

The Killing of Journalism and the Criminal Pursuit of Assange for Publishing Truth

by Pepe Escobar via gayle - ICH Saturday, Apr 13 2019, 8:53pm

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The date - April 11, 2019 - will live in infamy in the annals of Western “values” and “freedom of expression.” The image is stark. A handcuffed journalist and publisher dragged out by force from the inside of an embassy, clutching a Gore Vidal book on the History of the US National Security State.



Julian Assange -- journalist

The mechanism is brutal. WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange was arrested because the United States demanded this from the Tory British government, which for its part meekly claimed it did not pressure Ecuador to revoke Assange’s asylum.

The US magically erases Ecuador’s financial troubles, ordering the IMF to release a providential \$4.2-billion loan. Immediately after, Ecuadorian diplomats “invite” the London Metropolitan Police to come inside their embassy to arrest their long-term guest.

Let’s cut to the chase. Julian Assange is not a US citizen, he’s an Australian. WikiLeaks is not a US-based media organization. If the US government gets Assange extradited, prosecuted and incarcerated, it will legitimize its right to go after anyone, anyhow, anywhere, anytime.

Call it The Killing of Journalism.
Get me that password

The [case](#) by the US Department of Justice (DoJ) against Assange is flimsy at best. Everything has to do essentially with the release of classified info in 2010 - 90,000 military files on Afghanistan, 400,000 files on Iraq and 250,000 diplomatic cables spanning most of the planet.

Assange is allegedly guilty of helping Chelsea Manning, the former US Army intel analyst, to get these documents. But it gets trickier. He’s also allegedly guilty of “encouraging” Manning to collect more information.

There’s no other way to interpret that. This amounts, no holds barred, to all-out criminalization of

journalistic practice.

For the moment, Assange is charged with “conspiracy to commit computer intrusion.” The indictment argues that Assange helped Manning to [crack a password](#) stored on Pentagon computers linked to the Secret Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNet).

In March 2010 chat logs obtained by the US government, Manning talks to someone alternatively named “Ox” and “press association.” The DoJ is convinced this interlocutor is Assange. But they must conclusively prove it.

Manning and this person, allegedly Assange, engaged in “discussions.” “During an exchange, Manning told Assange that ‘after this upload, that’s all I really have got left.’ To which Assange replied: ‘Curious eyes never run dry in my experience.’”

None of this holds up. US corporate media routinely publishes illegal leaks of classified information. Manning offered the documents he had already downloaded to both the New York Times and the Washington Post - and he was rejected. Only then did he approach WikiLeaks.

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The nuclear option

The great Daniel “Pentagon Papers” Ellsberg had already warned back in 2017: “Obama having opened the legal campaign against the press by going after the roots of investigative reporting on national security - the sources - Trump is going to go after the gatherers/gardeners themselves (and their bosses, publishers). To switch the metaphor, an indictment of Assange is a ‘first use’ of ‘the nuclear option’ against the First Amendment protection of a free press.”

The current DoJ charges - basically stealing a computer password - are just the tip of the avalanche. At least for now, publishing is not a crime. Yet if extradited, Assange may be additionally charged with extra conspiracies and even violation of the 1917 Espionage Act.

Even if they must still seek consent from London to bring further charges, there’s no shortage of DoJ lawyers able to apply sophistry to conjure a crime out of thin air.

Jennifer Robinson, Assange’s very able lawyer, has correctly stressed his arrest is “a free speech issue” because it “is all about the ways in which journalists can communicate with their sources.” The invaluable Ray McGovern, who knows one or two things about the US intel community, has

evoked a requiem of the [fourth estate](#).

The full context of Assange's arrest comes to light when examined as sequential to Chelsea Manning spending a month in solitary confinement in a Virginia jail for refusing to denounce Assange in front of a grand jury. There's no doubt the DoJ tactic is to break Manning by any means available.

Here's Manning's legal team: "The indictment against Julian Assange unsealed today was obtained a year to the day before Chelsea appeared before the grand jury and refused to give testimony. The fact that this indictment has existed for over a year underscores what Chelsea's legal team and Chelsea herself have been saying since she was first issued a subpoena to appear in front of a Federal Grand Jury in the Eastern District of Virginia - that compelling Chelsea to testify would have been duplicative of evidence already in the possession of the grand jury, and was not needed in order for US Attorneys to obtain an indictment of Mr Assange."

The Deep State attacks

The ball is now in a UK court. Assange will most certainly linger in prison for a few months for skipping bail while the extradition to the US dossier proceeds. The DoJ arguably has discussed with London how a "correct" judge may deliver the desired outcome.

Assange is a publisher. He leaked absolutely nothing. The New York Times, as well as The Guardian, also published what Manning uncovered. [Collateral Murder](#), among tens of thousands of pieces of evidence, should always be at the forefront of the whole discussion - this is about war crimes committed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

So it's no wonder the US Deep State will never forgive Manning and Assange, even as the New York Times, in another glaring instance of double standards, may get a pass. The drama will eventually need closure at the Eastern District of Virginia because the national security and intel apparatus has been working on this screenplay, full-time, for years.

As CIA director, Mike Pompeo did cut to the chase: "It is time to call out WikiLeaks for what it really is: a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia."

What amounts to a de facto declaration of war underlines how dangerous WikiLeaks actually is, just because it practiced investigative journalism.

The current DoJ charges have absolutely nothing to do with the debunked Russiagate. But expect the subsequent political football to be bombastic.

The Trump camp at the moment is divided. Assange is either a pop hero fighting the Deep State swamp or a lowly Kremlin stooge. At the same time, Joe Manchin, a southerner Democrat Senator, rejoices, on the record, as an ersatz 19th-century plantation owner, that Assange is now "our property." The Democrat strategy will be to use Assange to get to Trump.

And then there's the EU, of which Britain may eventually not be part of, later rather than sooner. The EU will be very vigilant on Assange being extradited to "Trump's America," as the Deep State makes sure that journalists everywhere actually do have a right, to always remain silent.

Copyright applies.

[It's a foregone conclusion that the criminal USA, the workings of which Assange exposed to the WORLD, will go down after a long futile legal battle as he has lost support due to his own personality

problems but that is not the point it's free journalism at stake and if gangster State America, proven time and again, succeeds in crucifying Assange then kiss goodbye to what remains of our freedoms as then only the propaganda narratives scripted by the nefarious CRIMINAL elites would be the sole source of media information -- which event would introduce a totalitarian, Big Brother State and the subsequent violent oppression of anyone brave enough to question and oppose the propaganda LIES of State and its media propaganda arm. All dissenters would become a targeted group which group does not have the power, legal or otherwise, to defend itself against evil mass murdering States. Without unified support from the masses, an impossibility in designed divided societies today, Assange and the rest of us will tumble. So either unite and fight for y/our RIGHTS or go down divided, THAT SIMPLE!

We all have a responsibility to ourselves and to others to fight for our rights and liberties as set down clearly in America's founding documents. Exposed criminals pursuing Assange and OTHERS must not get away with it! This issue is not about Assange though he is the focal point, it is about OUR freedoms and LIBERTIES, most of which have already been forfeited due to complacency, apathy and social division.]



Hillary Clinton -- criminal

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/51419.htm>

Inverse Times Open Publishing. <http://inversetimes.lingama.net/news/story-571.html>