

To the Editor January 13, 2020

Free Julian Assange! *Updated*

In 1991 as an inquisitive teenaged Australian Freedom hacker, Assange aka "Mendax", hacked into MILNET the U.S. military's computer network that served the United States Department of Defense. In 1994, after exploring this and other systems for more than two years, Assange was charged by Australian authorities for his hacking escapades and in 1996 pled guilty to 25 counts of hacking. He was sentenced to pay a good behavior bond and reparations. He did no harm, he simply searched the computer systems looking for interesting information.

He and I are alike in that in the early 1990's we both explored this whole new online world of information made available by a personal computer and a phone modem for just ten cents per call. I chose the forums of CompuServe, MSN, and the community of local BBS's like Milwaukee's ExecPC. He chose to access more interesting hidden information, but he was a kid, and by that time I had the maturity of an adult. He eventually became an Internet service provider for a time, as did I, bringing dial-up Internet service for others to enjoy.

Julian Paul Assange grew up to become an Australian editor, winner of the Australian Galizia Prize for Journalists as a publisher, and as an activist founded WikiLeaks in 2006. WikiLeaks came to international attention in 2010 when it published a series of leaks provided by U.S. Army intelligence analyst Pvt. Chelsea Manning. These leaks included the Iraq Collateral Murder video, the Afghanistan war logs, the Iraq war logs, and Cablegate, which was the release of diplomatic cables from around the world. These leaks of classified materials exposed US war crimes and diplomatic intrigues, but did not cause real harm to U.S. interests, according to a document prepared by a US Department of Defense task force. After the 2010 leaks, the United States government launched a criminal investigation into the WikiLeaks organization.

In November 2010, Sweden issued an international arrest warrant for Assange, after questioning him months earlier about allegations of sexual assault. Assange denied these allegations, and offered that they were just part of a plot developed as a pretext and backdoor for him to be extradited from Sweden to the United States. This of course was because of his role in publishing the leaked American government documents. Sweden had indicated to him that he would be detained without charge and he knew that this likely meant he would be detained in isolation until the extradition to the US could be arranged. These charges have since been dropped, and details released since, give the appearance of a setup. Two collaborating women in Sweden used fake evidence to try to turn consensual sex into a crime under Sweden's rather stringent laws. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxuOoVC7_6g

Assange voluntarily surrendered to UK police in December 2010 and was released on bail after ten days in jail. Unsuccessful in his challenges to the extradition proceedings, he breached his bail in June 2012 to seek the protection of asylum from Ecuador in their London Embassy. In August 2012, Assange was granted asylum by Ecuador due to evidence of political persecution and possible extradition to the United States for a US government political prosecution.

In January 2018, he was granted Ecuadorian citizenship; however it was later suspended in April 2019. A \$4.2 billion dollar IMF loan, submission to the US, and vengeance appear to have been the newly elected Ecuadorian President Moreno's true motives for revoking Assange's asylum. Assange was subsequently arrested by British police and forcibly removed from the embassy and imprisoned in London's maximum security Belmarsh prison. He was sentenced to 50 weeks in prison, a sentence which is longer than the maximum required by law in May 2019, for breaching his cash bail. An extremely harsh sentence for an action that typically carries a fine or short jail term.

He is currently being held, effectively in solitary confinement, now past his served sentence awaiting the extradition hearing. He is scheduled for a February 24 trial on the unprecedented extraterritorial extradition of an Australian citizen journalist from the UK, to the United States. The US is trying to extradite him from

London on a dubious hacking charge under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, because our treaty with UK will not easily allow extradition for political reasons. But it was Manning that actually did the hacking with Assange accepting the materials and providing whistleblower advice on covering his tracks. He did what American journalists do all the time, to protect their sources.

Once here in the US, Assange will more than likely will be charged with 17 counts of espionage under the 1917 Espionage Act, created to punish spies during WWI. These charges hold of penalty of ten years in prison for each count, and can be applied consecutively. He is threatened with life imprisonment over his role in WikiLeaks' publication of these documents.

If convicted he would be sent to the highest-level security prison in the Bureau of Prisons system, located at ADX Florence, a super maximum security prison in Colorado. This prison currently holds Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols, Robert P. Hanssen, an FBI Double agent/spy, Ramzi Yousef & Mohammed Salameh, 1993 World Trade Center bombers; Ted John Kaczynski, aka the "Unabomber, Dzhokhar A. Tsarnaev, aka the Boston bomber, Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, an Al-Qaida cofounder, Richard C. Reid, the airline Shoe Bomber, and Eric R. Rudolph, the Atlanta Olympic Park bomber.

Julian Assange has been silenced, prevented from communicating with the outside world in his final 13 months at the Ecuador embassy in London. The silencing has continued in the British prison where Assange has been detained pending extradition to the US since April.

This relentless nine-year persecution of Assange—including the flagrant violation of his human rights and the monitoring of his every word and movement while he was supposed to be protected by political asylum—is aimed at terrorizing all would-be whistleblowers and journalists into silence.

Julian Assange is showing all the symptoms associated with the prolonged exposure to psychological torture and should not be extradited to the US, according to a senior UN expert special rapporteur on torture. More than 60 doctors have written an open letter saying they fear Julian Assange's health is so bad that the WikiLeaks founder could die in prison. In the letter, these doctors called for Assange to be moved to a local university teaching hospital. In a further letter, more than 100 doctors from around the globe put Australia's government on notice that Assange's health is deteriorating rapidly. In an open letter to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the doctors urged the government to intervene and get him medical treatment before it is too late. "The doctors warned that the potentially fatal medical consequences of prolonged psychological torture are inherently unpredictable, and could strike at any time."

More than 1,030 journalists and media workers from every corner of the globe have so far signed an open letter to all the governments complicit in Assange's torment, demanding his unconditional freedom and an immediate "end to the legal campaign being waged against him for the crime of revealing war crimes."

All of this adds shame to those journalists who remain silent about this disgrace. It applies especially to those who benefited in their careers from reporting on his brave acts, and brings shame on newspapers like the Guardian, Washington Post, and the NY Times.

WikiLeaks practices scientific journalism, requiring all media to provide a link to the original source documents so that the reader can judge for themselves if the reporters interpretation is accurate and valid. This work has had many positive impacts contributing to the total knowledge of the world. WikiLeaks continues to be the library of the world by securely archiving documents of political or historical importance that are censored or otherwise suppressed, by being classified, deleted, or disappeared at an alarming rate.

"Every time we witness an injustice and do not act, we train our character to be passive in its presence and thereby eventually lose all ability to defend ourselves and those we love. In a modern economy it is impossible to seal oneself off from injustice.

If we have brains or courage, then we are blessed and called on not to frit these qualities away, standing agape at the ideas of others, winning pissing contests, improving the efficiencies of the neo-corporate state, or immersing ourselves in obscuranta, but rather to prove the vigor of our talents against the strongest opponents of love we can find.

If we can only live once, then let it be a daring adventure that draws on all our powers. Let it be with similar types whose hearts and heads we may be proud of. Let our grandchildren delight to find the start of our stories in their ears but the endings all around in their wandering eyes.

The whole universe or the structure that perceives it is a worthy opponent, but try as I may I cannot escape the sound of suffering.

Perhaps as an old man I will take great comfort in pottering around in a lab and gently talking to students in the summer evening and will accept suffering with insouciance. But not now; men in their prime, if they have convictions are tasked to act on them."

—Julian Assange

He should be freed. He should not have to die in prison for simply exposing truth to the public, and adding to the knowledge base of the human library of Planet Earth. Courage is Contagious.

Watch his story: https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B00FJUBTZG/ref=atv_wl_hom_c_unkc_1_1

Write to him at:

Mr. Julian Assange A9379AY

D.O.B. 3/7/1971

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Update 1/16/2020 Juan Branco, a prominent legal advisor to Julian Assange, condemned the illegal surveillance conducted against the WikiLeaks founder and his associates, including his lawyers.

Branco tweeted a video of himself in a confidential discussion with Assange in Ecuador's London embassy, where the publisher was granted asylum in 2012. The video was apparently taken by UC Global, the private Spanish firm which was contracted by the Ecuadorian government to manage security at the embassy.

UC Global is accused of conducting a vast spying operation in the building on behalf of the US Central Intelligence Agency, beginning in 2015. This allegedly included recording Assange's private conversations with lawyers, including Branco, in a flagrant violation of the right to attorney-client privilege. The spying exposes the utter criminality of the attempt to extradite Assange from Britain to the US, where he faces espionage charges and life imprisonment, for having exposed Washington's war crimes, diplomatic intrigues and human rights violations.

"We believe this is a crucial element in our battle to avoid Julian Assange's extradition. The gross violation of the principles of a fair trial, including the right to a fair defense, are epitomized in this episode.

The lack of secrecy of his exchanges with his lawyers was not only the fruit of covert operations: the dispositives were probably also used to collect evidence that could be used in trial, i.e., that could be legalized. In these conditions, in which the material basis of an indictment is based on illegal spying operations that violate the basic rights of the defense, it seems to us extremely difficult to argue that an extradition to the US would not violate the basic requisites that apply in these circumstances."

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/01/16/bran-i16.html>