this subject. –A.B.]*

Other users called the tweet a disgusting analogy, with some saying Assange wants rape victims to keep quiet.

James @elboneman

Of course you want victims of sexual assault to keep quiet. It's why you're stuck in an embassy basement right now rapey.[???

2:29 AM - Oct 21, 2017

The #MeToo campaign, started by Tarana Burke, went viral on social media when actress Alyssa Milano posted a tweet urging women to come forward with their stories

of sexual harassment. The post came after scores of women in Hollywood accused now-disgraced movie executive Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment and rape....

Assange followed his tweet with another post on Saturday that also didn't sit well with social media. He said he wanted to let women in on a "male secret": that men who call themselves feminists are "predatory sleaze bags."

Julian Assange @JulianAssange

Women, I will let you in on a male secret. Men know that constantly self-proclaiming male 'feminists' are often predatory sleaze bags. They are intensely disliked by other men because of their manipulative qualities and not, in general, because they are viewed to be sex traitors.

4:31 PM - Oct 21, 2017

The post was an apparent reference to Weinstein, who was known for contributing to causes that supported women's equality despite his long history of allegedly abusing them.

Assange linked to a story about a retired Swedish police chief who had tried to end sexism in the police force but was also accused [*convicted and imprisoned –A.B.*] of sex trafficking and rape. Assange compared the chief to Weinstein.

Social media users began to poke fun at Assange for his "male secret comment," with some arguing that Assange was trying to dissuade men from becoming feminists.

FREE ASSANGE NOW @AssangeFreedom

Replying to @mooooo000 @JulianAssange

There were never any sex charges! Thats media smear!

Julian speaks his truth boldly like a real man should! Like a leader of men should!

Thorlaug Agustsdotti @thorlaug

This has got to be a joke. "A real man" hiding in a basement because of rape charges trying to discourage men from supporting women's rights

11:09 AM - Oct 22, 2017

Assange has spent nearly seven years living in the embassy after the accusations of sexual harassment were aired. Assange tried to clear his name in 2016 when he claimed the sex with the woman accusing him of rape was "entirely innocent" and consensual.

After Swedish authorities dropped the rape charge, his lawyers said in May that he would stay at the embassy until it was clear whether or not the U.S. would extradite him for leaking classified military information.

Assange's lawyer Melinda Taylor previously told Newsweek that her client would remain in the embassy until "the ongoing national security prosecution in the United States" had ended.

WikiLeaks then released a statement in May on Assange's stay in the embassy.

"UK refuses to confirm or deny whether it has already received a US extradition warrant for Julian Assange. Focus now moves to UK," the group said in a tweet.

http://www.newsweek.com/julian-assange-sounds-me-too-campaign-690950?piano_t=1

Assange Says WikiLeaks Rejected Request by Data Firm Tied to Trump

NICHOLAS CONFESSORE

N.Y. TIMES

OCT. 25, 2017

The WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said on Wednesday that he had rebuffed a request for help last year from the head of a data firm that worked for Donald J. Trump and is now facing congressional scrutiny.

On Twitter, Mr. Assange said he had been approached before the 2016 election by Alexander Nix, the chief executive of Cambridge Analytica, which worked for Mr. Trump during the final months of the campaign. Mr. Assange did not disclose what kind of help Mr. Nix sought, only that he had declined the request.

“I can confirm an approach by Cambridge Analytica,” Mr. Assange wrote, “and can confirm that it was rejected by WikiLeaks.”

But The Daily Beast reported on Wednesday that Mr. Nix had emailed Mr. Assange looking for copies of more than 30,000 emails that were deleted from Hillary Clinton’s private server and never publicly released. Mrs. Clinton has said that the emails were personal in nature.

A spokesman for Cambridge Analytica did not respond to requests for comment on Wednesday evening.

It is not clear precisely when the two men corresponded. CNN reported on Wednesday that the emails were exchanged in the summer of 2016. Cambridge Analytica was being paid by a rival campaign — that of Senator Ted Cruz of Texas — through early June, according to Federal Election Commission records. By early summer, Cambridge Analytica had also begun wooing the Trump campaign, which hired the firm in June. The firm’s principal owner is the conservative billionaire Robert Mercer, who backed Mr. Cruz during the campaign before switching his allegiance to Mr. Trump.

It is also unclear why Mr. Nix would have believed that Mr. Assange had copies of the missing emails. Earlier last year, WikiLeaks had posted a searchable database of more than 50,000 emails from Mrs. Clinton’s private server, all of them previously released by the State Department. But Mr. Trump himself seemed eager to find the missing emails: At a campaign rally in July, Mr. Trump publicly asked Russia to obtain the deleted emails.

“Russia, if you’re listening, I hope you’re able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing,” Mr. Trump said.

The communication with Mr. Nix could more closely link the Trump campaign and Mr. Assange, whose website has published thousands of emails stolen from Democratic officials. United States intelligence agencies believe the documents were originally obtained by Russia-linked hackers. Another Trump adviser, the political consultant Roger Stone, has disclosed that he was in touch with Mr. Assange through intermediaries; during the campaign, Mr. Stone occasionally previewed WikiLeaks releases of stolen emails from Democratic officials.

Cambridge Analytica has drawn criticism inside and outside the Republican Party, both for its claim to be able to classify voters by psychology and for exaggerating its role in Mr. Trump's upset victory. Former Trump campaign officials have said publicly and privately over the last year that Cambridge functioned as one of several data and analytics vendors for the campaign. While the Republican National Committee provided the campaign's core voter data, those officials said, Cambridge provided personnel to the campaign and helped develop target lists for digital advertising and online fund-raising, among other tasks.

Cambridge Analytica has since provided documents to congressional investigators investigating potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian interests. On Tuesday, Brad Parscale, a former senior Trump campaign official who oversaw Mr. Trump's digital and analytics vendors, testified before the House Intelligence Committee.

On Wednesday, Michael Glassner, executive director for Mr. Trump's re-election committee, issued a statement that conspicuously did not mention Cambridge Analytica and seemed intended only to distance Mr. Trump from the firm.

"We as a campaign made the choice to rely on the voter data of the Republican National Committee to help elect President Donald J. Trump," Mr. Glassner said. "Any claims that voter data from any other source played a key role in the victory are false." He did not mention the exchange between Mr. Nix and Mr. Assange.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/us/julian-assange-wikileaks-trump.html>

Julian Assange Says WikiLeaks Rejected Request From Trump-Linked Firm

A data firm reportedly offered to help with Hillary Clinton's emails.

*Nick Visser
Huffington Post
10/26/2017*

A data firm linked to the presidential campaign of Donald Trump approached WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange ahead of last year's election about emails from Hillary Clinton's private server, the Daily Beast reported Wednesday.

Assange confirmed on Twitter that Cambridge Analytica reached out to him last year, but did not specify what kind of help they offered or requested: "I can confirm an approach by Cambridge Analytica [prior to November last year] and can confirm that it was rejected by WikiLeaks."

Alexander Nix, the head of Cambridge Analytica, reportedly told several people in an email that he had contacted Assange about the 33,000 messages that were deleted from Clinton's account while she was secretary of state. **It's unclear what request Nix lodged with WikiLeaks, but The Wall Street Journal reported that the firm offered to help index the messages to make them more easily searchable.**

WikiLeaks already had a searchable database of more than 50,000 Clinton emails when Nix emailed Assange, The New York Times noted. But several other media outlets said the request could link the Trump campaign more closely to efforts by outside governments to influence the election. Some legal scholars shared similar speculations:

Many of the emails published by WikiLeaks ahead of the election were stolen from Democratic officials, including Clinton's campaign chair John Podesta. Although Assange has denied any connections to the Kremlin, U.S. intelligence agencies said the thefts were likely conducted by hackers linked to the Russian government. *[Former intelligence agents have demonstrated that to have been impossible. –A.B.]*

Last July, Trump publicly asked Russia to find Clinton's deleted emails, which she described as personal in nature.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said at a campaign rally.

Cambridge Analytica is partially owned by billionaire Robert Mercer, who initially backed Sen. Ted Cruz's (R-Texas) presidential bid. The firm began working with Trump in July 2016 and was ultimately paid more than \$5 million prior to the November election.

Nix also emailed Rebekah Mercer, Robert Mercer's daughter, to say he had reached out to WikiLeaks and lodged the database offer, CNN reported.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/julian-assange-wikileaks-cambridge-analytica_us_59f1655de4b0af27f5899697?section=us_theworldpost

'Delay is inexcusable' says Julian Assange as WikiLeaks offers \$100,000 reward for blocked JFK files

The Trump administration has given US intelligence agencies an additional six months to review and redact the remaining records.

*India Ashok
International Business Times
October 27, 2017*

The US National Archives and Records Administration (Nara) released 2,800 previously unreleased records pertaining to the assassination of President John F Kennedy, on 26 October. However, the release of hundreds of other related documents were reportedly blocked due to pressure from the CIA and the FBI.

The Trump administration reportedly bowed to pressure from US intelligence agencies, providing them with an additional six months to review and possibly redact the remaining unreleased records. WikiLeaks is now offering a \$100,000 (£76,223) bounty in exchange for the unreleased JFK files. "WikiLeaks issues a \$100,000 reward for the withheld JFK documents should they show violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error," the whistleblowing organisation tweeted yesterday.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange also took to Twitter to express outrage at the six-month delay to the release of some of the secret JFK records. **"The agencies have had**

literally 25 years to prepare for the scheduled release today. The delay is inexcusable," he wrote.

In another tweet, Assange took yet another jab at US intelligence agencies, claiming that the delay in full release of JFK records showed how the agencies are "determined to make Trump look weak by delaying JFK files after he promised their release today". [A more likely reason is that the withheld files include secrets that the deep state is anxious to keep secret. –A.B.]

News of the release of the JFK files were hyped by US President Donald Trump, who announced his approval of the files being made public through a tweet.

Trump said in a memo to the heads of US agencies that he had "no choice" but to accept the request for redactions, adding that the American people deserved access to as many of the JFK files as possible. "Therefore, I am ordering today that the veil finally be lifted," he wrote, Reuters reported.

A spokesperson for the CIA told Reuters that around 18,000 CIA records, part of the collection, remain unreleased. However, these documents will reportedly also be released eventually with just 1% of the material left redacted.

Julian Assange @JulianAssange

US intelligence agencies seem to be determined to make Trump look weak by delaying JFK files after he promised their release today....

The agencies have had literally 25 years to prepare for the scheduled release today.

The delay is inexcusable. @realDonaldTrump

10:39 PM — Oct 26, 2017

"Approximately 88% of the records in the Collection are open in full. An addition 11% are released in part with sensitive portions removed. Approximately 1% of documents identified as assassination-related remain withheld in full. All documents withheld either in part or in full were authorized for withholding by the Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB), an independent temporary agency that was in existence from 1994 to 1998," Nara said in a statement.

The White House said in a statement that the remaining records pertaining to the JFK assassination would be released later "on a rolling basis" by April 2018. The files will contain "redactions in only the rarest of circumstances," the statement added.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/delay-inexcusable-says-julian-assange-wikileaks-offers-100000-reward-blocked-jfk-files-1644769>

'Gandhian struggle' for Catalonia: Assange

Julian Assange has been a vocal supporter of Catalonia's independence from Spain.

AAP/SBS

2017-10-27

Julian Assange says Catalonia now faces a "Gandhian struggle" after the Catalan parliament declared independence from Spain in a contentious vote.

On Friday the Catalan parliament in Barcelona passed a motion declaring independence, however opposition parties boycotted the vote leaving the chamber half empty.

At the same time the Spanish Senate in Madrid approved direct rule of the prosperous region.

Mr Assange, the Australian founder of WikiLeaks, has been a vocal supporter of the Catalan independence push.

"An enormous defining Gandhian struggle will now commence in Catalonia to secure their declaration of independence against the full weight of the Spanish state, from the use of force, to financial interdiction, censorship, computer hacking, intelligence, propaganda and diplomacy," he tweeted following the Catalan vote.

"Spain failed to adapt to its diminishing leverage over Catalonia by moving towards a confederation or otherwise being more attractive to Catalans," he later tweeted. "If the chain is weak the carrots must be strong. The failure to flexibly adapt is rooted in Francoist structures, ideas-and families"

On October 1 the regional government held a referendum on independence, despite Spanish courts ruling it illegal, but the ballot was marred by violent clashes with police and a low turnout of 43 per cent.

Five people were hospitalised and more than 800 people reported injuries after clashes with Spanish police, who were condemned by Mr Assange at the time.

"Dear @JunckerEU. Is this 'respect for human dignity, freedom and democracy'? Activate article 7 and suspend Spain from the European Union for its clear violation of Article 2," he tweeted, referring to Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the EU.

The outspoken 45-year-old has been holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since June 2012 after seeking asylum to avoid extradition to Sweden to face a rape allegation.

Swedish prosecutors dropped investigations into the allegations in May, but Mr Assange still faces arrest by British police on a charge of skipping bail if he leaves the embassy.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/10/28/gandhian-struggle-catalonia-assange>

The Guardian, 2017-10-29



Last Wednesday, 11 months into Donald Trump's new world order, in the first year of normalisation, a sudden unblurring of lines took place. A shift. A door of perception swung open.

Because that was the day that the dramatis personae of two separate Trump-Russia scandals smashed headlong into one another. A high-speed news car crash between Cambridge Analytica and WikiLeaks, the two organisations that arguably had the most impact on 2016, coming together last week in one head-spinning scoop.

That day, we learned that Alexander Nix, the CEO of Cambridge Analytica, the controversial data firm that helped Trump to power, had contacted Julian Assange to ask him if he wanted "help" with WikiLeaks's stash of stolen emails.

That's the stash of stolen emails that had such a devastating impact on Hillary Clinton in the last months of the campaign. And this story brought WikiLeaks, which the head of the CIA describes as a "hostile intelligence service", directly together with the Trump campaign for which Cambridge Analytica worked. This is an amazing plot twist for the company owned by US billionaire Robert Mercer, which is already the subject of investigations by the House intelligence committee, the Senate intelligence committee, the FBI and, it was announced late on Friday night, the Senate judiciary committee.

So far, so American. These are US scandals involving US politics and the news made the headlines in US bulletins across US networks.

But it's also Cambridge Analytica, the data analytics company that has its headquarters in central London and which, following a series of articles about its role in Brexit in the Guardian and the Observer, is also being investigated, by the Electoral Commission and the Information Commissioner's Office. The company that was spun out of a British military contractor, is headed by an old Etonian and that **responded to our stories earlier this year by threatening to sue us**. It's our Cambridge it's named after, not the American one, and it was here that it processed the voter files of 240 million US citizens.

It's also here that this "hostile intelligence service" — WikiLeaks — is based. The Ecuadorian embassy is just a few miles, as the crow flies, from Cambridge Analytica's head office. Because this is not just about America. It's about Britain, too. This is transatlantic. It's not possible to separate Britain and the US in this whole sorry mess — and I say this as someone who has spent months trying. Where we see this most clearly is in **that other weird WikiLeaks connection: Nigel Farage**. Because that moment in March when Farage was **caught** tripping down the steps of the Ecuadorian embassy was the last moment the lines suddenly became visible. **That the ideological overlaps between WikiLeaks and Trump and Brexit were revealed to be not just lines, but a channel of communication.**

Because if there's one person who's in the middle of all of this, but who has escaped any proper scrutiny, it's Nigel Farage. **That's Nigel Farage, who** led the Leave.EU campaign, which is being investigated by the Electoral Commission alongside Cambridge Analytica, about whether the latter made an "impermissible donation" of services to the leave campaign. Nigel Farage who visited Donald Trump and then Julian Assange. Who is friends with Steve Bannon and Robert Mercer. Who headed an organisation — Ukip — which has multiple, public, visible but almost entirely unreported Russian connections. Who is paid by the Russian state via the broadcaster

RT, which was banned last week from Twitter. And who appears like clockwork on British television without any word of this.

This is a power network that involves WikiLeaks and Farage, and Cambridge Analytica and Farage, and Robert Mercer and Farage. Steve Bannon, former vice president of Cambridge Analytica, and Farage. It's Nigel Farage and Brexit and Trump and Cambridge Analytica and WikiLeaks... and, if the Senate intelligence committee and the House intelligence committee and the FBI are on to anything at all, somewhere in the middle of all that, Russia.

Try to follow this on a daily basis and it's one long headspin: a spider's web of relationships and networks of power and patronage and alliances that spans the Atlantic and embraces data firms, thinktanks and media outlets. It is about complicated corporate structures in obscure jurisdictions, involving offshore funds funnelled through the black-box algorithms of the platform tech monopolists. That it's eye-wateringly complicated and geographically diffuse is not a coincidence. Confusion is the charlatan's friend, noise its accessory. The babble on Twitter is a convenient cloak of darkness.

Yet it's also quite simple. In a well-functioning democracy, a well-functioning press and a well-functioning parliament would help a well-functioning judiciary do its job. Britain is not that country. There is a vacuum where questions should be, the committees, the inquiries, the headlines on the TV bulletins. **What was Nigel Farage doing in the Ecuadorian embassy? More to the point: why has no public official asked him?** Why is he giving speeches — for money — in the US? Who's paying him? I know this because my weirdest new hobby of 2017 is to harry Arron Banks, the Bristol businessman who was Ukip and Leave.EU's main funder, and Andy Wigmore, Leave.EU's comms man and Belize's trade attache to the US, across the internet late at night. Wigmore told me about this new US venture — an offshore-based political consultancy working on Steve Bannon-related projects — in a series of tweets. Is it true? Who knows? Leave.EU has learned from its Trumpian friends that black is white and white is black and these half-facts are a convenient way of diffusing scandal and obscuring truth.

What on earth was Farage doing advancing Calexit — Californian Brexit? And why did I find a photo of him hanging out with Dana Rohrabacher, the Californian known in the US press as "Putin's favourite congressman"? The same Dana Rohrabacher who's met with Don Trump Jr's Russian lawyer and — wait for it — also visited Julian Assange in the Ecuadorian embassy. And who is now interceding on his behalf to obtain a pardon from Don Trump Junior's dad.

(You got this? Farage visited Trump, then Assange, then Rohrabacher. Rohrabacher met Don Trump's Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya. Then Assange. And is now trying to close the circle with Trump.)

In these post-truth times, journalists are fighting the equivalent of a firestorm with a bottle of water and a wet hankie. We desperately need help. We need public pressure. We need parliament to step up and start asking proper questions. There may be innocent answers to all these questions. Let's please just ask them.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/28/trump-assange-bannon-farage-bound-together-in-unholy-alliance>

Hillary Clinton Keeps Pointing Fingers

Hillary Clinton blames others for last year's electoral defeat, never recognizing that many Americans — both Democrats and Republicans — found her public record appalling.

*Dennis J Bernstein and John Pilger
Consortium News
October 30, 2017*

Because of the failure of the corporate press to report fully on Hillary Clinton's policy failures throughout her career, it was difficult for voters to perceive how dangerous her presidency might have been, although many Democratic voters bolted to Bernie Sanders and enough Americans voted against her last November to give Donald Trump his narrow Electoral College victory.

In the following conversation with the legendary filmmaker and muckraking journalist John Pilger, we leap off from his recent article regarding Clinton's new book and her recent appearance on Australian Broadcasting (ABC).

In the interview, I delve with Pilger into the career of Clinton as a hawkish U.S. senator who continued her interventionism as Secretary of State, not only voting for the Iraq War in 2002 but protecting the 2009 coup in Honduras and pressing for the "regime change" war in Libya that turned the once-prosperous country into a failed state. She also chuckled at the news of the rape-murder of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Dennis Bernstein: Hillary Clinton has been featured on Australian Media to talk about her new book and apparently to blame anyone and everyone for the fact that she lost the election to Donald Trump.

John Pilger: Actually, the interview I wrote about was conducted in New York but it was broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on their flagship current affairs program called "Four Corners." The interviewer was someone with a reputation for hard-hitting interviews named Sarah Ferguson. I thought it was an extraordinary display of Clinton's attempting to justify herself after all these months.

When I was in New York recently I read quite a few interviews conducted by female reporters with Hillary Clinton in which she was portrayed as a feminist and therefore all else should be set aside if not forgiven. This was what came across in the Sarah Ferguson interview. It opens with "your pain seemed almost visceral, describe your pain to us." It was as if she were being invited to lie on a therapist's couch instead of being interviewed. This has run right through interviews with Clinton by women journalists. The whole question of identity politics has such potency now that a corrupt politician who deceived and abused the electorate can be held up as a martyr.

There is nothing in the interview, for example, about why she described ordinary Americans who might have voted for Trump as "irredeemable and deplorable." Nothing about how she earned from Goldman Sachs speeches a total of about \$670,000, displaying the sort of greed that upset ordinary people in the US.

And of course there is the central issue of the emails leaked by WikiLeaks, which showed how involved Clinton has been with the whole violent, corrupt world of the

Gulf and jihadism. The very people backing jihadism, especially Saudi Arabia, were donating large sums to the Clinton Foundation.

All this is missing from this and other interviews. It shows how the power of identity politics can eclipse the facts. **There was even a photograph I saw in New York of a reporter with her arm around Clinton, consoling her.**

Dennis Bernstein: The feeling you get in watching this whole thing unfold is that this is a full-court press to distract from the content of the released emails.

John Pilger: It is very easy to distract attention from something if you simply don't mention it. **I have always felt that the most virulent form of censorship is censorship by omission.** The whole nefarious state of the Clintons and the Clinton Foundation is simply left out of these interviews. Hillary Clinton is able to plead a kind of special case for herself because she is a woman and a feminist.

Dennis Bernstein: After this interview with the Australian Broadcasting Company, the producer referred to Julian Assange as "Putin's bitch."

John Pilger: The producer re-tweeted a troll message to advertise the interview with Clinton, and especially the component in which she defames Julian Assange. You have to remember, **this is the state broadcaster in Australia, which is Julian Assange's country. Assange pointed out that the ABC's code was meant to prevent this kind of bias.** It was a particularly bad interview but in a sense it was also a very typical one. It allowed a figure of great power and contention to say anything she wanted to say without challenge.

There was no mention of Libya in all of this. Libya was Hillary Clinton's invasion. It was Hillary Clinton who famously rejoiced on camera the gruesome murder of Colonel Gaddafi. 40,000 people died in this criminal US and NATO invasion. None of this was mentioned, no solidarity with the women who died. **There is no solidarity with the women who will suffer as a result of the coup in Honduras,** which Clinton signed off on as secretary of state. Simply to make an exception of women like Hillary Clinton because she is a woman and would have been the first female president of the United States seems to me to be a very powerful form of censorship what we should be aware of.

Dennis Bernstein: Hillary Clinton laughed at Qaddafi's on-camera assassination. She thought that was funny. She bragged about sustaining the coup in Honduras over the opposition of all the presidents in Central America, which has now led to Honduras being the murder capital of the world.

John Pilger: Her notoriety should be clear in the public consciousness. There she is on video saying, "[We] came, [we] saw, he died." Gaddafi was murdered publicly with a knife. His convoy, which was trying to escape from Libya, was only intercepted because NATO aircraft identified where it was. She gloated at the murder of this man. We should be enlightening people as to the corrupt and very violent nature of individuals such as Hillary Clinton. We are letting the public down if we buy into these identity politics stereotypes. I am sure there are many feminists who find Hillary Clinton and what she has done appalling. But the media still present this woman as something very different from Trump. **The grotesqueness of Trump has allowed many liberals in the United States to put aside the fact that Hillary Clinton really is the embodiment of a corrupt system.**

A companion piece to censorship is double standards. With Hillary Clinton, it is an incandescent double standard. Many feminists foolishly went along with her call to support the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 on the premise that it would free the women of Afghanistan from the Taliban. Actually, it changed the position of women very little but it caused a great deal of suffering in that country.

What we are seeing is an important issue— that of identity politics— being used as a cover for violent invasions of other countries. In the Australian interview the interviewer fed her the question, “How much damage did Julian Assange do to you personally?” Her answer was that she had a lot of history with him because she was secretary of state when WikiLeaks published a lot of very important information from our State Department and Defense Department. **What Clinton failed to say, and what the interviewer failed to ask her, was that in 2010 WikiLeaks revealed that Clinton had ordered a secret intelligence campaign targeted at the United Nations leadership.** This intelligence operation, signed by Clinton, went after things like credit card passwords and forensic details about the communication systems used by UN officials. It was by any measure totally lawless spying.

Dennis Bernstein: There is every indication that these key emails were leaked by someone at Democratic party headquarters who was upset that Hillary and the Democratic leadership undermined Bernie Sanders’ bid for the nomination.

John Pilger: I had a long, filmed interview with Julian Assange one year ago and I asked him outright where the Podesta emails had come from, if they had come from Russia, and he said no. It seems to me that there is every likelihood that these emails were the result of what you just described. Clinton really cut the ground from beneath Sanders. We know that the emails are completely authentic. They expose the Clinton Foundation and its greed and how important Saudi Arabia was to Hillary Clinton. **After Saudi Arabia and Qatar had donated generously to the Clinton Foundation, Clinton as secretary of state approved the biggest arms sales in history, something like a total of \$80 billion. As a result, total US arms sales to the world doubled.** That is big business, that is big war-making, and I would say that is big corruption.

Dennis Bernstein: It is not an exaggeration to say that she was a warmonger, that she was someone who embraced war.

John Pilger: Yes, she was. All the polls during the election campaign last year indicated that Clinton and Trump were two of the most despised candidates to ever run for president. I suppose the people’s memory of that has been clouded over by the awful presence of Trump.

Dennis Bernstein: Anyone concerned about the plight of Palestinians has to recall Operation Cast Lead—which killed around 2,200 people, including about 500 children, with the bombing of schools and hospitals. When Clinton was asked about that, she said, “Israel has the right to defend itself.”

John Pilger: Compared to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Trump is a bit of a wimp. After Obama was elected and before he was inaugurated, he was on vacation in Hawaii where he met with members of his National Security and Defense Department team and he approved support for Israel’s attack on Gaza. So **Obama’s first foreign policy act was to approve Israel’s onslaught on the people of Gaza.**

I think that wondering whether a politician like Clinton will ever do something requiring strong principles and a sense of social justice is really very naive. We have to see these people for what they are. **Both Clinton and Trump are a symptom of the system and people must start concentrating on the system and how to change it.**

Dennis J Bernstein is a host of "Flashpoints" on the Pacifica radio network and the author of Special Ed: Voices from a Hidden Classroom. You can access the audio archives at www.flashpoints.net.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/10/28/hillary-clinton-keeps-pointing-fingers/>

WikiLeaks Legally Obtained Clinton Emails From US State Dept.

Julian Assange announced that "thousands of Clinton emails" published by WikiLeaks were obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

*Sputnik
31.10.2017*

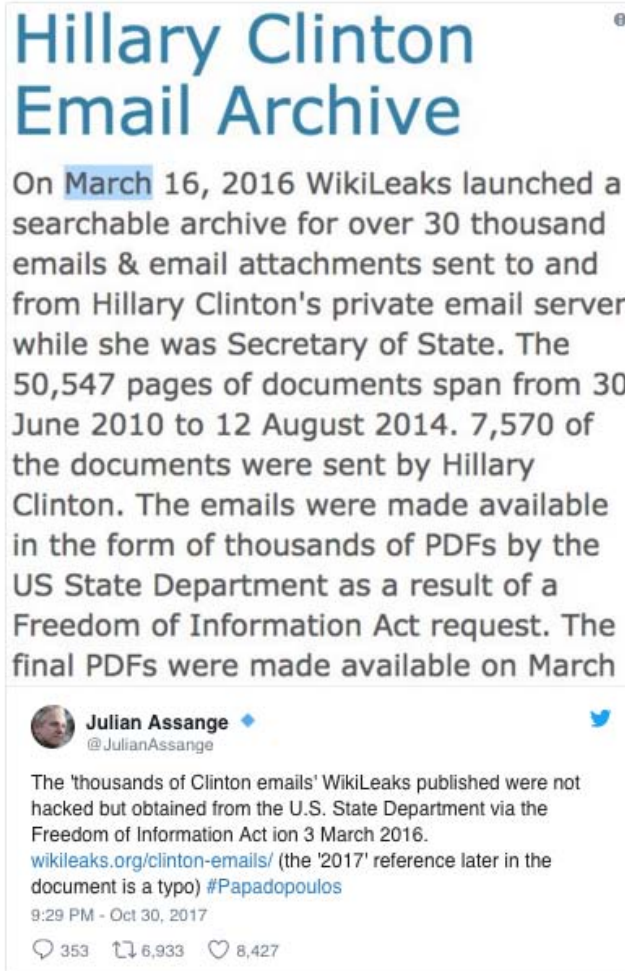
The emails of former US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, published by the WikiLeaks whistleblowing platform in 2016, were not hacked but legally obtained from the US State Department, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said.

"The 'thousands of Clinton emails' WikiLeaks published were not hacked but obtained from the U.S. State Department via the Freedom of Information Act on 3 March 2016," Assange wrote on Twitter.

In March 2016, WikiLeaks released an archive of more than 30,000 emails that have been sent to and from Clinton's private email server during her term as the US Secretary of State in 2009-2013.

Later in 2016, the website also published nearly 20,000 emails apparently hacked from the US Democratic National Committee, as well as emails hacked from the account of Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta.

Several US intelligence agencies said they suspected Russia to be behind the leaks, but provided no evidence to support the claims. Moscow has called the claims of the election interference absurd and a distraction from actual election fraud.



<https://sputniknews.com/us/201710311058677994-wikileaks-obtains-clinton-emails-state-dept/>

Assange Wouldn't Apply for Asylum in Russia Due to Political Situation

Sputnik
31.10.2017

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange told Russian journalist Vladimir Pozner in an interview that he was considering the possibility of applying for asylum in Russia, but later renounced the idea since Western media could have used that against him as the political situation remains tense.

Assange explained that even though he shared similar political views with former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, who received a residence permit in Russia after leaking classified documents pertaining to mass surveillance practices by US authorities, he decided that it was wiser to stay in a country that is not a political opponent to the West, such as Ecuador.

The WikiLeaks founder also refuted his alleged ties to the Russian government, as well as alleged attempts to hinder Hillary Clinton's election campaign on behalf of the Kremlin with his publications. **Assange explained that by making such statements Clinton had been seeking to escape her responsibility for incompetence and unpopularity**, which resulted into her defeat to Donald Trump during the presidential race last year.

According to Assange, the former US secretary of state was also intending to disrupt his support in his own country, Australia, through such allegations. He stressed that WikiLeaks had never received any information from any government.

The journalist also told Pozner that the UK authorities had spent tens of millions of dollars on monitoring him inside the embassy, **installed video cameras in the building across the road and even deployed a surveillance group in the department store nearby. He added that the authorities bribed the embassy employees to install intercepting devices on each floor of the building.**

Assange expressed the hope that one day he would be able to leave the Ecuadorian Embassy as a free man. The WikiLeaks founder noted, however, that there was a contingency plan in case he had serious health issues in the embassy, explaining that dying was scarier than spending two decades in the US prison.

The interview was filmed at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where Assange has been residing since 2012.

The WikiLeaks website was launched by Julian Assange in 2006. Since then, the site has released millions of classified diplomatic documents from around the world on numerous espionage practices, war crimes, torture and many other human rights violations. In July 2016, WikiLeaks published over 19,000 emails apparently hacked from the Democratic National Committee. A number of US intelligence agencies have concluded that Russian actors may have delivered the emails to WikiLeaks, but did not provide evidence to support such claims.

<https://sputniknews.com/europe/201710311058679050-assange-wont-asylum-russia-political-situation/>

Manhattan attack wouldn't have happened if CIA 'spent less time' arming terrorists — Assange

RT

1 Nov. 2017

WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange slammed the CIA, saying the deadly terrorist attack in New York overnight might not have happened if the agency investigated terrorists instead of training and arming them.

TrendsManhattan attack

"If the CIA spent more time investigating terrorists and less time training and arming them we might not have had today's truck attack in New York," the whistleblower tweeted following the attack in lower Manhattan that left eight people dead and a dozen injured on Tuesday.

The suspect, reportedly identified as 29-year-old Sayfullo Saipov, an Uzbekistan native, drove a rented truck onto a bike path near the World Trade Center memorial, striking several pedestrians and cyclists. The vehicle did not stop until it hit a school bus, then the suspect left his vehicle holding two “imitation firearms” and shouting “Allahu Akbar.” He was shot by police officers before being taken into custody.

The suspect reportedly had a note in his truck that said he committed the attack on behalf of Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL), law enforcement told NBC News.

<https://www.rt.com/news/408410-assange-cia-arms-terrorists/>

CIA wrote code 'to impersonate' Russia's Kaspersky Lab anti-virus company, WikiLeaks says

RT

9 Nov. 2017

WikiLeaks says it has published the source code for the CIA hacking tool ‘Hive,’ which **indicates that the agency-operated malware could mask itself under fake certificates and impersonate public companies**, namely Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab.

The CIA multi-platform hacking suite ‘Hive’ was able to impersonate existing entities to conceal suspicious traffic from the user being spied on, the source code of the malicious program indicates, WikiLeaks said on Thursday.

The extraction of information would therefore be misattributed to an impersonated company, and **at least three examples in the code show that Hive is able to impersonate Russian cybersecurity company Kaspersky Lab**, WikiLeaks stated.

“If the target organization looks at the network traffic coming out of its network, it is likely to misattribute the CIA exfiltration of data to uninvolved entities whose identities have been impersonated,” WikiLeaks said in a statement.

WikiLeaks began to publish documents on Hive in April this year, exposing the elaborate malware suite used by the CIA to hack, record and even control modern hi-tech appliances worldwide. Kaspersky Lab has repeatedly been accused by US officials of being involved in alleged Russian state-run hacking of the US presidential election.

WikiLeaks began to publish ‘Hive’ documents in April this year, exposing the elaborated malware suite used by the CIA to hack, record and even control modern hi-tech appliances worldwide. The most recent revelations are particularly interesting, as Kaspersky Lab has been repeatedly accused by US officials of being involved in the alleged Russian state-supervised hacking plot.

In September, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ordered all government agencies to stop using the company’s products and remove them from computers, citing “information security risks presented by the use of Kaspersky products on federal information systems.” Kaspersky Lab has repeatedly denied cooperating with

any government entity including Russia, stating that its products simply cannot be used for spying as they lack any functionality beyond the advertised one. In an unprecedented move, the company even opened its source code to independent review last month.

<https://www.rt.com/news/409376-cia-wrote-code-to-impersonate-kaspersky/>

‘Zero evidence’ that Russia hacked DNC, says NSA whistleblower

RT

9 Nov. 2017

NSA whistleblower William Binney spoke to RT about his recent meeting with CIA director Mike Pompeo, where they discussed accusations that Russia meddled in 2016 US presidential election by hacking the Democrats.

In an interview with RT America host Ed Schultz on Wednesday, **Binney said tests have “clearly showed” the DNC was not hacked by Russia before the 2016 presidential election, but that the data was downloaded locally.**

Binney met with CIA director Mike Pompeo on Wednesday to review analysis by the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), which challenged the notion that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) was hacked by Russia. In a letter to President Donald Trump, the group claims the “data was leaked (not hacked) by a person with physical access to DNC computers.”

After analyzing the data, VIPS concluded that the transfer simply does not support the claim the documents were hacked by Russian agents, as leaders of the US intelligence community claimed in a January report.

Binney also spoke with RT's Neil Harvey on Wednesday. During the meeting, Binney shared test findings gleaned on the transfer rate of data, which he said “clearly showed that it was a local download and not an international hack.”

“It was very clear it was a local download, because of the speeds and all,” Binney said, explaining how his colleagues set up a test between a data center in New Jersey and another in the UK, and could not reproduce the download that took place on July 5, 2016.

The approximately 16GB of data was downloaded in two bursts, totaling 87 seconds, with a 12-minute pause between them. “It had to be done locally,” Binney told RT America.

The data logs and the speed test were the only concrete evidence available for examination, he pointed out. **“Everything else is speculation,** and agenda- and emotionally-driven assertions.”

If the intelligence community had some factual evidence proving Russian hacking, that would be another matter, the NSA whistleblower said, but “so far they’ve produced nothing.”

When asked who could have been behind the leak, Binney said it may have been an “inside job,” but he couldn’t attribute it to anybody in particular, because “we never knew who did the download, or whether or not it went anywhere else.”

President John F. Kennedy presented aerial surveillance photos of Soviet missiles in Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis, Binney pointed out. Reagan presented Japanese radio intercepts of orders to shoot down the Korean airliner in 1983. No such evidence has been offered for the hacking accusation, though many lawmakers have described it as an act of war.

“They need to put up or shut up,” said Binney. He said he does not buy into such claims without any factual evidence, “and that’s basically what their situation is. They have zero evidence.”

However, if there was an agency who would be able to detect if the DNC was hacked, it would be the NSA, Binney said.

“If anybody did anything across the net, NSA has so many taps on the fiber network inside the US and around the world and so many traceroute programs embedded by the hundreds around the network, they would know where these packets went,” Binney told RT America.

The NSA and FBI “know a lot more than they’re telling the president,” Binney added.

The analysis from VIPS implies the intelligence community is not telling the Trump administration what really happened, Binney said. They don’t want the American people to hear the truth either, he added.

“They’re hiding this. They keep the population ignorant, uninformed so they can manipulate them any way they want,” Binney said. “This is the same thing the mainstream media is doing.”

Mainstream media outlets have branded the VIPS analysis as “disputed,” “fringe,” or a “conspiracy theory” (Washington Post, NBC, and CNN respectively) while failing to apply the same level of skepticism to the US intelligence community narrative.

On Wednesday, the NSA whistleblower was repeatedly called a “conspiracy theorist” in a CNN article about the meeting.

“That’s basically showing the shallow weakness of their argument,” Binney said. “They produce no facts whatsoever and simply throw labels at people to do character assassination.”

<https://www.rt.com/usa/409269-binney-cia-dnc-hack-meeting/#.WgNpgjdAGMU.facebook>

Assange Says Bloomberg Spread Propaganda on Alleged Russia Meddling in Catalonia

Assange has commented on the alleged Russian meddling in Catalonia's independence referendum amid the ongoing crisis in the region.

Sputnik

2017-11-09

MOSCOW — Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has stated that the Bloomberg news agency had published an unverified propaganda story concerning Catalonia, claiming that Russia allegedly influenced the region's residents during the independence referendum.

Assange was apparently referring to a report that cited an analyst at the Elcano Royal Institute saying that "unidentified Russians" had been allegedly posting both true and false messages on social networks during the referendum on October 1. These efforts were reportedly backed by Moscow-supported television, a claim that hasn't yet been commented on by the Russian authorities.

Accusations against Russia's alleged influence on Catalonia's independence referendum comes amid the probe into the alleged Russian interference in the US presidential election that has prompted several European countries, including Britain, France and Germany, to also speculate about Russia "meddling" in their election processes, a claim strongly refuted by the authorities as groundless.

Responding to these accusations, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has called the claims ridiculous, emphasizing that there was no proof that Russia was involved in the election processes of the United States, Germany, France, or the United Kingdom.

The independence referendum in Catalonia that took place on October 1, is considered illegal by Madrid. On October 27, the Spanish Senate approved the introduction of direct rule in Catalonia, shortly after the regional parliament passed the declaration of independence. A number of former Catalan lawmakers and ministers are facing lawsuits brought by the central government.

Numerous rallies are being held in the region, protesting the decisions by the central government.



<https://sputniknews.com/europe/201711091058953407-wikileaks-bloomberg-catalonia-russia/>

UK prosecutors admit destroying key emails in Julian Assange case

Correspondence between CPS and its Swedish counterparts about WikiLeaks founder deleted after lawyer retired in 2014

*Ewen MacAskill and Owen Bowcott
The Guardian
10 November 2017*

The Crown Prosecution Service is facing embarrassment after admitting it destroyed key emails relating to the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is holed up in Ecuador's London embassy fighting extradition.

Email exchanges between the CPS and its Swedish counterparts over the high-profile case were deleted after the lawyer at the UK end retired in 2014.

The destruction of potentially sensitive and revealing information comes ahead of a tribunal hearing in London next week.

Adding to the intrigue, **it emerged the CPS lawyer involved had, unaccountably, advised the Swedes in 2010 or 2011 not to visit London to interview Assange.** An interview at that time could have prevented the long-running embassy standoff.

The CPS, responding to questions from the Guardian, denied there were any legal implications of the data loss for an Assange case if it were to come to court in the future. Asked if the CPS had any idea what was destroyed, a spokesperson said: **"We have no way of knowing the content of email accounts once they have been deleted."**

Assange, whose WikiLeaks has been involved in a series of controversial leaks that include the Iraq war logs, US state department cables and Democratic party emails, was wanted by Sweden as part of a preliminary investigation into rape allegations. Sweden dropped the investigation in May.

Detractors of Assange, who sought refuge in Ecuador's embassy in 2012, accuse him of collaborating with Russian propagandists in undermining Hillary Clinton's bid for the presidency and helping Donald Trump secure it.

Supporters of Assange fear he could have been extradited to the US from Sweden and might yet from the UK. The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said this year Assange was a priority for the justice department and US federal prosecutors are believed to be considering charges against him over the leaks.

The CPS data destruction was disclosed in a freedom of information (FOI) case being pursued by the Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi.

Maurizi, a reporter on *La Repubblica* who has covered WikiLeaks since 2009, has been pressing both the CPS and its Swedish counterpart for information relating to Assange and extradition.

Unhappy over the limited material released so far, **she is taking her case against the CPS to an information tribunal on Monday and Tuesday.**

“It is incredible to me these records about an ongoing and high-profile case have been destroyed. I think they have something to hide,” Maurizi said.

She is keen to establish how much influence the UK had in the decision of the Swedish authorities at the time not to travel to London to interview Assange. She is also looking for evidence of US involvement in extradition moves.

She unearthed two years ago, through an FOI request to the Swedish prosecutors, an email from a lawyer in the CPS extradition unit on 25 January 2011 saying: “My earlier advice remains, that in my view it would not be prudent for the Swedish authorities to try to interview the defendant in the UK.”

The sentence was redacted in the email obtained by Maurizi from the CPS under an FOI request but not when it was released under an FOI request from the Swedish prosecutors.

Assange declined to travel to Sweden at the time, expressing fear it was a ruse that could pave the way for his extradition to the US. His lawyers offered a compromise in which Swedish investigators could interview him in person in London or by a video link, but the Swedish authorities did not take up the offer at the time.

A legal manager at the CPS, Mohammed Cheema, who has been dealing with the FOI requests, said, in a lengthy witness statement in August this year, that the Assange case file comprises mainly 55 lever-arch files, one A4 file and a selection of other paper files.

He added it was very unlikely the CPS held further significant email correspondence. But just 11 days before the hearing, Cheema sent a further statement saying a search of electronic records found data associated with the lawyer who had been in touch with the Swedish prosecutors “was deleted when he retired and cannot be recovered”. He retired in March 2014.

Jennifer Robinson, a Doughty Street chambers barrister, and Estelle Dehon, who specialises in freedom of information, will be representing Maurizi at the tribunal.

Robinson, who has also represented Assange, said: “The missing information raises concerns about the Crown Prosecution Service’s data retention policy and what internal mechanisms are in place to review their conduct of this case in light of the fact the UK has been found to have breached its international obligations.”

A United Nations panel last year found Assange had been arbitrarily detained by the UK and Sweden.

Robinson said: “The CPS has disclosed some material which is very limited. We know there is more.”

She added: “Serious questions must be asked about the role of the CPS. Had the Swedes interviewed Assange back in 2010 one wonders whether this case would have continued for such a long time.”

The Swedes had interviewed many other people in the UK in relation to other cases, Robinson said. “We had been offering the Swedish prosecutors Assange’s testimony

since October 2010. We didn't know at the time that the CPS was advising them not to take up the offer."

The CPS spokesperson, in response to a question from the Guardian why such important documents were destroyed, said the email account was deleted following retirement in accordance with standard procedure.

Asked if it was CPS policy that documents relating to live court cases should be destroyed, the spokesperson said: "The individual to whom you refer was a lawyer in the CPS extradition unit discussing matters relating to extradition proceedings which concluded in 2012. The case was, therefore, not live when the email account was deleted."

He added: "Most casework papers and related material are stored for three years following the conclusion of proceedings, or for the duration of the convicted defendant's sentence plus three months. In some cases material may be held for longer."

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/10/uk-prosecutors-admit-destroying-key-emails-from-julian-assange-case>

UK panel to rule on FOIA requests in Assange case

Courage Foundation
November 14, 2017

Seven years since the issue of an European Arrest Warrant against Julian Assange, and five since Ecuador granted him political asylum, a freedom of information case in the UK is shedding light on what was happening behind the scenes during that period.

Assange has spent more than five years isolated in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, in what a UN Advisory Group ruled was arbitrary detention that contravened international law.

Ecuador recognised the political persecution of Assange and granted him the status of political refugee, judging his life to be at grave risk. Despite the UN group's determination, British police maintain their threat to arrest Assange if he leaves the embassy.

Following years of debate over where Assange should be interviewed, Swedish prosecutors finally questioned the detained publisher in the Ecuadorian Embassy at the end of 2016, after which Sweden ultimately dropped its investigation.

Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi, who has worked on WikiLeaks releases as a media partner since 2009, has made a series of FOI requests in the different countries involved in the Assange case. In 2015 she managed to get 44 pages released on from Sweden's prosecutorial authority. Her challenge in the UK, which was initially met with a "neither confirm nor deny" response from the Crown Prosecution Service, has now reached tribunal level, where it is being heard in front of a panel of three judges. If successful, what is at stake is the publication of communications between the CPS and

Swedish prosecutors, the government of Ecuador and — potentially — the United States.

Pre-hearing press coverage focused on the CPS' deletion of key emails from the account of a now-retired CPS lawyer, Paul Close, whose name could not be published for the duration of the proceedings. A short extract of the emails disclosed by CPS shortly before the case **shows the CPS lawyer advising Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny not to interview Julian Assange in London, a decision that led to years of deadlock.** *[There were no doubt additional reasons for the delay. –A.B.]* As the extract [[here](#)] shows, many of the documents released by the CPS in advance of the hearing have been subjected to significant redaction.

In her statement to the court, Stefania Maurizi said that she found it remarkable that, **in 780 pages disclosed by the CPS so far, not one unredacted line addresses Assange's fear of extradition to the United States**, not least given he was later granted asylum by the government of Ecuador on this basis. "Something went wrong in this case," she said, "I don't know what."

For the CPS, extradition lawyer Mohammed Cheema **countered that disclosing the information would endanger the UK's diplomatic relations** and could have a "very significant" chilling effect on extradition procedures with particular, unspecified, countries. Much of the CPS evidence was given in closed session, in the presence of the judges, the CPS' lawyers and the lawyer for the Information Commissioner's Office.

Estelle Dehon and Jennifer Robinson from Doughty Street Chambers were representing Stefania Maurizi in the two-day hearing, which concluded on Tuesday 14 November. A date for the ruling has yet to be given.

<https://couragefound.org/2017/11/uk-panel-to-rule-on-foia-requests-in-assange-case/>

Mocking Trump Doesn't Prove Russia's Guilt

President Trump is getting mocked for "trusting" Vladimir Putin's denial about "meddling" in U.S. politics — and not accepting Official Washington's groupthink — but ridicule isn't evidence, writes ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern.

*Ray McGovern
Consortium News
November 13, 2017*

If the bloody debacle in Iraq should have taught Americans anything, it is that endorsements by lots of important people who think something is true don't amount to evidence that it actually is true. If endorsements were the same as evidence, U.S. troops would have found tons of WMD in Iraq, rather than come up empty.

So, when it comes to whether or not Russia "hacked" Democratic emails last year and slipped them to WikiLeaks, just because a bunch of people with fancy titles think the Russians are guilty doesn't compensate for the lack of evidence so far evinced to support this core charge.

But the reaction of Official Washington and the U.S. mainstream media to President Trump saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin seemed sincere in denying Russian “meddling” was sputtering outrage: How could Trump doubt what so many important people think is true?

Yet, if the case were all that strong that Russia did “hack” the emails, you would have expected a straightforward explication of the evidence rather than a demonstration of a full-blown groupthink, but what we got this weekend was all groupthink and no evidence.

For instance, on Saturday, CNN responded to Trump’s comment that Putin seems to “mean it” when he denied meddling by running a list of important Americans who had endorsed the Russian-guilt verdict. Other U.S. news outlets and politicians followed the same pattern.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee and a big promoter of the Russia-gate allegations, scoffed at what Trump said: “You believe a foreign adversary over your own intelligence agencies?”

The Washington Post’s headline sitting atop Sunday’s lede article read: “Trump says Putin sincere in denial of Russian meddling: Critics call that ‘unconscionable.’”

Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee and another Russia-gate sparkplug, said he was left “completely speechless” by Trump’s willingness to take Putin’s word “over the conclusions of our own combined intelligence community.”

Which gets us back to the Jan. 6 “Intelligence Community Assessment” and its stunning lack of evidence in support of its Russian guilty verdict. **The ICA even admitted as much, that it wasn’t asserting Russian guilt as fact but rather as opinion:** “Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact. Assessments are based on collected information, which is often incomplete or fragmentary, as well as logic, argumentation, and precedents.”

Even The New York Times, which has led the media groupthink on Russian guilt, initially published the surprised reaction from correspondent Scott Shane who wrote: “What is missing from the public report is what many Americans most eagerly anticipated: hard evidence to back up the agencies’ claims that the Russian government engineered the election attack. ... Instead, the message from the agencies essentially amounts to ‘trust us.’”

In other words, the ICA was not a disposition of fact; it was guesswork, possibly understandable guesswork, but guesswork nonetheless. And guesswork should be open to debate.

Shutting Down Debate

But the debate was shut down earlier this year by the oft-repeated claim that all 17 U.S. intelligence agencies concurred in the assessment and how could anyone question what all 17 intelligence agencies concluded!

However, that canard was finally knocked down by President Obama's own Director of National Intelligence James Clapper who acknowledged in sworn congressional testimony that **the ICA was the product of "handpicked" analysts from only three agencies — the CIA, FBI and National Security Agency.**

In other words, not only did the full intelligence community not participate in the ICA but only analysts "handpicked" by Obama's intelligence chiefs conducted the analysis— and as we intelligence veterans know well, **if you handpick the analysts, you are handpicking the conclusions.**

For instance, put a group of analysts known for their hardline views on Russia in a room for a few weeks, prevent analysts with dissenting viewpoints from weighing in, don't require any actual evidence, and you are pretty sure to get the Russia-bashing result that you wanted.

So why do you think Clapper and Obama's CIA Director John Brennan put up the no-entry sign that kept out analysts from the State Department and Defense Intelligence Agency, two entities that might have significant insights into Russian intentions? By all rights, they should have been included. But, clearly, no dissenting footnotes or wider-perspective views were desired.

If you remember back to the Iraq WMD intelligence estimate, analysts from the State Department's intelligence bureau, known as INR, offered unwelcome dissenting views about the pace of Iraq's supposed nuclear program, inserting a footnote saying they found it too difficult to predict the fruition of a program when there was no reliable evidence as to when — not to mention if — it had started.

DIA also was demonstrating an unusually independent streak, displaying a willingness to give due consideration to Russia's perspective. Here's the heterodox line DIA took in a major report published in December 2015:

"The Kremlin is convinced the United States is laying the groundwork for regime change in Russia, a conviction further reinforced by the events in Ukraine. Moscow views the United States as the critical driver behind the crisis in Ukraine and the Arab Spring and believes that the overthrow of former Ukrainian President Yanukovich is the latest move in a long-established pattern of U.S.-orchestrated regime change efforts."

So, not only did the Jan. 6 report exclude input from INR and DIA and the other dozen or so intelligence agencies but it even avoided a fully diverse set of opinions from inside the CIA, FBI and NSA. The assessment — or guesswork — came only from those "hand-picked" analysts.

It's also worth noting that not only does Putin deny that Russia was behind the publication of the Democratic emails but so too does WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange who has insisted repeatedly that the material did not come from the Russians. He and others around WikiLeaks have strongly suggested that the emails came as leaks from Democratic insiders.

Seeking Real Answers

In the face of Official Washington's evidence-free groupthink, what some of us former U.S. intelligence analysts have been trying to do is provide both a fuller understand-

of Russian behavior and whatever scientific analysis can be applied to the alleged “hacks.”

Forensic investigations and testing of relevant download speeds, reported by members of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), have undermined the Russia-did-it groupthink. But this attempt to engage in actual evaluation of evidence has been either ignored or mocked by mainstream news outlets.

Still, the suggestion in our July 24 VIPS memo that President Trump ask current CIA Director Mike Pompeo to take a fresh look at the issue recently had some consequence when Pompeo contacted VIPS member William Binney, a former NSA Technical Director, and invited him to explain his latest research on the impossibility of the Russians extracting the Democratic emails via an Internet hack based on known download speeds.

In typically candid terms, Binney explained to Pompeo why VIPS had concluded that the intelligence analysts behind the Jan. 6 report had been making stuff up about Russian “hacking.”

When news of the Binney-Pompeo meeting broke last week, the U.S. mainstream media again rejected the opportunity to rethink the Russia-did-it groupthink and instead treated Binney as some sort of “conspiracy theorist” with a “disputed” theory, while attacking Pompeo’s willingness to discuss Binney’s findings as “politicizing intelligence.”

Despite the smearing of Binney, President Trump appears to have taken some of this new evidence to heart, explaining his dispute with open-mouthed White House reporters on Air Force One who baited Trump with various forms of the same question: “Do you believe Putin?” amid the new jeering about Trump “getting played” by Putin.

Trump’s demeanor, however, suggested increased confidence that the Russian “hacking” allegations were the “witch hunt” that he has decried for months.

Trump also jabbed the press over its earlier false claims that “all 17 intelligence agencies” concurred on the Russian “hack.” And Trump introduced the idea of a different kind of “hack,” i.e., Obama’s political appointees at the heads of the agencies behind the Jan. 6 report.

Trump said, “You hear it’s 17 agencies. Well it’s three. And one is Brennan ... give me a break. They’re political hacks. ... I mean, you have Brennan, you have Clapper, you have [FBI Director James] Comey. Comey is proven to be a liar and he’s proven to be a leaker.”

Later, in deference to those still at work in intelligence, Trump said, “I’m with our [intelligence] agencies as currently constituted.”

While Trump surely has a dismal record of his own regarding truth-telling, he’s not wrong about the checkered record of the triumvirate of Clapper, Brennan and Comey.

Clapper played a key role in the bogus Iraq-WMD intelligence when he was head of the National Geo-spatial Agency and hid the fact that there was zero evidence in satellite imagery of any weapons of mass destruction before the Iraq invasion. When no WMDs were found, Clapper told the media that he thought they were shipped off to Syria.

In 2013, Clapper perjured himself before Congress by denying NSA's unconstitutional blanket surveillance of Americans. After evidence emerged revealing the falsity of Clapper's testimony, he wrote a letter to Congress admitting, "My response was clearly erroneous -- for which I apologize." Despite the deception, he was allowed to stay as Obama's most senior intelligence officer for almost four more years.

Clapper also has demonstrated an ugly bias about Russians. On May 28, as a former DNI, Clapper explained Russian "interference" in the U.S. election to NBC's Chuck Todd on May 28 with a tutorial on what everyone should know about "the historical practices of the Russians." **Clapper said, "the Russians, typically, are almost genetically driven to co-opt, penetrate, gain favor, whatever, which is a typical Russian technique."**

Brennan, who had previously defended torture as having been an effective way to gain intelligence, was CIA director when agency operatives broke into the computers of the Senate Intelligence Committee when it was investigating CIA torture.

Former FBI Director Comey is infamous for letting the Democratic National Committee arrange its own investigation of the "hacking" that was then blamed on Russia, a development that led some members of Congress to call the supposed "hack" an "act of war." **Despite the risk of nuclear conflagration, the FBI didn't bother to do its own forensics.**

And, by his own admission, Comey arranged a leak to The New York Times that was specifically designed to get a Special Prosecutor appointed to investigate Russia-gate, a job that fell to his old friend Robert Mueller, who has had his own mixed record as the previous FBI director in mishandling the 9/11 investigation.

There are plenty of reasons to want Trump out of the White House, but there also should be respect for facts and due process. So far, the powers-that-be in Washington—in politics, the media and other dominant institutions, what some call the Deep State—have shown little regard for fairness in the Russia-gate "scandal."

The goal seems to be to remove the President or at least emasculate him on a bum rap, giving him the bum's rush, so to speak, while also further demonizing Russia and exacerbating an already dangerous New Cold War.

The truth should still count for something. No one's character should be assassinated, as Bill Binney's is being now, for running afoul of the conventional wisdom that Trump—like bête noire Putin—never tells the truth, and that to believe either is, well, "unconscionable," as The Washington Post warns.

Ray McGovern was a CIA intelligence analyst for 27 years and is co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/11/13/mocking-trump-doesnt-prove-russias-guilt/>

The Secret Correspondence Between Donald Trump Jr. and WikiLeaks

The transparency organization asked the president's son for his cooperation—in sharing its work, in contesting the results of the election, and in arranging for Julian Assange to be Australia's ambassador to the United States.

*Julia Ioffe
The Atlantic
Nov. 13, 2017*

Just before the stroke of midnight on September 20, 2016, at the height of last year's presidential election, the WikiLeaks Twitter account sent a private direct message to Donald Trump Jr., the Republican nominee's oldest son and campaign surrogate. "A PAC run anti-Trump site putintrump.org is about to launch," WikiLeaks wrote. "The PAC is a recycled pro-Iraq war PAC. We have guessed the password. It is 'putintrump.' See 'About' for who is behind it. Any comments?" (The site, which has **since become a joint project with Mother Jones**, was founded by Rob Glaser, a tech entrepreneur, and was funded by Progress for USA Political Action Committee.)

The next morning, about 12 hours later, Trump Jr. responded to WikiLeaks. "Off the record I don't know who that is, but I'll ask around," he wrote on September 21, 2016.

The messages, obtained by *The Atlantic*, were also turned over by Trump Jr.'s lawyers to congressional investigators. They are part of a long— **and largely one-sided**— correspondence between WikiLeaks and the president's son that continued until at least July 2017. The messages show WikiLeaks, a radical transparency organization that *[a limited and clearly biased selection of — A.B.]* the American intelligence community believes was chosen by the Russian government to disseminate the information it had hacked, actively soliciting Trump Jr.'s cooperation. WikiLeaks made a series of increasingly bold requests, including asking for Trump's tax returns, urging the Trump campaign on Election Day to reject the results of the election as rigged, and requesting that the president-elect tell Australia to appoint Julian Assange ambassador to the United States.

"Over the last several months, we have worked cooperatively with each of the committees and have voluntarily turned over thousands of documents in response to their requests," said Alan Futerfas, an attorney for Donald Trump Jr. "Putting aside the question as to why or by whom such documents, provided to Congress under promises of confidentiality, have been selectively leaked, we can say with confidence that we have no concerns about these documents and any questions raised about them have been easily answered in the appropriate forum." WikiLeaks did not respond to requests for comment.

The messages were turned over to Congress as part of that body's various ongoing investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign. American intelligence services have accused the Kremlin of engaging in a deliberate effort to boost President Donald Trump's chances while bringing down his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. That effort— and the president's response to it— has spawned multiple congressional investigations, and a special counsel inquiry that has led to the indictment of Trump's former campaign chair, Paul Manafort, for financial crimes.

It's not clear what investigators will make of the correspondence, which represents a small portion of the thousands of documents Donald Trump Jr.'s lawyer says he turned over to them. The stakes for the Trump family, however, are high. Trump Jr.'s June 2016 meeting with Natalia Veselnitskaya, a Russian lawyer with connections to Russia's powerful prosecutor general, is already reportedly a subject of interest in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, as is the White House statement defending him. (Trump Jr. was emailed an offer of "information that would incriminate Hillary," and responded in part, "If it's what you say I love it.") The messages exchanged with WikiLeaks add a second instance in which Trump Jr. appears eager to obtain damaging information about Hillary Clinton, **despite its provenance.** [???

Though Trump Jr. mostly ignored the frequent messages from WikiLeaks, he at times appears to have acted on its requests. When WikiLeaks first reached out to Trump Jr. about putintrump.org, for instance, Trump Jr. followed up on his promise to "ask around." According to a source familiar with the congressional investigations into Russian interference with the 2016 campaign, who requested anonymity because the investigation is ongoing, on the same day that Trump Jr. received the first message from WikiLeaks, he emailed other senior officials with the Trump campaign, including Steve Bannon, Kellyanne Conway, Brad Parscale, and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, telling them WikiLeaks had made contact. Kushner then forwarded the email to campaign communications staffer Hope Hicks. At no point during the 10-month correspondence does Trump Jr. rebuff WikiLeaks, which had published stolen documents **and was already observed [by whom? –A.B.] to be releasing information that benefited Russian interests.**

WikiLeaks played a pivotal role in the presidential campaign. In July 2016, on the first day of the Democratic National Convention, WikiLeaks released emails stolen from the Democratic National Committee's servers that spring. The emails showed DNC officials denigrating Bernie Sanders, renewing tensions on the eve of Clinton's acceptance of the nomination. On October 7, less than an hour after the Washington Post released the Access Hollywood tape, in which Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women, Wikileaks released emails that hackers had **pilfered** from the personal email account of Clinton's campaign manager John Podesta. *[Note that correspondence published by WikiLeaks has been "stolen" and "pilfered", but the correspondence on which this articles is based has been "obtained" by The Atlantic. – A.B.]*

On October 3, 2016, WikiLeaks wrote again. "Hiya, it'd be great if you guys could comment on/push this story," WikiLeaks suggested, attaching a quote from then-Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton about wanting to "just drone" WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange.

"Already did that earlier today," Trump Jr. responded an hour-and-a-half later. "It's amazing what she can get away with."

Two minutes later, Trump Jr. wrote again, asking, "What's behind this Wednesday leak I keep reading about?" The day before, Roger Stone, an informal advisor to Donald Trump, had tweeted, "Wednesday@HillaryClinton is done. #WikiLeaks."

WikiLeaks didn't respond to that message, but on October 12, 2016, the account again messaged Trump Jr. **"Hey Donald, great to see you and your dad talking about our**

publications,” WikiLeaks wrote. (At a rally on October 10, Donald Trump had proclaimed, “I love WikiLeaks!”)

“Strongly suggest your dad tweets this link if he mentions us,” WikiLeaks went on, pointing Trump Jr. to the link wlsearch.tk, which it said would help Trump’s followers dig through the trove of stolen documents and find stories. **“There’s many great stories the press are missing and we’re sure some of your follows [sic] will find it,”** WikiLeaks went on. **“Btw we just released Podesta Emails Part 4.”**

Trump Jr. did not respond to this message. But just 15 minutes after it was sent, as *The Wall Street Journal’s* Byron Tau pointed out, Donald Trump himself tweeted, “Very little pick-up by the dishonest media of incredible information provided by WikiLeaks. So dishonest! Rigged system!”

Two days later, on October 14, 2016, Trump Jr. tweeted out the link WikiLeaks had provided him. “For those who have the time to read about all the corruption and hypocrisy all the @wikileaks emails are right here: <http://wlsearch.tk/>,” he wrote.

After this point, Trump Jr. ceased to respond to WikiLeaks’s direct messages, but WikiLeaks escalated its requests.

“Hey Don. We have an unusual idea,” WikiLeaks wrote on October 21, 2016. **“Leak us one or more of your father’s tax returns.”** WikiLeaks then laid out three reasons why this would benefit both the Trumps and WikiLeaks. One, The New York Times had already published a fragment of Trump’s tax returns on October 1; two, the rest could come out any time “through the most biased source (e.g. NYT/MSNBC).”

It is the third reason, though, WikiLeaks wrote, that “is the real kicker.” **“If we publish them it will dramatically improve the perception of our impartiality,”** WikiLeaks explained. **“That means that the vast amount of stuff that we are publishing on Clinton will have much higher impact, because it won’t be perceived as coming from a ‘pro-Trump’ ‘pro-Russia’ source.”** It then provided an email address and link where the Trump campaign could send the tax returns, and adds, **“The same for any other negative stuff (documents, recordings) that you think has a decent chance of coming out. Let us put it out.”**

Trump Jr. did not respond to this message.

WikiLeaks didn’t write again until Election Day, November 8, 2016. “Hi Don if your father ‘loses’ we think it is much more interesting if he DOES NOT concede [sic] and spends time CHALLENGING the media and other types of rigging that occurred— as he has implied that he might do,” WikiLeaks wrote at 6:35pm, when **the idea that Clinton would win was still the prevailing conventional wisdom.** (As late as 7:00pm that night, FiveThirtyEight, a trusted prognosticator of the election, gave Clinton a 71 percent chance of winning the presidency.) **WikiLeaks insisted that contesting the election results would be good for Trump’s rumored plans to start a media network should he lose the presidency.** **“The discussion can be transformative as it exposes media corruption, primary corruption, PAC corruption, etc.,”** WikiLeaks wrote.

Shortly after midnight that day, when it was clear that Trump had beaten all expectations and won the presidency, **WikiLeaks sent him a simple message: “Wow.”**

Trump Jr. did not respond to these messages either, but WikiLeaks was undeterred. "Hi Don. Hope you're doing well!" WikiLeaks wrote on December 16 to Trump Jr., who was by then the son of the president-elect. **"In relation to Mr. Assange: Obama/Clinton placed pressure on Sweden, UK and Australia (his home country) to illicitly go after Mr. Assange. It would be real easy and helpful for your dad to suggest that Australia appoint Assange ambassador to [Washington,] DC."**

WikiLeaks even imagined how Trump might put it: "'That's a real smart tough guy and the most famous australian [sic] you have!' or something similar," WikiLeaks wrote. **"They won't do it but it will send the right signals** to Australia, UK + Sweden to start following the law and stop bending it to ingratiate themselves with the Clintons." (On December 7, Assange, proclaiming his innocence, had released his testimony in front of London investigators looking into accusations that he had committed alleged sexual assault.)

In the winter and spring, WikiLeaks went largely silent, only occasionally sending Trump Jr. links. But on July 11, 2017, three days after The New York Times broke the story about Trump Jr.'s June 2016 meeting with Natalia Veselnitskaya, a Russian lawyer with connections to Russia's powerful prosecutor general, WikiLeaks got in touch again.

"Hi Don. Sorry to hear about your problems," WikiLeaks wrote. "We have an idea that may help a little. We are VERY interested in confidentially obtaining and publishing a copy of the email(s) cited in the New York Times today," citing a reference in the paper to emails Trump Jr had exchanged with Rob Goldstone, a publicist who had helped set up the meeting. "We think this is strongly in your interest," WikiLeaks went on. **It then reprised many of the same arguments it made in trying to convince Trump Jr. to turn over his father's tax returns, including the argument that Trump's enemies in the press were using the emails to spin an unfavorable narrative of the meeting. "Us publishing not only deprives them of this ability but is beautifully confounding."** The message was sent at 9:29 am on July 11. Trump Jr. did not respond, but just hours later, he posted the emails himself, on his own Twitter feed.

Julia Ioffe is a staff writer at The Atlantic, covering politics and world affairs.

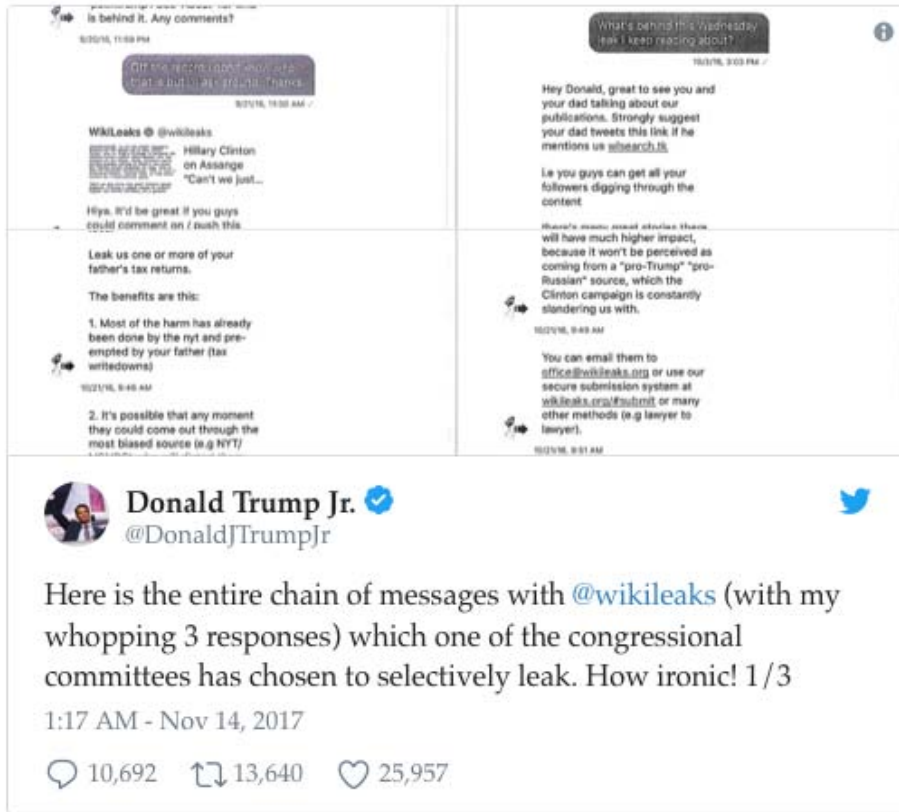
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/the-secret-correspondence-between-donald-trump-jr-and-wikileaks/545738/>

Trump Jr., Assange Strike Back at Leaked, 'Edited' Emails

*Greg Richter
Newsmax
13 Nov. 2017*

Donald Trump Jr. and WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange fired back at a report by The Atlantic on Monday that WikiLeaks sent private messages to Trump Jr. via Twitter during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Trump Jr.'s response was simple: He tweeted out screenshots of the entire exchange, noting he responded only three times.



Assange would not verify the direct messages, but noted the full release of them by Trump Jr. showed the meaning was different than the "edited" versions released by The Atlantic.



 **Julian Assange** ♦
@JulianAssange

Replied to @JulianAssange and 2 others

WikiLeaks can be very effective at convincing even high profile people that it is their interest to promote links to its publications. 3/

12:35 AM - Nov 14, 2017

228 767 1,618

 **Julian Assange** ♦
@JulianAssange

Replied to @JulianAssange and 2 others

WikiLeaks has such chutzpah that it allegedly tried to convince Trump Jr to leak his father's tax returns & his own "Russian lawyer meeting" emails (he did). WikiLeaks appears to beguile some people into transparency by convincing them that it is in their interest. 4/

1:06 AM - Nov 14, 2017

233 786 1,611

 **Julian Assange** ♦
@JulianAssange

Replied to @JulianAssange and 2 others

Finally, I tweeted this, publicly, back in July. #hysteriverse twitter.com/JulianAssange/...

1:33 AM - Nov 14, 2017

 **Julian Assange** ♦
@JulianAssange

Incredible. The Atlantic edited "Trump Jr" DM story to reverse its meaning even removing "that the Clinton campaign is constantly slandering us with" right after "pro-Russia". Full text changes everything. twitter.com/wikileaks/stat...

2:15 AM - Nov 14, 2017

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/leaks-wikileaks-emails-donald-trump-jr/2017/11/13/id/825902/>

WikiLeaks Was Really, Really Dumb to Send Twitter DMs to Donald Trump Jr.

April Glaser
Slate
Nov. 13, 2017

Considering it's a hacker organization whose calling card is the anonymity it provides to whistleblowers leaking government secrets, WikiLeaks sure seems to have some shoddy security practices. The transparency group, led by its chief-in-exile Julian Assange, sent a series of direct messages over Twitter to Donald Trump Jr. starting on Sept. 20, 2016, less than two months before Election Day, according to a report in the Atlantic.

In correspondence with Trump's son, the WikiLeaks account shared details about a new anti-Trump website it said was about to launch, putintrump.org, and provided the login information for the site. "We have guessed the password. It is 'putintrump,'" the message read.

"Off the record I don't know who that is, but I'll ask around," Donald Trump Jr. responded.

Sending a Twitter direct message was an incredibly dumb move, at least from a digital security perspective, but Assange's WikiLeaks continued to communicate with Trump's son over Twitter for at least another 10 months, long after his father became president. The direct messages were shared with congressional investigators by Trump Jr.'s lawyers.

Twitter's direct messages are not encrypted, which make it a poor medium for correspondence with a high-profile, potentially soon-to-be U.S. president's son, especially if that correspondence is about hacking into someone else's website. That's because **stealing a password and then using it without authorization is a violation of a federal anti-hacking law called the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act**. If the Trump campaign did use the password to sneak into the backend of an opposition website, WikiLeaks potentially led the Trump campaign to participate in criminal activity.

U.S. intelligence officials reported in January that they've assessed with "high confidence" that WikiLeaks worked with Russian military intelligence to release stolen emails from the Democratic National Convention in July 2016. If that is true, WikiLeaks conspired with Russia to sway a U.S. presidential election, and then paved roads between itself, a Russian government conspirator, and the Trump campaign—not a good look for an administration trying to dismiss claims that it knowingly got a leg up from the Kremlin before Election Day. *[There is exactly no evidence that it is true. –A.B.]*

Trump Jr.'s correspondence with WikiLeaks began as the investigation into Russian interference in the run-up to 2016 election was starting to heat up, only months after the WikiLeaks release of the DNC emails and right before WikiLeaks released a second trove of emails from Clinton's campaign manager, John Podesta. WikiLeaks, according to the Atlantic's report, continued to contact Donald Trump Jr. months after his father, Donald Trump, entered the White House and while multiple investigations into the Trump campaign's possible collusion with Russian agents were well under way. In other words, it *appears [to whom and on what grounds? –A.B.]* WikiLeaks collaborated

with hackers, likely Russian, to release stolen emails in an effort to support Trump's candidacy, and in the midst of the chaos around the release the stolen Clinton-related emails, Assange's organization maintained some level of communication with the Trump campaign through the candidate's son.

If Assange was getting advice from a security professional that this was a fine move, that person was either giving intentionally bad advice or is terrible at their job. It doesn't take a Ph.D. in cryptography to know that it would make sense to keep some real distance from the campaign you're trying to boost with stolen emails, hacked passwords, and a strong connection to Russia [???], which was already suspected of interfering with the election. Assange's organization either terribly miscalculated how far the federal investigations into Russian meddling in the U.S. election would go, or his team just wasn't worried about it. If the latter is true, the temerity and naivety of WikiLeaks is nothing short of phenomenal.

What's more, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday that the CEO of the data firm hired by the Trump campaign, Cambridge Analytica, had reached out to WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange to ask if it could "help better organize" the emails WikiLeaks was releasing about Hilary Clinton. That contact apparently happened in early June, at the same time Cambridge Analytica was in negotiations to join the Trump campaign. *[That suggestion was rejected by Assange, as conveniently not noted here. –A.B.]* WikiLeaks didn't start publishing documents stolen from the DNC until July.

April Glaser is a Slate technology writer. Follow her on Twitter.

http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2017/11/13/wikileaks_was_really_really_dumb_to_send_donald_trump_jr_dms_on_twitter.html

Experts: No Evidence Donald Jr Broke Law in WikiLeaks Contact

*Cathy Burke
Newsmax
13 Nov. 2017*

It is one thing to make ethically questionable contact with a third-party during a campaign, but another thing to break the law — and it does not appear Donald Trump Jr. did that in reported communications with WikiLeaks, legal experts say.

In remarks to *Law & Crime*, Paul Ryan of the watchdog group Common Cause said he looked for evidence in *The Atlantic* report on the contact that Trump Jr. asked for something of value from a foreign national, received something of value from a foreign national, or advised WikiLeaks on how they could spend resources.

"I didn't see strong evidence of any of that going on," he told *Law & Crime*.

Ryan also downplayed the reported WikiLeaks direct-message to Trump Jr. of the website password for a yet-to-premiere anti-Trump PAC, arguing this password "doesn't scream to me that it is of obvious or significant value."

He also said there are no reports the campaign did anything with it, calling the detail "small potatoes" in terms of campaign finance law.

More of concern, Ryan told *Law & Crime*, would be Trump Jr.'s June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer to get dirt on Hillary Clinton, saying it struck him as "illicit" because the eldest son of President Donald Trump, as a campaign surrogate, sought out a thing of value from a foreign national.

Rick Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine, told the outlet one detail of *The Atlantic* story did stand out: WikiLeaks urged the campaign on election day to reject the results as rigged.

"During the election many of us were very concerned that Trump would not concede if he lost, something which would be very dangerous for American democracy," Hasen told *Law & Crime*.

"**Learning that a foreign agent with ties to Russia [???** was urging Trump to take that course is quite disconcerting."

<https://www.newsmax.com/Politics/legal-experts-wikileaks-donald-trump-jr-campaign-communication/2017/11/13/id/825895/>

Assange Claims WikiLeaks Was Trying to 'Beguile' Donald Trump Jr. Into Leaking

The president's son posted his exchanges with the organization on Twitter after The Atlantic disclosed their contents.

Elaine Godfrey
The Atlantic
Nov 14, 2017

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, responded to *The Atlantic's* disclosure of private communications between his group and Donald Trump Jr. by praising his organization for its "chutzpah" in attempting to take advantage of the president's son.

On Monday afternoon, my colleague Julia Ioffe reported on the direct messages exchanged on Twitter between WikiLeaks and Trump Jr. WikiLeaks attempted to convince the president's son to promote the hacked emails it had published, share his father's tax returns, and, on Election Day, challenge the U.S. election results. A few hours later, Trump Jr. confirmed the report by posting the full chain of messages to Twitter, while downplaying its importance.

Assange, for his part, insisted that his organization was merely attempting to solicit leaks. "WikiLeaks appears to beguile some people into transparency by convincing them that it is in their interest," Assange wrote on Twitter on Monday. He added that the message encouraging Trump to reject the election as rigged was intended "to generate a transformative discussion about corrupt media, corrupt PACs, and primary corruption."

The Twitter conversation between WikiLeaks and Trump Jr., which began in late September 2016 and lasted through July 2017, showed the radical transparency organization soliciting Trump Jr.'s cooperation. It made requests of him multiple times, from asking him to share links to proposing that Assange be as the Australian ambassador to the U.S. Twice, the organization implored Trump Jr. to give it his father's tax returns, as well as his email conversations related to a 2016 meeting with Russian lawyer (which Trump Jr. posted to his own Twitter account in July). Trump Jr. initially responded, but the messages disclosed on Monday include no replies after early October to WikiLeaks's increasingly bold requests.

Some Democratic lawmakers dismissed the explanations proffered by Assange and Trump Jr. Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut wrote that the messages "seem to indicate Pres. Trump's son was actively engaged and may have coordinated strategy with **a known agent of the Russian government, WikiLeaks.**" He called on Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley to subpoena Trump Jr.'s public testimony. "There seems to be no reasonable explanation for these messages," Blumenthal told the AP.

Representative Adam Schiff of California, the ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee, wrote that the correspondence "demonstrates again a willingness by the highest levels of the Trump campaign to accept foreign assistance."

The Trump administration, meanwhile, found itself facing another round of unwelcome questions. Vice President Mike Pence was asked in October 2016 whether the Trump campaign was "in cahoots" with WikiLeaks. "Nothing could be further from the truth," he replied at the time. On Monday, his press secretary, Alyssa Farah, said, "The vice president was never aware of anyone associated with the campaign being in contact with Wikileaks. He first learned of this news from a published report earlier tonight."

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/assange-claims-wikileaks-was-trying-to-beguile-donald-trump-jr-into-leaking/545819/>

Donald Trump Jr communicated with WikiLeaks during final stages of election

President's son exchanged direct messages with WikiLeaks Twitter account weeks before election day, a new leak of private correspondence shows

*Ed Pilkington
The Guardian
14 November 2017*

Donald Trump Jr, the eldest son of the US president, was in direct communication with WikiLeaks in the crucial final stages of the 2016 presidential election, a new leak of private correspondence from inside the Trump circle reveals.

The younger Trump exchanged direct messages with the WikiLeaks account on Twitter between 20 September and 12 October 2016. Copies of the correspondence were handed to congressional investigators by Trump Jr's lawyers and subsequently obtained by the Atlantic magazine.

The communication occurred at a highly sensitive moment for both the Trump presidential campaign and for WikiLeaks, just weeks before election day and at the height of WikiLeaks' publication of hacked emails belonging to senior Democratic figures at the instigation, US intelligence agencies allege, of the Russian government.

The most politically explosive communication between the two parties, according to the Atlantic, came on and after 12 October 2016.

"Hey Donald, great to see you and your dad talking about our publications," the WikiLeaks account, @WikiLeaks, said to Trump Jr two days after his father had proclaimed at a campaign rally: "I love WikiLeaks!"

"Strongly suggest your dad tweets this link if he mentions us. There's many great stories the press are missing and we're sure some of your follows [sic] will find it," the message continued.

The message went on to offer a link to wlsearch.tk — a search tool that facilitates the exploration of the database of leaked emails from John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign chairman, that WikiLeaks had by then begun to publish.

Julia Ioffe, author of the Atlantic article, writes that Trump Jr did not reply to the WikiLeaks message. But two days later, on 14 October, he did tweet that same link to wlsearch.tk, encouraging "those who have the time to read about all the corruption and hypocrisy" exposed by the WikiLeaks emails....

The Guardian contacted WikiLeaks, which referred to a Twitter post by the group's founder, Julian Assange; he suggested that the Atlantic had selectively edited the messages.

Assange also wrote that the messages from WikiLeaks, including ones urging Trump Jr to release his father's tax returns through the organisation, showed its "chutzpah".

A lawyer for Trump Jr told the Atlantic: "We can say with confidence that we have no concerns about these documents and any questions raised about them have been easily answered in the appropriate forum."

On Monday evening, Trump Jr tweeted what he said were copies of the "entire chain of messages with @wikileaks".

The first contact from WikiLeaks was made on 20 September 2016, the magazine reports. In it the open information website informed Trump Jr that a new political action committee called "putintrump" was about to launch.

Trump Jr replied the following morning: "Off the record I don't know who that is, but I'll ask around."

According to leaked information obtained by the Atlantic, Trump Jr shared the news that WikiLeaks had been in touch with him with several members of the inner campaign team. Among those he allegedly told were Steve Bannon, then chief executive of the Trump presidential campaign, as well as the candidate's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

On 3 October there was a further exchange through Twitter in which WikiLeaks encouraged the Trump team to publicise a comment by Clinton about wanting to “just drone” the head of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange.

“Already did that earlier today,” Trump Jr replied, according to the Atlantic.

Soon after, the businessman sent a second DM to WikiLeaks asking to know more about an upcoming leak from WikiLeaks that had been teased by Roger Stone, the Trump-supporting political agitator.

According to the Atlantic the information flow continued until as late as July this year, although after 12 October 2016 it was entirely in one direction — after that date the younger Trump did not respond to any approaches. Beyond that point, the leak becomes more revealing about WikiLeaks and its maverick founder Assange, holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has lived since 2012, than about the circle of the US president.

The most revelatory detail in that regard dates back to 21 October 2016 when the WikiLeaks account — presumably controlled by Assange himself, though the identity of the correspondent is unknown — contacted Trump Jr urging him to allow WikiLeaks to publish his father’s tax returns. WikiLeaks suggested the move would be positive as it would undermine suggestions that the organisation was in the pocket of the Kremlin.

“If we publish [the tax returns] it will dramatically improve the perception of our impartiality,” WikiLeaks says. “That means the vast amount of stuff that we are publishing on Clinton will have much higher impact, because it won’t be perceived as coming from a ‘pro-Trump’ ‘pro-Russia’ source.”

On election day itself, 8 November, WikiLeaks contacted Trump Jr to make the extraordinary suggestion that should his father lose the contest, as was then widely expected, he should refuse to concede the race and instead turn the spotlight on the media for “rigging” the result.

Even more bizarrely, WikiLeaks wrote again in December, by which time Donald Trump Sr was the president-in-waiting, to ask for support in Assange’s legal battles against the governments of Sweden, the UK and Australia. “It would be real easy and helpful for your dad to suggest that Australia appoint Assange ambassador to DC.”

The Twitter message added: “They won’t do it but it will send the right signals to Australia, UK + Sweden to start following the law and stop bending it to ingratiate themselves with the Clintons.”

The younger Donald Trump did not reply.

This is not the first controversy involving Trump Jr and links to Russia. In June 2016 he met a Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, in what was presented to him as part of a Russian government effort to aid his father’s campaign by providing information that could be used against Hillary Clinton.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/nov/13/donald-trump-jr-communicated-with-wikileaks-during-final-stages-of-election>

Help make Julian Assange Australia's US ambassador, WikiLeaks urged Trump Jr

Leaked correspondence reveals WikiLeaks suggested that president-elect ask Australia to send 'real smart tough guy' to DC

Michael McGowan
The Guardian
14 November 2017

WikiLeaks tried to have Julian Assange installed as the Australian ambassador to the US after Donald Trump's election, a new leak of private correspondence from inside the Trump circle has revealed.

On Tuesday the Atlantic magazine reported Donald Trump Jr, the president's son, was in contact with WikiLeaks via Twitter direct messages during the final stages of the 2016 election. Copies of the correspondence were handed to congressional investigators by Trump Jr's lawyers and then obtained by the Atlantic.

Trump Jr subsequently tweeted a transcript of what he said was the entire exchange.

Donald Trump Jr. (@DonaldJTrumpJr)
Here is the entire chain of messages with @wikileaks (with my whopping 3 responses) which one of the congressional committees has chosen to selectively leak. How ironic! 1/3 pic.twitter.com/SiwTqWtykA
November 14, 2017

It reveals WikiLeaks and Trump Jr sought information from each another and details a string of increasingly bold suggestions made by WikiLeaks to Trump Jr, including asking for the president-elect to tell Australia to appoint Assange ambassador to the US.

On 16 December, a month after Trump's election, WikiLeaks asked Trump Jr to have his father "suggest" Australia appoint Assange to the post in Washington, DC. Donald Trump Jr communicated with WikiLeaks during final stages of election

"Hi Don. Hope you're doing well!" WikiLeaks wrote to Trump Jr. "In relation to Mr. Assange: Obama/Clinton placed pressure on Sweden, UK and Australia (his home country) to illicitly go after Mr. Assange. It would be real easy and helpful for your dad to suggest that Australia appoint Assange ambassador to DC."

WikiLeaks went as far as suggesting wording for Trump: "'That's 'a real smart tough guy and the most famous australian [sic] you have!' or something similar," WikiLeaks wrote.

"They won't do it but it will send the right signals to Australia, UK + Sweden to start following the law and stop bending it to ingratiate themselves with the Clintons."

WikiLeaks also encouraged Trump Jr to leak his father's tax returns to prevent them being published by a "biased source" such as the New York Times. "If we publish them it will dramatically improve the perception of our impartiality," WikiLeaks explained.

It also urged the Trump campaign to reject the results of the election as rigged, and in July told the president's son to release emails detailing his contact with Russian figures during the campaign.

While most of the communication was one-sided, the exchanges between Trump Jr and WikiLeaks came at a highly sensitive moment. They took place only months before the election, at the height of WikiLeaks' publication of hacked emails belonging to senior Democratic figures.

US intelligence agencies allege the leaks came from the Russian government, which Assange has denied.

On Twitter, Assange said he "cannot confirm the alleged DM's" and said the Atlantic story was "edited and clearly does not have the full context".

However he also pointed to a tweet from his own account in July in which he said he had contacted Trump Jr to urge him to release emails relating to Trump Jr's meeting with a Russian lawyer he believed might have damaging information on the Clinton campaign.

Julian Assange (@JulianAssange)

Contacted Trump Jr this morning on why he should publish his emails (i.e with us). Two hours later, does it himself: <https://t.co/FzCttGSyr6>
July 11, 2017

Assange said the messages showed that "WikiLeaks loves its pending publications and ignores those who ask for details".

"Trump Jr. was rebuffed just like Cambridge Analytica. In both cases WikiLeaks had publicly teased the publications," he wrote.

"Thousands of people asked about them. WikiLeaks can be very effective at convincing even high profile people that it is their interest to promote links to its publications.

"WikiLeaks has such chutzpah that it allegedly tried to convince Trump Jr to leak his father's tax returns & his own 'Russian lawyer meeting' emails (he did). WikiLeaks appears to beguile some people into transparency by convincing them that it is in their interest."

Assange has had a rocky relationship with the Australian government. In 2010 the former prime minister Julia Gillard described the release by WikiLeaks of classified documents from the US State Department as "illegal", and after he was granted asylum by Ecuador in 2012 Australia was accused of "abandoning" him.

Last year the foreign affairs minister, Julie Bishop, met Assange's lawyers after a United Nations report found Assange had been "arbitrarily detained" since his arrest in 2010.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/14/julian-assange-australia-us-ambassador-wikileaks-urged-trump-jr>

'Ambassador Assange' is not the real story

*John Gooding
Lowy Institute
14 November 2017*

Earlier today, The Atlantic's Julia Ioffe ran a story detailing Twitter correspondence between Donald Trump Jr and WikiLeaks (and **potentially** with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange).

The piece is remarkable. **It's not particularly revelatory that Assange had attempted to contact Trump Jr at all, as he claimed as much in July of this year.** However, the nature of this contact is revealing and damaging for both WikiLeaks and Trump Jr.

The leaked correspondence is a clear demonstration that WikiLeaks is not a simple media/transparency organisation. Since the correspondence has come to light, Assange has attempted to spin it as a masterful ploy to prompt Trump Jr into promoting their publications and 'beguile' him into providing WikiLeaks with information, rather than active coordination and negotiation with the Trump campaign. **If true, the attempt to 'beguile' is plainly unbecoming of a self-professed media outlet. More likely, Assange's explanatory narrative is false.**

For Trump Jr, the consequences are yet to be fully fleshed out. Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal has characterised the conversation as Trump Jr '[coordinating] strategy with a known agent of the Russian government' and called for the full exchange to be subpoenaed. Vice President Mike Pence has walked back comments made as a candidate in October of last year that the campaign was 'in cahoots' with WikiLeaks.

But the significance of one aspect of Ioffe's story is being overplayed — the request from the WikiLeaks account that Trump Jr arrange for his father to suggest the Australian government give Assange an ambassadorial posting in the US. According to the article's own subheading, 'the transparency organization asked the president's son for his cooperation...in arranging for Julian Assange to be Australia's ambassador to the United States.'

But Assange becoming an ambassador was seemingly never a realistic consideration for WikiLeaks. Rather, the suggestion was more an exercise in legitimising Assange in the eyes of the world: '[Australia] won't do it but it will send the right signals to Australia, UK + Sweden to start following the law and stop bending it to ingratiate themselves with the Clintons'.

While the notion of Trump endorsing Assange as Australia's Ambassador is absurd, it's only somewhat more absurd than Trump floating Brexit supremo Nigel Farage as the UK's Ambassador via Twitter — which actually happened.

Indeed, the timing suggests that may have been the inspiration for Assange's request. Trump spruiked Farage on 22 November last year, while WikiLeaks requested the same treatment for Assange on 16 December, **going so far as to emulate Trump's tweeting style in a draft endorsement.** The UK government doused any speculation Farage would be appointed the same day Trump made his comment and there would be no reason for any of the actors involved to suspect the Australian government's

response would be any different, or any less swift. While no doubt interesting, getting hung up on this unrealised pipe dream detracts from the broader significance of Ioffe's story.

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/ambassador-assange-not-real-story>

Julian Assange jokes he'd run a hotel-style embassy with 'luxury suites for whistleblowers' as ambassador

Peter Mitchell
New Daily
2017-11-15

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has joked he would still like US President Donald Trump to push for his appointment as Australia's ambassador in Washington DC so he could open a hotel-style embassy "with luxury immunity suites for whistleblowers".

Mr Trump's son, Donald Jr, released private Twitter messages between himself and WikiLeaks on Monday after a report by The Atlantic.

Queensland-born Mr Assange announced he could not confirm the messages and accused The Atlantic of taking them out of context, but on Tuesday he took a tongue-in-cheek tack.

"Dear @DonaldJTrumpJr our offer of being ambassador to the US still stands," Mr Assange wrote.

"I could open a hotel style embassy in DC with luxury immunity suites for whistleblowers.

"The public will get a turbo-charged flow of intel about the latest CIA plots to undermine democracy.

"DM [direct message] me."

Mr Assange has been holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012 after the South American nation granted him asylum.

In the released Twitter messages, WikiLeaks suggested the US president heap praise on Mr Assange.

"In relation to Mr Assange: Obama/Clinton placed pressure on Sweden, UK and Australia (his home country) to illicitly go after Mr. Assange," WikiLeaks wrote.

"It would be real easy and helpful for your dad to suggest that Australia appoint Assange ambassador to DC."

The private tweets were turned over to members of US Congress probing Russian interference in the 2016 election.

<http://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2017/11/15/julian-assange-ambassador-trump/>

We Knew Julian Assange Hated Hillary Clinton. We Didn't Know He Was Secretly Advising Trump.

*Robert Mackey
The Intercept
November 15 2017*

The revelation that WikiLeaks secretly offered help to Donald Trump's campaign, in a series of private Twitter messages sent to the candidate's son Donald Trump Jr., **gave ammunition to the group's many detractors and also sparked anger from some longtime supporters** of the organization and its founder, Julian Assange.

One of the most high-profile dissenters was journalist Barrett Brown, whose crowd-sourced investigations of hacked corporate documents later posted on WikiLeaks led to a prison sentence.

Brown had a visceral reaction to the news, first reported by The Atlantic, that WikiLeaks had been advising the Trump campaign. In a series of tweets and Facebook videos, **Brown accused Assange of having compromised "the movement" to expose corporate and government wrongdoing by acting as a covert political operative.**

Brown explained that he had defended WikiLeaks for releasing emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee, "because it was an appropriate thing for a transparency org to do." **But, he added, "working with an authoritarian would-be leader to deceive the public is indefensible and disgusting."**

He was particularly outraged by an Oct. 26, 2016 message, in which Assange had appealed to Trump Jr. to let WikiLeaks publish one or more of his father's tax returns in order to make his group's attacks on Hillary Clinton seem less biased. "If we publish them it will dramatically improve the perception of our impartiality," the Assange-controlled @Wikileaks account suggested. "That means that the vast amount of stuff that we are publishing on Clinton will have much higher impact, because it won't be perceived as coming from a 'pro-Trump' 'pro-Russia' source, which the Clinton campaign is constantly slandering us with."

As Brown pointed out in another tweet, it was all-caps exasperating that Assange was in this case "complaining about 'slander' of being pro-Trump IN THE ACTUAL COURSE OF COLLABORATING WITH TRUMP."

The journalist, an Intercept contributor, whose work had been championed by WikiLeaks, also shared a link to a Reddit AMA conducted two days after the election in which WikiLeaks staff, including Assange's longtime collaborator Sarah Harrison, had denied point-blank that they had collaborated with the Trump campaign.

"The allegations that we have colluded with Trump, or any other candidate for that matter, or with Russia, are just groundless and false," the staffers wrote then. "We were not publishing with a goal to get any specific candidate elected."

It is not surprising that Brown felt personally betrayed by Assange, since, as he explained on Facebook Tuesday night, **"I went to prison because of my support for WikiLeaks."** Specifically, Brown said, the charges against him were related to his role in "operations to identify and punish members of the government and members of

private companies that had been exposed by Anonymous hackers of my acquaintance, via email hacks, as having conspired to go after Assange, to go after WikiLeaks.”

That sort of activism, dedicated to making public secret wrongdoing, Brown argued, is very different from “colluding with an authoritarian presidential campaign backed by actual Nazis while publicly denying it.”

“Plainly,” he observed with bitterness, “the prospect of a Clinton in the White House was such an unimaginable nightmare scenario that all normal standards of truth and morality became moot and it became necessary to get people like Sebastian Gorka into the White House to establish order.”

Before his private messages to Trump Jr. were leaked, Assange himself had categorically denied that he or WikiLeaks had been attacking Hillary Clinton to help elect Donald Trump. “This is not due to a personal desire to influence the outcome of the election,” he wrote in a statement released on November 8 as Americans went to the polls.

Even though Assange had by then transformed the WikiLeaks Twitter feed into a vehicle for smearing [???] Clinton, he insisted that his work was journalistic in nature. “The right to receive and impart true information is the guiding principle of WikiLeaks — an organization that has a staff and organizational mission far beyond myself,” Assange wrote. “Millions of Americans have pored over the leaks and passed on their citations to each other and to us,” he added. “It is an open model of journalism that gatekeepers are uncomfortable with, but which is perfectly harmonious with the First Amendment.”

The same morning, WikiLeaks tweeted an attack on Clinton for not having driven her own car during her decades of public service.

For Brown, and others who have been critical of Assange for using the platform of WikiLeaks to fight his own political and personal battles, his secret communication with the Trump campaign was damning because it revealed that he had been functioning more like a freelance political operative, doling out strategy and advice, than a journalist interested in obtaining and publishing information, concerned only with its accuracy.

James Ball, a former WikiLeaks volunteer who has described the difficulty of working for someone who *[he claims –A.B.]* lies so much, was also appalled by one post-election message to Trump Jr., in which WikiLeaks suggested that, as a form of payback, it would be “helpful for your dad to suggest that Australia appoint Assange ambassador to DC.”

That request for payback, on Dec. 16, 2016, came three weeks after Trump’s father had called on the British government to make his friend Nigel Farage its ambassador. “This should be it, game over, end of it, for anyone who tries to suggest Assange looks out for anyone except himself,” Ball observed on Twitter *[continuing his ongoing smear campaign against Assange –A.B.]*. “That’s his cause, and plenty of good people have been played, badly.”

There was also criticism from journalists, like Chris Hayes of MSNBC, a network Assange accused of being, with the New York Times, “the most biased source” in one

note to Trump Jr. Pointing to a message from WikiLeaks sent on election day, advising Trump to refuse to concede and claim the election was rigged, **Hayes asked how, exactly, offering that sort of political advice squared with the organization's mission to promote transparency.**

Still, many of Assange's most vocal supporters stuck with him, calling even secret communication with the Trump campaign to undermine Clinton entirely consistent with his vision of WikiLeaks as a sort of opposition research group, dedicated to "crushing bastards" by finding dirt in the servers of powerful individuals or organizations.

As Raffi Khatchadourian explained in a *New Yorker* profile of the WikiLeaks founder in 2010, "**Assange, despite his claims to scientific journalism, emphasized to me that his mission is to expose injustice, not to provide an even-handed record of events.**" To Assange, Khatchadourian wrote, "**Leaks were an instrument of information warfare.**"

One steadfast Assange ally was Kim Dotcom, the founder of the shuttered file-sharing site Megaupload, who helped fuel a **conspiracy theory [???**] that the DNC emails had not been hacked by Russia, but provided to WikiLeaks by a young Democratic staffer named Seth Rich, who was subsequently murdered. Alluding to another entirely **unsubstantiated [???**] allegation — that Hillary Clinton had once suggested killing Assange in a drone strike — Dotcom said that the WikiLeaks founder was merely part of a crowd-sourced political operation that had successfully defeated the greater evil.

As it happens, one of the anti-Clinton rumors that WikiLeaks had urged Trump Jr. to "push" in an Oct. 3, 2016 message was a tweet linking to that unsubstantiated allegation in an unsigned blog post citing anonymous sources. The blog post includes no documentation of the allegation, but the WikiLeaks tweet linking to it, which Trump Jr. told Assange he did share, included an excerpt from the blog post in which the type was styled to look like a leaked document.

While WikiLeaks has undoubtedly facilitated the release of information that is both true and important, it is **Assange's Trump-like willingness** to traffic in such unsubstantiated rumors, conspiracy theories, and innuendo not supported by evidence that undermines his claim to be a disinterested publisher, not a political operative.

While this tendency to disguise personal animus in the cloak of high-minded ideals was very much in evidence during his work on behalf of Trump, it is a consistent feature of Assange's advocacy for other people and causes.

During the final week of the Brexit campaign last year, Assange tried to undermine the credibility of a witness to the savage murder of a pro-European member of parliament, Jo Cox. In the immediate aftermath of the assassination, Brexit supporters like Assange were concerned that a wave of sympathy for the murdered MP could sway the vote. So they set out to contest evidence that the killing had been politically motivated.

To that end, the WikiLeaks Twitter feed drew attention to the fact that one witness to the killing — who said he had heard the attacker shout "Britain First!" — might have belonged to a racist political group, the British National Party, whose membership rolls WikiLeaks had obtained. Within hours of the murder, WikiLeaks also shared a link to a conspiratorial post from the pro-Brexit Breitbart UK, which speculated that the witness might have lied about what he heard as part of a feud among far-right racist groups.

The next day, British police confirmed that the attacker told the arresting officers he was “a political activist,” and had indeed shouted pro-Brexit phrases including “Britain First,” during the murder.

More recently, during the separatist protests in Catalonia he supported, Assange was forced to delete several fake images he had shared on Twitter — like one photograph of Spanish police officers struggling with Catalans, which had been digitally altered to insert a Catalan independence flag.

In the final months of the 2016 presidential election, the WikiLeaks Twitter feed promoted not just its new publications, but also frequently referred to tabloid rumors — like old chestnuts about Hillary Clinton’s supposed “role in the death of White House counsel Vince Foster” — and wild, misogynistic conspiracy theories about her campaign chairman taking part in bloody Satanic rituals.

We know now that, from late September on, Assange was also privately using that account to urge the candidate’s son to hype the mostly anodyne emails stolen from the account of the campaign chairman, John Podesta, as crucial evidence of Clinton’s unfitness for office. And it certainly looks like the campaign took his advice.

On October 12, 2016, just 15 minutes after Assange told Trump Jr. that a new batch of Podesta emails had been released, with “many great stories the press are missing,” his father tweeted a complaint accusing “the dishonest media” of ignoring “incredible information provided by WikiLeaks.”

In the same message, Assange urged Trump Jr. to share a link he provided to the email database — wlsearch.tk — so “you guys can get all your followers digging through the content.” Two days later, Trump Jr. shared that link.

Despite the constant claims, from Assange and the Trumps, that the emails stolen from Democrats implicated Clinton in scandal and corruption, it is important to keep in mind that the WikiLeaks method of encouraging Trump supporters and Reddit trolls to scour the documents for evidence of malfeasance did not, in fact, uncover any such evidence.

Instead, the hacked emails were used to reverse-engineer preposterous conspiracy theories, like the imaginary pedophilia scandal called Pizzagate, which WikiLeaks was still treating as real two months after the election.

This is the real tragedy and menace of the public and private collaboration of WikiLeaks with Trump. An organization with a sterling reputation for providing the public with accurate information about secret government and corporate activities was used to launder conspiracy theories that helped elect a racist, sexual predator President of the United States.

That might be a terrific result for people like Julian Assange, who see a dysfunctional, discredited White House as a way to undermine what they see as the real evil empire. For Americans condemned to live under Trump, particularly vulnerable groups who will suffer the most from his cruelty, it is less good.

<https://theintercept.com/2017/11/15/wikileaks-julian-assange-donald-trump-jr-hillary-clinton/>

[Note. This article can hardly be said to embody the virtues it finds lacking in Assange. –A.B.]

Spain V Assange: Ecuador warned Wikileaks leader is spreading ideas 'contrary to reality'

THE Spanish government has accused Wikileaks founder Julian Assange of spreading false messages as Madrid ministers battle to contain public opinion on Catalonia, it has been claimed.

*Vincent Wood
Express (U.K.)
Nov. 16, 2017*

Mr Assange, who is currently holed up in London's Ecuadorian embassy, has shared multiple videos of protests in Barcelona along with messages of support to the people of Catalonia.

But Spanish officials have claimed he is spreading messages "contrary to reality" and are believed to have put pressure on Ecuadorian representatives to silence the outspoken hacktivist — claiming his comments are breaching his asylum status.

On the eve of the Catalonia referendum, Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno said: "We have asked him in a cordial way to stop commenting on Ecuador's policy or on other countries' policies because his asylum status does not allow him to do so.

"He is surpassing that condition."

Mr Assange has become a vocal supporter of Catalanian secession amid furious protests and scenes of police brutality in Barcelona and beyond.

Spain has long maintained the referendum was illegal, and have clamped down on its instigators along with issuing a European arrest warrant for former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont.

Diplomatic sources claimed the last time Spain contacted the Ecuadorian authorities was after a meeting between Assange and the editor Oriol Soler — who aided Mr Puigdemont in his push for independence.

Spanish authorities also believe Mr Assange helped keep open referendum websites the Government was closing down following the orders of the Constitutional Court.

In addition to the meeting with Oriol Soler, there is the offer of 20,000 euros for whoever reveals police intervention plans for October 1, as well as their costs.

The Spanish authorities have since reportedly told Ecuadorian counterparts Mr Assange is spreading messages "contrary to reality" — adding his statements place pressure on Madrid to explain the situation due to swaying public opinion.

Express.co.uk has contacted Mr Assange for comment.

The allegations come as Spain blames Russian-based groups for attempting to manipulate social media by promoting Catalonia's independence as a way of trying to destabilise Madrid.

Spain's defence and foreign ministers said they had evidence that state and private-sector Russian groups, as well as groups in Venezuela, used Twitter, Facebook and

other websites to publicise the separatist cause and swing public opinion behind Catalonia in the run-up to the controversial October 1 referendum.

The referendum has plunged Spain into its worst constitutional crisis in decades and now officials are accusing Moscow of meddling before the vote.

Spanish Defence Minister Maria Dolores de Cospedal said: "What we know today is that much of this came from Russian territory.

"These are groups that, public and private, are trying to influence the situation and create instability in Europe," she told reporters at a meeting of European Union foreign and defence ministers in Brussels today.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/880591/Spain-Catalonia-crisis-independence-Julian-Assange-Ecuador-Embassy>

SNL hilariously re-enacts Donald Trump Jr. — and Eric's — liaison with WikiLeaks' Julian Assange

David Ferguson
Raw Story
18 Nov 2017

This week, "Saturday Night Live" opened with a sketch lampooning reports that came to light this week about President Donald Trump's eldest son Donald Jr. and his contacts with WikiLeaks.

The sketch opened with Donald Trump, Jr. — played by SNL cast member Mikey Day — meeting with Kate McKinnon as WikiLeaks' Julian Assange in a parking deck beneath the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where Assange has been confined for four years to escape extradition on rape charges.

Trump Jr. explained that he had to make his brother Eric wait in the car, but, "I told him to honk the horn if he gets scared."

Immediately the horn began to blare, so Trump Jr. and and Assange were joined by Alex Moffat, returning in his role as Eric Trump.

"He looks like Draco Malfoy," said Eric.

"Now Eric," said Donald Jr. "What say about making fun of people based on their appearance?"

"That's dad's thing?" Eric asked.

"Yeah," his brother replied.

<https://www.rawstory.com/2017/11/snl-hilariously-re-enacts-donald-trump-jr-and-erics-liaison-with-wikileaks-julian-assange/>



Julian Assange ♦ @JulianAssange · 20 nov.



Haha. Love Kate McKinnon--even if the facts are reversed. Jr was ignored when he asked about our publications and got nothing. WikiLeaks on the other hand did manage to get Jr to publish his emails. Poor Eric.



WikiLeaks Cold Open - SNL

Eric (Alex Moffat) and Donald Trump Jr. (Mikey Day) meet with Julian Assange (Kate McKinnon) to get dirt on Hillary Clinton. #SNL #SNL43 Get more SNL: <http://youtube.com>

<https://twitter.com/julianassange>

Signs of U.K. Misconduct in Assange Case

The world's most prominent freedom-of-the-press case remains the legal pressure on WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange, still in Ecuador's London embassy amid signs of U.K. prosecutorial misconduct, reports Dennis J Bernstein.

*Dennis J Bernstein
Consortium News
November 18, 2017*

A British court proceeding on a freedom of information request regarding how the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) dealt with the case of WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange has revealed that CPS deleted relevant emails from the account of a now-retired CPS lawyer, Paul Close.

However, one email that wasn't destroyed shows the CPS lawyer advising Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny not to interview Assange in London, a decision that has helped keep Assange stuck for more than five years in Ecuador's London embassy where he had been granted asylum. Finally, in late 2016, after Swedish prosecutors did question Assange at the embassy, they dropped sex abuse allegations against him, but he still faces possible arrest in the U.K. as well as potential extradition to the U.S., where officials have denounced him for releasing classified material.

Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi, who has worked on WikiLeaks disclosures as a media partner since 2009, has made freedom of information requests in several countries regarding the Assange case. On Monday, I spoke with Estelle Dehon, a lawyer for Maurizi and Assange.

Dennis Bernstein: You represented Julian Assange and Stefania Maurizi in court today. Give us the background, what got you into court today?

Estelle Dehon: It has to do with access to information. In the United States there is legislation which can allow individuals to have access to official information held by public authorities. We have the same type of system in the United Kingdom.

My client, the extraordinary Italian investigative journalist Stefania Maurizi, made a freedom of information request to the Crown Prosecution Service for information about Julian Assange. In particular, she was asking for copies of correspondence between the Crown Prosecution Service and the Swedish prosecution authorities and any correspondence with the US State Department, the Department of Justice, or the state of Ecuador. Obviously, this all relates to the situation that has occurred with Mr. Assange being arbitrarily detained in the Ecuadorian embassy.

Dennis Bernstein: There were revelations just a week or two ago that some of the key information you are seeking has been destroyed.

Estelle Dehon: Information has been coming out piecemeal. Initially, the Crown Prosecution Service refused to provide anything. As the appeal has been going forward before the tribunal, they started to release information. Just last week we were informed that the email account of the main lawyer in the case who was corresponding with the Swedish Prosecution Authority was deleted when he retired from the Crown Prosecution Service in 2014. One of the things we were asking today was how that could possibly have taken place. We had been told that the extradition matter had come to an end when the Supreme Court in 2012 upheld the arrest warrant for Mr. Assange.

So on the one hand the Crown Prosecution Service is saying that at that point the extradition matter we were dealing with came to an end. But on the other hand, they are saying, as a way of resisting full disclosure, that the extradition matter is ongoing. So which is it? If this is a case that is closed, in which case emails can be deleted then in the public interest, as much information as possible should be released. And if this is a case that is ongoing, then what could the justification possibly be for deleting the email account of one of the key people involved?

Dennis Bernstein: Could you talk a little about the documents that have already been released and what it is you are still looking for?

Estelle Dehon: A number of pieces of correspondence between the Crown Prosecution Service and the Swedish Prosecution Authority have been released, some of them with only slight redaction and some of them very heavily redacted. One of the things they are arguing today at the tribunal is that these redactions should be removed. That correspondence really looks at the flow of information from Sweden to the Crown Prosecution Service and back again. This information revealed that the Crown Prosecution Service had advised the Swedish prosecutor not to travel to the United Kingdom to interview Mr. Assange, despite the fact that that offer had been made. That advice was provided very early on, in January 2011. One of the things we seek through the information request is to understand why that advice was given at that time and why that advice seemed to remain the same, despite the situation arising with the Ecuadorian embassy.

I must explain that we rely quite heavily on the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, who made a determination in December 2015, as the result of a complaint made by Mr. Assange, that they considered Mr. Assange was being arbitrarily detained in the Ecuadorian embassy.

We don't explicitly say as part of our case that the tribunal has to come to the same determination. What we say is that, because this very respected United Nations body came to that conclusion, that is highly relevant to the correspondence and the advice between the Crown Prosecution Service and the Swedish authorities. We still haven't seen any indication that that UN decision changed the way the authorities

were dealing with Mr. Assange, with the way they were refusing to come and question him.

One of the revelations from the court case today was that the Crown Prosecution Service certainly did not consider that the determination by the UN panel made any difference to the way in which they were treating Mr. Assange's case. But we are still persisting with the request, to see if any of the information that has been provided can be unredacted.

Dennis Bernstein: In terms of the destroyed documents, the Crown Prosecution Service is saying they don't have the slightest idea what documents were destroyed or the implications of those documents. Do you believe that?

Estelle Dehon: I think I do believe that. As I understand it, the email account has been completely destroyed. There is no way of getting it back. At a very high level we know that whatever was in the email account of that lawyer having to do with Assange's case is now gone. All that remains is the correspondence that was printed out. And we are told that we have been provided with all the emails that exist in hard copy, albeit heavily redacted. Today, however, it was revealed that, despite assurances from the Crown Prosecution Service that they had released all the relevant documents, it turns out they may have uncovered some further emails.

Dennis Bernstein: Britain has worked very closely with the United States in intelligence matters. Is there any indication that the big hand of the United States has been dictating the course of events here, for example, by preventing the Swedish ambassador from conducting the interview with Assange and possibly finding out that there wasn't any substance to the charges against him?

Estelle Dehon: There is certainly no evidence of that in the information that has been disclosed to us or in what has been presented in court. What we don't know is what the documents that have not been disclosed might show in that regard. We don't know if there has been any influence exerted by the United States.

A key part of my client, Ms. Maurizio's, request was for correspondence between the Crown Prosecution Service and the US State Department and the US Department of Justice. The response we had today was essentially a blanket "no." **The Crown Prosecution Service will neither confirm nor deny whether such correspondence exists.**

One of the things we will be asking the tribunal to rule on is that that is not a lawful approach for them to take. Our freedom of information law does not deal in blanket bans, it doesn't countenance that kind of secrecy. Our freedom of information law looks at the public interest and makes an objective determination about whether information should be confirmed or denied.

Dennis Bernstein: What is at the core of this case for you? What do you think this is really all about?

Estelle Dehon: First of all, I should explain that we were not before a high court today, we were before a body called an information tribunal. **We may end up in the court system if we don't get the type of decision we think we should get in the tribunal system.** But right now we are still at the very early stages.

In terms of what I think is at the heart of this case, I believe it is the clash between free speech and freedom of the press versus an official culture of secrecy. One of the great hopes of the information access regime which was put in place in 2000 in the United Kingdom was that it would foster a culture of openness. There wouldn't be any area where the stock response was to shut down and not to engage with the media.

Unfortunately, in certain areas such as extradition matters, it hasn't had that effect. The ethos of the freedom of information act, the important watchdog role that journalists play, simply hasn't featured on their radar.

And then, of course, Julian Assange's case is a very particular one. It is clear from the limited material we have been provided that the Crown Prosecution Service believed from the start that this was not just another extradition request. That is clearly because of the personality involved and because of the work Assange has undertaken with WikiLeaks. At the heart of this case is the clash between a very open, non-state organization taking state documents and publishing outside of what a lot of countries are familiar with, between that and a culture of secrecy.

My hope is that in some small way this information tribunal will confront the public authorities who still look to be secret first and say to them, that is not the right approach. You have to consider properly and carefully the public interest in disclosure. Our own information commissioner has acknowledged that there was a significant public interest in the information requested by Ms. Maurizi. If that is the case, you cannot just close up and refuse to provide information. That cannot be your stock response.

Dennis Bernstein: Would you refer to Julian Assange as a journalist?

Estelle Dehon: We consider that he is an editor. Ms. Maurizi explained this to the tribunal today. As traditional journalists do, Assange speaks to sources and obtains information. And then he and WikiLeaks seek to validate that information. That is the editorial role. Then he works with media partners to release the information. That process, while it doesn't conform to the traditional media process, is in our view a type of journalism. We have characterized him as an editor and WikiLeaks as a journalistic organization.

Certainly Ms. Maurizi, in her role as an investigative journalist working with WikiLeaks, is a very clear example of a defender of democracy, a watchdog within the media looking to oppose corruption and shine light where it has not been shone before.

Dennis Bernstein: The courageous Israeli journalist Amira Hass once described the role of the journalist as "to monitor centers of power and report back to the people."

Estelle Dehon: Especially in an era where states exercise very significant power, and media organizations, however independent they try to be, can be influenced by that, a non-state, non-traditional actor such as WikiLeaks, which releases information not just to journalists but to the public at large is an important element of a democratic watchdog.

Dennis J Bernstein is a host of "Flashpoints" on the Pacifica radio network and the author of Special Ed: Voices from a Hidden Classroom.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/11/18/signs-of-u-k-misconduct-in-assange-case>

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange warns Trump that full net neutrality repeal could inhibit tweets

*Daniel Chaitin
Washington Examiner
Nov 21, 2017*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange tweeted at President Trump, noting that "some form" of net neutrality is important to have as the Republican-controlled Federal Communications Commission is poised to roll back the Obama-era Internet regulations in a vote next month.

At risk, the **notorious** secrets-leaker explained, is Trump's ability to effectively communicate with the world via tweets.

"Dear @realDonaldTrump: 'net neutrality' of some form is important," Assange tweeted Tuesday. "Your opponents control most internet companies. Without neutrality they can make your tweets load slowly, CNN load fast and infest everyone's phones with their ads. Careful."

The net neutrality regulations prevent ISPs from charging more for certain services, like Netflix for example, and blocks them from slowing down or speeding up content, which consumer advocates warn could be used by these ISPs to give their own content preferential treatment. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai argues that repealing net neutrality will be good for business innovation.

Trump often clashes with CNN, and other media outlets he deems as "fake news." The Trump administration is currently suing one of the largest Internet service providers, AT&T, to in an effort to prevent its purchase of Time Warner, which owns CNN.

Trump's use of Twitter has become a controversial sticking point in American politics, as critics lament his often-inflammatory tweets, some of which are directed at foreign leaders like North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Some watchdog groups have also sued Trump over how he sometimes deletes tweets, which they say is breaking federal law by destroying federal records.

WikiLeaks is a secrets-leaking website which has published stolen emails from Democratic officials during the 2016 campaign and information on CIA hacking tools, among other things. Agencies in the U.S. intelligence community concluded with high confidence in January that WikiLeaks was a front for Russian intelligence operation.

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/wikileaks-founder-julian-assange-warns-trump-that-full-net-neutrality-repeal-could-inhibit-tweets/article/2641445>

Ecuador warns Assange over support for Spain's Catalonia

France24
22 November 2017

Ecuador has told WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to avoid making statements that could affect the country's international relations after he expressed support for Catalanian independence from Spain, the foreign ministry said Wednesday.

Assange, who initially moved into London's Ecuadorian embassy five years ago to avoid arrest over now-dropped Swedish rape charges, angered Madrid after addressing hundreds of people in Barcelona via video link in September.

"The Ecuadorian authorities have reiterated to Mr Assange his obligation not to make statements or activities that could affect Ecuador's international relations, which must be preserved, as is the case with Spain," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

It added Assange "has formally committed to observe behavior that is compatible with the will of the Ecuadorian state."

Although Swedish prosecutors dropped their rape probe, Assange — who denied all allegations — remains in the embassy over fears he will be extradited to the United States and put on trial for WikiLeaks publishing leaked secret US military documents and diplomatic cables in 2010.

US justice authorities have never confirmed that they have Assange under investigation or are seeking his extradition.

But, when asked in May if arresting Assange was a "priority" for Washington, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said that "we will seek to put some people in jail."

<http://www.france24.com/en/20171122-ecuador-warns-assange-over-support-spains-catalonia>

Ecuador warns Assange over Catalonia comments

Euronews
23/11/2017

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is under fire once again — this time from the government of Ecuador.

Assange has been holed up at its London embassy since 2012, after Swedish prosecutors filed rape charges against him.

The country's foreign ministry has asked Assange to stop making statements that could affect Ecuador's diplomatic relations. The demand came after Spain complained about contacts between the Australian activist and Catalan secessionists. Assange has been vocal in his support for Catalonia's independence and has taken to social media to criticise and goad Spanish authorities. In September he offered a reward for information on the use of Spanish security forces during the region's independence referendum.

Ecuador's president is scheduled to visit Madrid next month and Quito is keen to stress its support for Spain's territorial integrity.

This is the second warning for Assange — in November the embassy cut off his internet after Wikileaks published emails from Hillary Clinton's U.S. presidential campaign.

Ecuador says it will continue to grant Assange asylum and protect him from any attempt to extradict him to the United States.

http://www.euronews.com/2017/11/23/ecuador-warns-assange-over-catalonia-comments?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

2017-12-05

The Holberg Debate 2017: "Propaganda, Facts and Fake News"

Julian Assange, John Pilger and Jonathan Heawood discuss the presence of propaganda in news and social media, and its democratic implications.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqEtKyuyngs>

Julian Assange: The Flashing Red Light

Jaraparilla

6 Dec. 2017

According to Julian Assange, censorship is always a sign of fear. It expresses weakness. It is like a flashing red light that tells everyone, "Hey, there is something to see over here." It is also a tacit admission by censors that their system can be reformed through the power of free speech — why else would they fear it?

In fact, as Julian told Hans Ulrich Obrist in May 2011, this understanding is a key to how and why WikiLeaks was first established:

"So, it was an epiphany to see the signal of censorship to always be an opportunity, to see that when organizations or governments of various kinds attempt to contain knowledge and suppress it, **they are giving you the most important information you need to know: that there is something worth looking at** -- to see if it should be exposed -- and that censorship expresses weakness, not strength."

From this perspective, it is fascinating to look at how many powerful people and supposedly benign institutions have tried — and failed — to silence WikiLeaks. What we discover is that Julian Assange himself has now become that flashing red light. **By repeatedly trying to silence and smear him, the censors of truth have only exposed themselves.**

In 2010, just when WikiLeaks revelations about Iraq, Afghanistan and the US State Department began rocking governments around the world, Julian was falsely labelled a "Double Rapist" on the front pages of global newspapers. Interpol issued a warrant for his arrest, even though the allegations (which remain unproven, because Sweden never filed charges, so innocence should be presumed) were not considered crimes in other countries. On December 7th, 2010, the British police threw Assange into Wandsworth Prison and locked him in solitary confinement for ten days, only releasing him after supporters posted a massive £140,000 bond. He was shackled with an electronic GPS ankle bracelet and forced to report daily to the local police station. Senior US political figures called for Assange to be arrested, tortured or assassinated. US banking giants, with the help of PayPal, cut off WikiLeaks' access to funds.

Publicly, the British government insisted that Assange was being treated like any other suspect. But we now know that the UK Crown Prosecutor privately assured Sweden that this would not be treated like a normal case. In fact they even asked the Swedes not to come and question Assange in London, which would have been normal procedure. And then they destroyed the paperwork, before the case was even closed!

And we only know this thanks to documents obtained by an Italian journalist, Stefania Maurizi, who is still pushing for more information. **The British press have been too busy assassinating Assange's character to even investigate the case.**

The US media, the CIA, the Australian government, and many others have similarly tried to smear or silence WikiLeaks and Assange over the past eight years. But self-censorship has also become a major problem: people exposed to so much relentless anti-WikiLeaks propaganda are prone to fall silent, or modify their views, lest they too be branded an "enemy of the state". On Twitter, for example, many journalists insist they support WikiLeaks journalism, but repeatedly express contempt for Julian Assange. It's difficult to get these people to even discuss the facts of his case, because **they don't really want to know**. They ignore you or block you instead.

What we see is that Assange and WikiLeaks have broken no laws, but instead have broken an unspoken taboo. We are not supposed to look at power too closely, lest the whole artifice of society crumbles. Supporters of the Establishment everywhere assure us that chaos is the only alternative. We are encouraged to tolerate a degree of corruption because after all, that is how the world works. Business is business. None of us are perfect. Now run along, children.

Can YOU handle the truth? Most people, it seems, cannot. Most don't want to break the taboo. They are scared of what they might find. They are scared of the unknown. They are scared of possessing knowledge, because then they might be obliged to do something about it. Better to know nothing than become complicit through inaction.

With an untrustworthy media and the explosion of social media, we find ourselves surrounded by myths. The corporate media peddles myths about who is good and who is bad. For example, compare reporting on Saudi Arabia with Venezuela, or Israel and Russia. This year, many Europeans were shocked to see their leaders endorsing Spain's violent attacks on Catalanian protestors. But the same leaders had worked together in 2013, forcing the Bolivian President's plane to land when the USA thought Edward Snowden was traveling on board. We rarely see networks of power at this level exposed so clearly.

The persecution of WikiLeaks and Assange reveals how corrupt power works in this world. With enough money and the right connections, you can become untouchable. But if you dare push too hard to discover the truth, you will be relentlessly attacked and destroyed. This is not acceptable in a world where the Neoliberal orthodoxy is collapsing, inequality is on the rise, and we urgently need to solve global problems like climate change, resource wars, and the consequent massive flows of asylum seekers.

So don't believe the hype. Don't censor yourself. Get involved. Speak up. Support those with the courage to put their lives on the line for the truth. Together we can change the world.

<http://jaraparilla.blogspot.com>

**Åklagarmyndigheten förlorar i domstol —
mail om Julian Assange ska lämnas till italiensk journalist**

Dagens Juridik
2017-12-05

Den svenska Åklagarmyndigheten hemlig-stämplade för mycket uppgifter när den italienska journalisten begärde att få ta del av handlingar i Assangefallet. Det konstaterar kammarrätten som slår fast att ett tiotal e-mail ska lämnas ut till journalisten.

Den italienska journalisten vände sig till den svenska Åklagarmyndigheten och begärde att få ta del av ett stort antal handlingar, främst i form av korrespondens, mellan Åklagarmyndigheten och flera utländska myndigheter mellan augusti 2015 och mars 2017.

Hon begärde också att få ta del av korrespondensen mellan Åklagarmyndigheten och Julian Assanges försvarare för samma tidsperiod.

Åklagarmyndigheten lämnade ut delar av materialet men maskade också stora delar av informationen med hänvisning till sekretess.

Förundersökningsledaren i Assangefallet, överåklagare Marianne Ny, hänvisade dels till förundersökningssekretessen, dels till den bestämmelse som gäller Sveriges förbindelser med andra stater.

Journalisten överklagade Åklagarmyndighetens beslut till Kammarrätten i Stockholm och begärde att allt material, alltså även det som hade hållits hemligt av Åklagarmyndigheten, skulle lämnas ut till henne.

Hon pekade på att hon i en tidigare begäran som gällde Assangefallet fått ut mer material som hade ett mycket mer intressant innehåll än det hon fått ut genom sin senaste begäran.

När det gäller vissa av handlingarna, särskilt de korrespondensen mellan Åklagarmyndigheten och myndigheter i USA, finns det enligt kvinnan ett starkt allmänintresse av att handlingarna lämnas ut.

Kammarrätten konstaterar nu att en stor del av det material som inte lämnats ut även fortsättningsvis är sekretessbelagt.

Journalisten har inte närmare redogjort för vilket material hon tagit del av sedan tidigare och kammarrätten anser att det inte är klarlagt att innehållet i handlingarna i allt väsentligt är känt för henne. Det kan därför inte lämnas ut på den grunden.

Kammarrätten gör dock en annan bedömning än Åklagarmyndigheten och slår fast att Åklagarmyndigheten har hemligstämplat för mycket material. Åklagarmyndigheten åläggs därför att lämna ut ett tiotal e-postmeddelanden och ytterligare två handlingar.

När det gäller en specifik handling som journalisten har begärt att få ta del av så återförvisar kammarrätten detta eftersom Åklagarmyndigheten av någon anledning inte har tagit ställning till den begäran.

<http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2017/12/aklagarmyndigheten-forlorar-i-domstol-mail-om-julian-assange-ska-lamnas-till-italiensk-journ>

DEC 7 2017

Julian Assange detained without charge 7 years

“ There is no way to prosecute Assange for publishing information **without the same theory being applied to Journalists**

Former US Justice Department spokesman
Matthew Miller

“ The essence of the **First Amendment** right to freedom of the press is not so much the right to print as it is **the right to read**. The rights of readers are not to be curtailed because of the geographical origin of printed materials.

US District Court ruling
United States v. The Publishers of Proceedings, 1802

“ Quite simply, our motive is identical to that claimed by the *New York Times* and *The Post* — to publish newsworthy content

WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange

“ A source's illegal conduct does not suffice to remove **the First Amendment shield** from speech about a matter of public concern

US Supreme Court ruling
Bartnicki v. Hopkins, 2007

“ Never in the history of the US has a publisher been prosecuted for **presenting truthful information to the public**

Ben Wizner
American Civil Liberties Union

UN ruling ignored by UK & US for nearly 2 years

“ Assange's arbitrary detention should be brought to an end and he should be afforded the right to compensation

So why is the US grand jury and investigation into WikiLeaks ongoing?

End the WikiLeaks witch hunt iamwikileaks.org

Julian Assange bets \$100K that CBS report on Donald Trump Jr., Wikileaks is false

Rebecca Joseph
Global News
December 8, 2017

Julian Assange is challenging a report by CBS News that details an email reportedly received by Donald Trump Jr. that offered access to hacked information provided through Wikileaks during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

According to CBS and CNN, the email was received by Trump Jr. along with others in the Trump campaign (including a rarely used email for Donald Trump himself) and

contained a website url and a decryption key on Sept. 14, 2016. (The email was first reported to have been sent on Sept. 4 but both news organizations corrected the date.)

But Assange said the reports were false. On Twitter, he challenged the Redstone family, who are majority owners in CBS, to a \$100,000 bet on whether or not the claims are true.

CBS received news of the email from a source who also received the email, while CNN received information on the email from congressional investigators.

Investigators are trying to figure out whether Wikileaks had additional contact with Trump Jr. as the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election continues.

Trump Jr.'s lawyer said the email was among the deluge of emails received by the campaign, and it wasn't taken seriously.

"The email was never read or responded to — and the House Intelligence Committee knows this," Alan S. Futerfas said, according to the Washington Post. "It is profoundly disappointing that members of the House Intelligence Committee would deliberately leak a document, with the misleading suggestion that the information was not public when they know that there is not a scintilla of evidence that Mr. Trump Jr. read or responded to the email."

The email came a month before Wikileaks published the emails of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chair, but two months after the leak of Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails. It also came a day after the leak of records from former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

It's unclear whether the information in the email refers to new data or previously released data.

But the Washington Post obtained a copy of the email and said it referred to "archive of files from the DNC."

"It's not clear what this has to do with @WikiLeaks. Many enthusiastic readers emailed around archives of our publications during the election," Assange wrote on Twitter.

"CNN+CBS story about @WikiLeaks today turns out to be 100% fake news," he wrote, linking to the story.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3906222/julian-assange-cbs-report-donald-trump-jr-wikileaks/>

The U.S. Media Yesterday Suffered its Most Humiliating Debacle in Ages: Now Refuses All Transparency Over What Happened

Glenn Greenwald
The Intercept
December 9, 2017

Friday was one of the most embarrassing days for the U.S. media in quite a long time. The humiliation orgy was kicked off by CNN, with MSNBC and CBS close behind, with countless pundits, commentators and operatives joining the party throughout the day. By the end of the day, it was clear that several of the nation's largest and most influential news outlets had spread an explosive but completely false news story to millions of people, while refusing to provide any explanation of how it happened.

The spectacle began on Friday morning at 11:00 am EST, when the Most Trusted Name in News™ [CNN] spent 12 straight minutes on air flamboyantly hyping an exclusive bombshell **report that seemed to prove that WikiLeaks, last September, had secretly offered the Trump campaign, even Donald Trump himself, special access to the DNC emails before they were published on the internet.** As CNN sees the world, this would prove collusion between the Trump family and WikiLeaks and, more importantly, between Trump and Russia, since the U.S. intelligence community regards WikiLeaks as an “arm of Russian intelligence,” and therefore, so does the U.S. media.

This entire revelation was based on an email which CNN strongly implied it had exclusively obtained and had in its possession. The email was sent by someone named “Michael J. Erickson” — someone nobody had heard of previously and whom CNN could not identify — to Donald Trump, Jr., offering a decryption key and access to DNC emails that WikiLeaks had “uploaded.” The email was a smoking gun, in CNN's extremely excited mind, because it was dated September 4 — ten days before WikiLeaks began promoting access to those emails online — and thus proved that the Trump family was being offered special, unique access to the DNC archive: likely by WikiLeaks and the Kremlin.

It's impossible to convey with words what a spectacularly devastating scoop CNN believed it had, so it's necessary to watch it for yourself to see the tone of excitement, breathlessness and gravity the network conveyed as they clearly believed they were delivering a near-fatal blow on the Trump/Russia collusion story:

<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened>

There was just one small problem with this story: it was fundamentally false, in the most embarrassing way possible. Hours after CNN broadcast its story — and then hyped it over and over and over — the Washington Post reported that CNN got the key fact of the story wrong.

The email was not dated September 4, as CNN claimed, but rather September 14 — which means it was sent after WikiLeaks had already published access to the DNC emails online. Thus, rather than offering some sort of special access to Trump, “Michael J. Erickson” was simply some random person from the public encouraging the Trump family to look at the publicly available DNC emails that WikiLeaks — as everyone by then already knew — had publicly promoted. In other words, the email was the exact opposite of what CNN presented it as being.

How did CNN end up aggressively hyping such a spectacularly false story? They refuse to say. Many hours after their story got exposed as false, the journalist who originally presented it, Congressional reporter Manu Raju, finally posted a tweet noting the correction. CNN's PR Department then claimed that “multiple sources” had provided CNN with the false date. And Raju went on CNN, in muted tones, to note the

correction, explicitly claiming that “two sources” had each given him the false date on the email, while also making clear that **CNN did not even see the email, but only had sources describe its purported contents:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ3PWnN2XEM>

All of this prompts the glaring, obvious, and critical question — one which CNN refuses to address: how did “multiple sources” all misread the date on this document, in exactly the same way, and toward the same end, and then feed this false information to CNN?

It is, of course, completely plausible that one source might innocently misread a date on a document. But how is it remotely plausible that multiple sources could all innocently and in good faith misread the date in exactly the same way, all to cause to be disseminated a blockbuster revelation about Trump/Russia/WikiLeaks collusion? This is the critical question that CNN simply refuses to answer. In other words, CNN refuses to provide the most minimal transparency to enable the public to understand what happened here.

Why does this matter so much? For so many significant reasons:

To begin with, it’s hard to overstate how fast, far and wide this false story traveled. Democratic Party pundits, operatives and journalists with huge social media platforms predictably jumped on the story immediately, announcing that it proved collusion between Trump and Russia (through WikiLeaks). One tweet from Democratic Congressman Ted Lieu, claiming that this proved evidence of criminal collusion, was re-tweeted thousands and thousands of times in just a few hours (Lieu quietly deleted the tweet after I noted its falsity, and long after it went very viral, without ever telling his followers that the CNN story, and therefore his accusation, had been debunked).

Brookings’ Benjamin Wittes, whose star has risen as he has promoted himself as a friend of former FBI Director Jim Comey, not only promoted the CNN story in the morning, but did so with the word “Boom” — which he uses to signal that a major blow has been delivered to Trump on the Russia story — along with a gif of a cannon being detonated:

Incredibly, to this very moment — almost 24 hours after CNN’s story was debunked — Wittes has never noted to his more than 200,000 followers that the story he so excitedly promoted turned out to be utterly false, even though he returned to Twitter long after the story was debunked to tweet about other matters. He just left his false and inflammatory claims uncorrected.

Talking Points Memo’s Josh Marshall believed the story was so significant that he used an image of an atomic bomb detonating at the top of his article discussing its implications, an article he tweeted to his roughly 250,000 followers. Only at night was an editor’s note finally added noting that the whole thing was false.

It’s hard to quantify exactly how many people were deceived — filled with false news and propaganda — by the CNN story. But thanks to Democratic-loyal journalists and operatives who decree every Trump/Russia claim to be true without seeing any evidence, it’s certainly safe to say that many hundreds of thousands of people, almost certainly millions, were exposed to these false claims.

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This Sounds Very Big To Me

SHARE TWEET PIN-IT

By **JOSH MARSHALL** Published **DECEMBER 8, 2017 9:59 AM** Like 36 14495 Views

[ed.note: As noted in my editor's note on the post above, CNN subsequently corrected this story. The correction – dating the email to September 14th, rather than September 14th dramatically changed what the email meant. See the editor's note above for more

DAYBREAKER

LiveV

WaPo: 9th Circuit Judge Acc Inappropriate Comments
The Washington Post reported two of them on the record...

Reports: Franks Badgered A Impregnate Them For \$5 Mil

Surely anyone who has any minimal concerns about journalistic accuracy — which would presumably include all the people who have spent the last year lamenting Fake News, propaganda, Twitter bots and the like — would demand an accounting as to how a major U.S. media outlet ended up filling so many people's brains with totally false news. That alone should prompt demands from CNN for an explanation about what happened here. No Russian Facebook ad or Twitter bot could possibly have anywhere near the impact as this CNN story had when it comes to deceiving people with blatantly inaccurate information.

Second, the “multiple sources” who fed CNN this false information did not confine themselves to that network. They were apparently very busy eagerly spreading the false information to as many media outlets as they could find. In the middle of the day, CBS News claimed that it had independently “confirmed” CNN's story about the email, and published its own breathless article discussing the grave implications of this discovered collusion.

Most embarrassing of all was what MSNBC did. You just have to watch this report from its “intelligence and national security correspondent” Ken Dilanian to believe it. Like CBS, Dilanian also claimed that he independently “confirmed” the false CNN report from “two sources with direct knowledge of this.” Dilanian, whose career in the

U.S. media continues to flourish the more he is exposed as someone who faithfully parrots what the CIA tells him to say (since that is one of the most coveted and valued attributes in US journalism), spent three minutes mixing evidence-free CIA claims as fact with totally false assertions about what his multiple “sources with direct knowledge” told him about all this. Please watch this — again, not just the content but the tenor and tone of how they “report” — as it is Baghdad-Bob-level embarrassing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBSmBMT4v6U>

Think about what this means. It means that at least two — and possibly more — sources, which these media outlets all assessed as credible in terms of having access to sensitive information, all fed the same false information to multiple news outlets at the same time. For multiple reasons, the probability is very high that these sources were Democratic members of the House Intelligence Committee (or their high-level staff members), which is the committee that obtained access to Trump Jr.’s emails, although it’s certainly possible that it’s someone else. We won’t know until these news outlets deign to report this crucial information to the public: which “multiple sources” acted jointly to disseminate incredibly inflammatory, false information to the nation’s largest news outlets?

L.A. Times Disowns Reporter Outed as a CIA Collaborator

By Jonathan Valeria



Recently released emails indicate that prominent national security reporter Ken Dilanian — formerly with the Los Angeles Times, currently with the Associated Press (and from 1997-2007 the Philadelphia Inquirer) — shared stories prior to publication with CIA press office seeking their approval, according to a story up on [The Intercept](#). Now, it is not

Just last week, the Washington Post decided — to great applause (including mine) — to expose a source to whom they had promised anonymity and off-the-record protections because they discovered that she was purposely feeding them false information as part of a scheme by Project Veritas to discredit the Post. It’s a well established principle of journalism — one that is rarely followed when it comes to

powerful people in DC — that journalists should expose, rather than protect and conceal, sources who purposely feed them false information to be disseminated to the public.

Is that what happened here? Did these “multiple sources” who fed not just CNN but also MSNBC and CBS completely false information do so deliberately and in bad faith? Until these news outlets provide an accounting of what happened — what one might call “minimal journalistic transparency” — it’s impossible to say for certain. But right now, it’s very difficult to imagine a scenario where multiple sources all fed the wrong date to multiple media outlets innocently and in good faith.

If this were, in fact, a deliberate attempt to cause a false and highly inflammatory story to be reported, then these media outlets have an obligation to expose who the culprits are — just as the Washington Post did last week to the woman making false claims about Roy Moore (it was much easier in that case because the source they exposed was a nobody-in-DC, rather than someone on whom they rely for a steady stream of stories, the way CNN and MSNBC rely on Democratic members of the Intelligence Committee). By contrast, if this were just an innocent mistake, then these media outlets should explain how such an implausible sequence of events could possibly have happened.

Thus far, these media corporations are doing the opposite of what journalists ought to do: rather than informing the public about what happened and providing minimal transparency and accountability for themselves and the high-level officials who caused this to happen, they are hiding behind meaningless, obfuscating statements crafted by PR executives and lawyers.

How can journalists and news outlets so flamboyantly act offended when they’re attacked as being “Fake News” when this is the conduct behind which they hide when they get caught disseminating incredibly consequential false stories?

The more serious you think the Trump/Russia story is, the more dangerous you think it is when Trump attacks the U.S. media as “Fake News,” the more you should be disturbed by what happened here, the more transparency and accountability you should be demanding. If you’re someone who thinks Trump’s attacks on the media are dangerous, then you should be first in line objecting when they act recklessly and demand transparency and accountability from them. It is debacles like this — and the subsequent corporate efforts to obfuscate — that have made the U.S. media so disliked and that fuel and empower Trump’s attacks on them.

Third, **this type of recklessness and falsity is now a clear and highly disturbing trend — one could say a constant — when it comes to reporting on Trump, Russia and WikiLeaks.** I have spent a good part of the last year documenting the extraordinarily numerous, consequential and reckless stories that have been published — and then corrected, rescinded and retracted — by major media outlets when it comes to this story.

All media outlets, of course, will make mistakes. The Intercept certainly has made our share, as have all outlets. And it’s particularly natural, inevitable, for mistakes to be made on a highly complicated, opaque story like the question of the relationship between Trump and the Russians, and questions relating to how WikiLeaks obtained DNC and Podesta emails. That is all to be expected.

But what one should expect with journalistic “mistakes” is that they sometimes go in one direction, and other times go in the other direction. That’s exactly what has not happened here. **Virtually every false story published goes only in one direction: to be as inflammatory and damaging as possible on the Trump/Russia story and about Russia particularly.** At some point, once “mistakes” all start going in the same direction, toward advancing the same agenda, they cease looking like mistakes.

No matter your views on those political controversies, no matter how much you hate Trump or regard Russia as a grave villain and threat to our cherished democracy and freedoms, it has to be acknowledged that when the U.S. media is spewing constant false news about all of this, that, too, is a grave threat to our democracy and cherished freedom.

So numerous are the false stories about Russia and Trump over the last year that I literally cannot list them all. Just consider the ones from the last week alone, as enumerated by the New York Times yesterday in its news report on CNN’s embarrassment:

It was also yet another prominent reporting error at a time when news organizations are confronting a skeptical public, and a president who delights in attacking the media as “fake news.”

Last Saturday, ABC News suspended a star reporter, Brian Ross, after an inaccurate report that Donald Trump had instructed Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser, to contact Russian officials during the presidential race.

The report fueled theories about coordination between the Trump campaign and a foreign power, and stocks dropped after the news. In fact, Mr. Trump’s instruction to Mr. Flynn came after he was president-elect.

Several news outlets, including Bloomberg and The Wall Street Journal, also inaccurately reported this week that Deutsche Bank had received a subpoena from the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, for President Trump’s financial records.

The president and his circle have not been shy about pointing out the errors.

That’s just the last week alone. Let’s just remind ourselves of how many times major media outlets have made humiliating, breathtaking errors on the Trump/Russia story, always in the same direction, toward the same political goals. Here is just a sample of incredibly inflammatory claims that traveled all over the internet before having to be corrected, walk-backed, or retracted — often long after the initial false claims spread, and where **the corrections receive only a tiny fraction of the attention with which the initial false stories are lavished:**

Russia hacked into the U.S. electric grid to deprive Americans of heat during winter (Wash Post)

An anonymous group (PropOrNot) documented how major U.S. political sites are Kremlin agents (Wash Post)

WikiLeaks has a long, documented relationship with Putin (Guardian)

A secret server between Trump and a Russian bank has been discovered (Slate)

RT hacked C-SPAN and caused disruption in its broadcast (Fortune)

Crowdstrike finds Russians hacked into a Ukrainian artillery app (Crowdstrike)

Russians attempted to hack elections systems in 21 states (multiple news outlets, echoing Homeland Security)

Links have been found between Trump ally Anthony Scaramucci and a Russian investment fund under investigation (CNN)

That really is just a small sample. So continually awful and misleading has this reporting been that even Vladimir Putin's most devoted critics — such as Russian expatriate Masha Gessen, oppositional Russian journalists, and anti-Kremlin liberal activists in Moscow — are constantly warning that the U.S. media's unhinged, ignorant, paranoid reporting on Russia is harming their cause in all sorts of ways, in the process destroying the credibility of the U.S. media in the eyes of Putin's opposition (who — unlike Americans who have been fed a steady news and entertainment propaganda diet for decades about Russia — actually understand the realities of that country).



The image is a screenshot of a tweet from the Washington Post (@washingtonpost). The tweet text reads: "Breaking: Russian hackers penetrated U.S. electricity grid through a utility in Vermont". Below the text is a photograph of a city street with several cars and a white van. A mouse cursor is pointing at the top right corner of the photo. Below the photo, there is a text box with the following text: "Russian operation hacked a Vermont utility, showing risk to U.S. electrical gri... A code associated with the Russian hacking operation dubbed Grizzly Steppe was detected." and the URL "washingtonpost.com".



National Security

Russian government hackers do not appear to have targeted Vermont utility, say people close to investigation



By Elen Nakashima and Juliet Elperin January 2

As federal officials investigate suspicious Internet activity found last week on a Vermont utility computer, they are finding evidence that the incident is not linked to any Russian government effort to target or hack the utility, according to experts and officials close to the investigation.

An employee at Burlington Electric Department was checking his Yahoo email account Friday and triggered an alert indicating that his computer had connected to a suspicious IP address associated by authorities with the Russian hacking operation that infiltrated the Democratic Party. Officials told the company that traffic with this particular address is found elsewhere in the country and is not unique to Burlington Electric, suggesting the company wasn't being targeted by the Russians. Indeed, officials say it is possible that the traffic is benign, since this particular IP address is not always connected to malicious activity.

U.S. media outlets are very good at demanding respect. They love to imply, if not outright state, that being patriotic and a good American means that one must reject efforts to discredit them and their reporting because that's how one defends press freedom.

But journalists also have the responsibility not just to demand respect and credibility but to earn it. That means that there shouldn't be such a long list of abject humiliations, in which completely false stories are published to plaudits, traffic and other rewards, only to fall apart upon minimal scrutiny. It certainly means that all of these "errors" shouldn't be pointing in the same direction, pushing the same political outcome or journalistic conclusion.

But what it means most of all is that when media outlets are responsible for such grave and consequential errors as the spectacle we witnessed yesterday, they have to take responsibility for it by offering transparency and accountability. In this case, that can't mean hiding behind PR and lawyer silence and waiting for this to just all blow away.

At minimum, these networks — CNN, MSNBC and CBS — have to either identify who purposely fed them this blatantly false information, or explain how it's possible that "multiple sources" all got the same information wrong in innocence and good faith. Until they do that, their cries and protests the next time they're attacked as "Fake News" should fall on deaf ears, since the real author of those attacks — the reason those attacks resonate — is themselves and their own conduct.

(Update: hours after this article was published on Saturday — a full day-and-a-half after his original tweets promoting the false CNN story with a "boom" and a cannon — Benjamin Wittes finally got around to noting that the CNN story he hyped has "serious problems"; needless to say, that acknowledgment received a fraction of re-tweets from his followers as his original tweets hyping the story attracted).

<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/>

The Entire Russian Hacking Narrative Is Invalidated In This Single Assange Tweet

Caitlin Johnstone
Medium
December 11, 2017

WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange has been very active on Twitter lately, even for him. Between his frequent posts about the fight for Catalan independence from Spain and about WikiLeaks' latest release on Russian domestic surveillance tactics, it's easy to inadvertently skim past a single post unrelated to either of those topics when reading through his Twitter page. Luckily due to its immense significance it's enjoying some circulation, and my primary goal with this article is to get even more eyes on it.



This one tweet completely invalidates the notion that Robert Mueller has been conducting a legitimate investigation into the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections. Regardless of the degree of suspicion in which Assange is held, there is absolutely no excuse for the people responsible for investigating Russia not to have had any interaction of any kind whatsoever with one of the central characters in the official narrative about what Russia is supposed to have done.

If his job was to find out what actually happened last year, Mueller would have spoken with Assange personally, and he would have done so long ago. But finding out what happened last year is not Mueller's job. Mueller's job is to enforce a pre-existing narrative. It is painfully obvious at this point that the Senate Intelligence Committee and Mueller's team have been avoiding Assange the way Hillary Clinton avoids personal responsibility because Assange has said multiple times that the Russian government is not the source of the DNC leaks or the Podesta emails released last year.

If this is an actual investigation into an actual alleged crime, then Assange is necessarily either (A) a source of useful information, (B) a person of interest, or (C) a suspect in the crime itself. None of those allows for any excuse for not speaking to him. If it's either (A) or (B), he's a potential goldmine of information for their investigation to make use of. If it's (C), they can grill him and try to get him to give something up. Even someone caught on video committing a murder eventually gets interviewed by the law enforcement officials responsible for investigating their case to establish the accused's side of the story; if they didn't, they'd be committing malpractice. Since they did not seek to question Assange early and extensively, this cannot possibly be an actual investigation into an actual allegation.

The fact of the matter is that Russia has been America's Public Enemy Number One since the end of World War Two, and for that reason there is a longstanding tradition in the United States of tarring political enemies with baseless accusations of Kremlin ties. Establishment loyalists have been accusing WikiLeaks of being in bed with Russia since long before any election meddling accusations surfaced, despite the organization's long and continued record of publishing critical documents related to the Russian Federation. They have been doing so not because there is any basis for such accusations, but because WikiLeaks is their political enemy. There is nothing more hostile to America's pernicious unelected power establishment than unauthorized truth-telling, and WikiLeaks is currently the world's leader in unauthorized truth-telling. It is that simple.

Mueller's investigation has no interest in finding the truth. Mueller's investigation is actively avoiding all potential sources of truth. The US intelligence community to which Mueller is loyal is the right arm of America's unelected power establishment, and due to conflicting economic and geopolitical interests things have been coming to a head with Russia for a long time. The neoconservative ideology which governs America's foreign policy is geared first and foremost toward preventing the rise of another rival superpower, and the former seat of the Soviet Union will always be first on the list of suspects.

The establishment knows that Russia will need to be beaten down at some point in order to preserve deep state interests, and they've been laying the bricks for that eventual conflict for years. There were concerns that their anointed queen Hillary Clinton was trying to start a war with Russia long before any allegations of hacking or

meddling ever arose; here is an article from June 2015 titled “Hillary Clinton’s hawkish position on Russia troubles both sides of aisle,” which says explicitly, “Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton has pivoted left on domestic issues but stands out on foreign policy as more hawkish than some of her GOP rivals, even stoking fears that she’s ready to put the U.S. on a warpath with Russia.”

Mueller’s investigation has one job, and that job ain’t finding the truth. All this Russia nonsense is geared toward pressuring Trump into cooperating with the escalations that Hillary Clinton was meant to be responsible for overseeing. That’s why it looks so sloppy and desperate all the time; this whole thing was slapped together in the last minute in response to her shocking loss, and they’re operating within a margin of error that’s tighter than a bee’s pussy.

There are a lot of extremely powerful people who have built some massive corporate kingdoms upon this empire, and their investments require this scheme to go smoothly. As noted in a recent Department of Defense Risk Assessment by the US Army Strategic Studies Institute, the US empire is in what it calls “post-primacy” and may currently be on its way out the door.

“In brief,” the assessment reads, “the status quo that was hatched and nurtured by U.S. strategists after World War II and has for decades been the principal ‘beat’ for DoD is not merely fraying but may, in fact, be collapsing. Consequently, the United States’ role in and approach to the world may be fundamentally changing as well.”

Things are not going as planned for America’s true rulers. Not in Syria, not in North Korea, and certainly not in Russia. People’s unprecedented ability to network and share information due to rising internet literacy and access has caused a severe breakdown in the propaganda machine which holds their entire prison together, and people are waking up to their manipulations. These creeps are on the back foot now. Keep fighting and wrest control of the world away from the plutocratic sociopaths who are trying to deceive and enslave us.

Caitlin Johnstone is a 100 percent reader-funded journalist so if you enjoyed this, please consider helping me out by sharing it around, liking me on Facebook, following me on Twitter, or throwing some money into my hat on Patreon.

<https://medium.com/@caityjohnstone/the-entire-russian-hacking-narrative-is-invalidated-in-this-single-assange-tweet-5f36ad25e0f9>

Ecuador Ratifies Support for the Human Rights of Julian Assange

*Prensa Latina
Dec 13, 2017*

The Ecuadorian government has confirmed that it will keep protecting Australian cyber activist Julian Assange, who has remained in asylum since 2012 at the Quito embassy in London, the Foreign Ministry confirmed today.

The statement, issued through the Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, responds to comments on the networks about an alleged decision of the executive to remove the WikiLeaks founder's status.

'Attention! Given the rumors circulating in social networks, the Foreign Ministry reiterates that there is no change in the status of asylum for #JulianAssange. Ecuador will maintain protection as soon [??] as his human rights are endangered,' the Foreign Ministry reported on Twitter.

Assange, whose web portal became worldwide known after spreading thousands of classified documents, especially from the Washington administration, remains unable to leave the Ecuadorian offices, before the threats of the British authorities to apprehend him and extradite him to the United States.

The Australian had a pending process in Sweden for alleged sexual crimes, with charges never formulated, which was filed by the judicial system of that European country.

Quito asked London to grant safe conduct to the cyber-activist, taking into account the Swedish decision, but to date the petition has not been executed. With that permission, Assange could travel to Ecuador.

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=22207&SEO=ecuador-ratifies-support-for-the-human-rights-of-julian-assange>

WikiLeaks recognised as a 'media organisation' by UK tribunal

Definition by the UK information tribunal may assist in Julian Assange's defence against US extradition on grounds of press freedom

*Ewen MacAskill
The Guardian
14 December 2017*

A British tribunal has recognised Julian Assange's WikiLeaks as a "media organisation", a point of contention with the United States, which is seeking to prosecute him and disputes his journalistic credentials.

The issue of whether Assange is a journalist and publisher would almost certainly be one of the main battlegrounds in the event of the US seeking his extradition from the UK.

The definition of WikiLeaks by the information tribunal, which is roughly equivalent to a court, could help Assange's defence against extradition on press freedom grounds.

The US has been considering prosecution of Assange since 2010 when WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of confidential US defence and diplomatic documents. US attorney general Jeff Sessions said in April this year that the arrest of Assange is a priority for the US.

The director of the CIA, Mike Pompeo, after leaks of emails from the US Democratic party and from Hillary Clinton, described WikiLeaks as "a non-state hostile

intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia". He added Assange is not covered by the US constitution, which protects journalists.

But the UK's information tribunal, headed by judge Andrew Bartlett QC, in a summary and ruling published on Thursday on a freedom of information case, **says explicitly: "WikiLeaks is a media organisation which publishes and comments upon censored or restricted official materials involving war, surveillance or corruption, which are leaked to it in a variety of different circumstances."**

The comment is made under a heading that says simply: "Facts".

Assange remains holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London where he has been granted diplomatic asylum.

The tribunal's definition of WikiLeaks comes in the 21-page summary into a freedom of information case heard in London in November. An Italian journalist, Stefania Maurizi, is seeking the release of documents relating to Assange, mainly in regard to extradition, and had lodged an appeal with the tribunal.

While the tribunal dismissed her appeal, it acknowledged there issues weighing in favour of public disclosure in relation to Assange. But it added these were outweighed by a need for confidentiality on the matter of extradition.

The UK Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the US justice department have refused to confirm or deny whether they have discussed extradition of Assange.

Maurizi, likely to take her appeal to a higher tribunal, welcomed Bartlett's acceptance of WikiLeaks as a media organisation but argued the tribunal should have gone a step further by pushing the CPS to confirm whether the US has lodged an extradition request.

"If such a request were made, the UK would not be assisting the US to extradite a narco, a mafia boss, or a drug kingpin. It would be assisting the US to extradite a media publisher to prosecute him and his media organisation for their publications," she said.

The tribunal also looked at the destruction by the CPS of emails relating to Assange. It said the deletion took place when a CPS lawyer retired and it had been believed all significant case papers were collated separately from his email account.

The tribunal said: "We conclude that there was nothing untoward in the deletion of the email account."

Maurizi had put in FOI requests for information relating to communications between the UK and Sweden, where prosecutors were investigating sexual assault allegations against Assange which have since been dropped. Supporters of Assange feared that if he went to Sweden, the US would seek to extradite him from there.

Maurizi also pressed for disclosure of any communications by the CPS and the US to extradite Assange directly from the UK.

Estelle Dehon, who specialises in freedom of information and who represented Maurizi at the tribunal, said that while disappointed with the overall ruling, she welcomed some of the findings.

“Progress has been made because the tribunal accepted that the circumstances of the case raise issues of human rights and press freedom and also agreed that there is a significant public interest in disclosing the information, in particular to increase understanding of how the CPS handled the extradition process and its relationship with a foreign prosecuting authority, “ Dehon said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/dec/14/wikileaks-recognised-as-a-media-organisation-by-uk-tribunal>

Assange welcomes UK ruling that WikiLeaks is a media organisation

*Jason Murdock
Intl. Business Times
December 14, 2017*

WikiLeaks has been recognised as a "media organisation" by a UK tribunal in a ruling that flies in the face of claims by US officials who have branded it a "hostile intelligence agency".

The anti-secrecy website — helmed by Julian Assange — has faced the ire of CIA director Mike Pompeo, who has compared its work to Hezbollah, Isis and al-Qaeda. Over the years, WikiLeaks has disclosed countless documents pilfered from the US government.

The assertion of the first-tier tribunal (information rights) in London was made in a legal filing published on Thursday (14 December) by Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi.

It followed an appeal seeking documents linked to Assange's long-running case between UK prosecutors and their Swedish counterparts.

"WikiLeaks is a media organisation which publishes and comments upon censored or restricted official materials involving war, surveillance or corruption, which are leaked to it in a variety of different circumstances," the tribunal said .

Swedish sex assault allegations against Assange, who remains in London's Ecuadorian embassy, were recently dropped— but he still fears US authorities want his extradition.

The tribunal, in a section detailing the public interest for disclosing any withheld information, described Assange as "the only media publisher and free speech advocate in the Western world who is in a situation that a UN body has characterised as arbitrary detention".

It added: "The circumstances of his case arguably raise issues about human rights and press freedom, which are the subject of legitimate public debate."

As the tribunal ruling came to light, Assange tweeted:



Ultimately, Maurizi's request for documents was dismissed by the tribunal, which ruled that all correspondence referencing Assange and any potential extradition — sent between various prosecuting officials in the UK, US and Sweden — should remain confidential.

In November, just prior to the tribunal, Maurizi revealed that emails sent by a Crown Prosecution Service lawyer linked to the Assange case had gone missing. UK officials brushed off any suggestion of wrongdoing, saying that they were deleted after the lawyer retired.

The judge ruled: "The deletion was made before Ms Maurizi's information request was received. We conclude that there was nothing untoward in the deletion of the email account."

Estelle Dehon, one of Maurizi's legal representatives during the tribunal, told the Guardian: "Progress has been made because the tribunal accepted that the circumstances of the case raise issues of human rights and press freedom."

Since leaking tens of thousands of emails stolen from Democratic Party figures during the 2016 presidential election, the WikiLeaks founder has been dogged by accusations of close Kremlin ties, which he denies. Trump administration officials, meanwhile, want his arrest.

On 20 April, US attorney general Jeff Sessions said Assange's arrest had become a priority. He noted: "We are going to step up our effort. We will seek to put some people in jail."

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/julian-assange-welcomes-uk-ruling-that-wikileaks-media-organisation-1651567>

Assange told not to interfere in Catalonia: Ecuador president

France 24
17 December 2017

Ecuador has warned WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange not to interfere in Catalonia's separatist crisis, Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno said in an interview published Sunday.

Assange, who has been holed up in Ecuador's embassy in London for the past five years, has angered Madrid by using Twitter to pump out messages of support for Catalonia's independence drive and accuse Spain's central government of "repression".

Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis has said there were signs that Assange was "trying to interfere and manipulate" amid the Catalan crisis after the outspoken Australian met last month with a prominent Catalan pro-independence figure.

"We do not want to intervene under any circumstances with respect to Catalonia. We hope the problem is resolved as soon as possible for the benefit of all Spaniards," Moreno told top-selling Spanish daily El Pais.

"We have reminded Mr Assange that he has no reason to interfere in Ecuadorian politics because his status does not allow it. Nor in that of nations that are our friends. He does not have the right to do so and he has committed himself to this."

Last month Ecuador's foreign ministry said it had told Assange to avoid making statements "that could affect Ecuador's international relations" with Spain and other nations.

Moreno begins a three-day official visit to Spain on Sunday with a meeting with Ecuadorian immigrants in Madrid. He is scheduled to hold talks with Spain's King Felipe VI and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Monday.

Assange has been living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since June 2012 after seeking asylum to avoid extradition to Sweden to face a rape allegation.

Although Swedish prosecutors dropped their rape probe in May, Assange --- who denied all allegations --- still faces arrest by British police on a charge of skipping bail if he leaves the embassy.

He fears he will be extradited to the United States and put on trial for WikiLeaks publishing leaked secret US military documents and diplomatic cables in 2010.

Spain was plunged into its worst political crisis since a failed coup attempt in 1981 after the Catalan government pushed ahead with a banned independence referendum on October 1.

Catalonia will vote Thursday in a knife-edge regional election that could chart the course of the secession crisis.

www.france24.com/en/20171217-assange-told-not-interfere-catalonia-ecuador-president

WikiLeaks lawyer's office stormed by hooded raiders in 'attempted robbery'

RT

20 Dec. 2017

Three hooded raiders broke into the office of WikiLeaks lawyer Baltasar Garzon in Madrid, covering security cameras with tape in what police described as a "very professional" operation.

The break-in took place at dawn on Monday, and police are treating it as an “attempted robbery,” El Pais reports.

The thieves didn’t take any money and police are waiting for technicians to confirm whether any files were taken or copied from Garzon’s computer. Police are analyzing the security cameras at the entrance to the office.

“They have not taken what they have been looking for,” Garzon told El Periodico. He confirmed to Ser his clients’ security “has not been affected,” and that the people “acted very quickly.”

El Diario reports an employee of the firm told police the individuals did attempt to copy information stored on their servers, but that they were unsuccessful. All they took from the office was a Christmas ham.

Assange and WikiLeaks tweeted about the break-in, with WikiLeaks tying it to the CIA’s pursuit of the two. CIA Director Mike Pompeo has made a number of threatening statements about the whistleblowing organization and described it as a “hostile intelligence service,” while Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in April that Assange’s arrest is “a priority,” and that the Justice Department had started to “step up” its efforts to seek jail time for those involved with the whistleblowing organization.

“As CIA threats against WikiLeaks heat up, at least three masked men dressed in black have broken into WikiLeaks’ chief counsel Baltasar Garzon’s legal office,” WikiLeaks wrote.

Garzon heads Assange’s legal defense, working on his case to avoid extradition to Sweden and preparing for the charges US authorities are said to have prepared against him.

He is known for investigating public officials and those suspected of genocide and war crimes, including Chile’s former ruler Augusto Pinochet, and opened an investigation into crimes committed during the Spanish Civil War and under General Francisco Franco’s dictatorship.

Garzon was prevented from working as a judge in Spain in 2012 after he was found guilty of illegally wiretapping the money-laundering Gurtel network. His supporters and human rights organizations said the case against him was a “threat to human rights.”

<https://www.rt.com/news/413725-assange-lawyer-garzon-office-break-in/>

Extradition confidentiality: UK tribunal blocks release of Assange files

RT

28 Dec. 2017

A UK tribunal has refused to release key details on communications between British and Swedish authorities over Julian Assange, in an effort to protect the Crown Prosecution Service’s relationship with foreign authorities.

An Italian investigative journalist's attempt to pull back the shroud covering the long-running Assange case, which involves four nations and at least two government prosecution agencies, ended in failure earlier this month.

Stefania Maurizi, of the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, had her appeal to the UK First-tier Tribunal to obtain documents held by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in London dismissed on December 12. Maurizi had sought access to the full correspondence between the UK's CPS and the Swedish Prosecution Authority (SPA). The reporter has been trying to get a hold of the documents for two years.

The quest for further information could have also potentially uncovered any dealings between the UK, Sweden, the US and Ecuador - the latter being the nation in which Assange has sought asylum. It may have also finally addressed Assange's fears that extradition to Sweden could ultimately pave the way for rendition to the US.

However, in the appeal documents seen by RT.com, the tribunal agreed that if any such request exists then "disclosing it would tip off Mr Assange illegitimately and undesirably."

<https://www.rt.com/uk/414442-assange-files-tribunal-maurizi/>

Weiner Laptop Doc: Assange Warrant Issued 2 Weeks After Swedish Election Leaks Warning

*Tyler Durden
Zero Hedge
12/31 Dec. 2017*

A confidential document found on Anthony Weiner's laptop reveals that the United States Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden expressed concerns in 2010 that WikiLeaks would release classified US documents related to Sweden ahead of the September 19 Swedish election, tipping the vote towards the Pirate Party. The subject of the cable reads "Wikileaks: The Pirate Party's White Horse Into Sweden's Parliament?"

On June 29, 2010 a US diplomat met with three members of the Pirate Party - which is described in the cable as a "mixture between communism and libertarianism," yet whose members are "well-salaried professionals, independent from the party for income." Two of the "pirates," according to the report, were active in the "youth branch of the conservative party currently leading government."

The Embassy cable notes the "grim electoral outlook for Pirates" - as confirmed by a Pirate party member interviewed by the US diplomat, "Unless WikiLeaks Saves the Day."

Two weeks after the cable was sent, an arrest warrant was issued for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on sexual assault allegations - which was dropped, then re-issued, then revoked again by Swedish authorities in August 2015 when they dropped their case against him.

The emergence of this confidential document (found on Anthony Weiner's laptop and sent while his wife, Huma Abedin, was Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff), is disturbing - as it potentially implicates the Obama administration in a conspiracy to silence Julian Assange while Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State - not to mention that it could be the smoking gun in yet another clear case of mishandled information found on imprisoned sexual deviant Anthony Weiner's laptop the FBI's Peter Strzok and crew must have somehow overlooked.

A brief timeline of events:

On August 20, 2010, the Swedish Prosecutor's Office issued an arrest warrant for Julian Assange over a rape allegation - two weeks after the US Embassy met with the Pirate party and had concerns over Assange leaking US secrets. The next day, Swedish cancelled the warrant. "I don't think there is reason to suspect that he has committed rape," says one of Stockholm's chief prosecutors, Eva Finne. Swedish prosecutors did however continue to investigate a separate allegation of molestation, though they felt it was not a serious enough crime for an arrest warrant.

On September 1, 2010, Swedish Director of Prosecution, Marianne Ny, reopened the rape investigation against Assange.

On November 18, 2010, Stockholm District Court approved a detention request for Mr. Assange, who had traveled to London. Two days later, Swedish police issued an international arrest warrant. On December 8, 2010, Assange is taken into British custody and taken to an extradition hearing. Eight days later, Assange posts bail and walks free in London until May 30, 2012 when the UK Supreme Court rules that he should be extradited to Sweden.

August 16, 2012, Assange begins his asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy in London - where he has remained for over five years.

In February, 2016, a UN panel found Assange to be detained unlawfully in the Ecuadorian embassy.

In May, 2017, Swedish authorities once again dropped their case against Julian Assange, with his Swedish lawyer Per Samuelsson told Swedish media "It is a total victory for Julian Assange," adding "He is free to leave the embassy whenever he wants."

Unfortunately, that's not going to be quite so easy for the time being - as Assange faces immediate arrest by the UK for skipping bail in his extradition hearing. Moreover, in April of this year, CNN and the Washington Post simultaneously reported that Attorney General Jeff Sessions' DOJ has prepared criminal charges against Assange over 2010 leaks of diplomatic cables and military documents.

While the DOJ seems intent on locking Assange up, the WikiLeaks founder has also received tremendous support from certain members of congress.

As we reported last week, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher travelled to London in August with journalist Charles Johnson for a meeting with Assange, where Rohrabacher said the WikiLeaks founder offered "firsthand" information proving that

the Trump campaign did not collude with Russia, and which would refute the Russian hacking theory.

Rohrabacher brought that message back to Trump's Chief of Staff, John Kelly, to propose a deal. In exchange for a presidential pardon, Assange would share evidence that would refute the Russian hacking theory by proving they weren't the source of the emails, according to the WSJ.

However - when Trump was asked in late September about the Assange proposal, he responded that he'd "never heard" of it, causing Rohrabacher to unleash on John Kelly, who he blamed for blocking the proposal from reaching the President. Rohrabacher told the Daily Caller:

"I think the president's answer indicates that there is a wall around him that is being created by people who do not want to expose this fraud that there was collusion between our intelligence community and the leaders of the Democratic Party," Rohrabacher told The Daily Caller Tuesday in a phone interview.

"This would have to be a cooperative effort between his own staff and the leadership in the intelligence communities to try to prevent the president from making the decision as to whether or not he wants to take the steps necessary to expose this horrendous lie that was shoved down the American people's throats so incredibly earlier this year," Rohrabacher said.

Contributing to the notion of deep-state interference, CIA director Mike Pompeo referred to WikiLeaks as a "hostile intelligence service" in April, calling Julian Assange "a fraud, a coward hiding behind a screen" for exposing information about democratic governments rather than authoritarian regimes. This quite the ironic statement, considering Pompeo used leaked emails from WikiLeaks as proof "the fix was in" against President Trump.

So - while the Swedish authorities have dropped their case against Assange, and the UN says he's been unlawfully detained - the UK insists on arresting Assange the moment he steps outside the Ecuadorian embassy for jumping bail on the dropped charges, and the US Department of Justice is reportedly prepared to slap criminal charges on Assange.

Perhaps the establishment is still a bit miffed that the "white wizard" showed the world what's really underneath the pantsuit, which despite the constant rhetoric of the past year is what ultimately cost Hillary - and so many of her charitable friends - the election.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-12-31/weiner-laptop-doc-assange-warrant-issued-2-weeks-after-swedish-election-leaks>

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<http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case9.pdf>