

Free Speech Except for War Crimes: Truth on Trial

Have you considered the idea that what is happening to WikiLeaks' publisher, Julian Assange, is a threat to every American's First Amendment rights?



Australian citizen, Julian Assange, founding editor of WikiLeaks' news outlet, is currently held in Belmarsh, a maximum security prison in London, UK. Assange is being detained to facilitate possible extradition to the US. Once in the US, Assange will face charges under the archaic Espionage Act of 1917 that could result in imprisonment for up to 175 years.

What has he done? Through Wikileaks, publisher Julian Assange has exposed atrocities that governments from around the world have committed.

A few examples:

- WikiLeaks published the Collateral Murder video that shows a US helicopter crew attacking and killing unarmed Iraqi civilians and Reuters journalists.
- WikiLeaks published the Guantanamo Bay army manual, revealing the immoral and illegal torture techniques used on detainees under the Bush and Obama administrations.
- WikiLeaks published the Iraq War Logs - over 400,000 pages of documents relating to the Bush administration's illegal invasion of Iraq.
- WikiLeaks published the Afghan War Diaries - 92,000 pages of documents relating to the US war in Afghanistan and detailing civilian casualties.
- WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of US State Department cables demonstrating the stranglehold our government exerts on other countries without the consent of the American people. Included are cables of Secretary of State Clinton ordering diplomats to spy on French, British, Russia and Chinese delegations at the UN Security Council.

In addition, WikiLeaks exposed the Peru oil scandal, the Russian Government spy activity on the cell phones of their own citizens, toxic dumping in Africa, and published the 2017 'Vault 7' documents which revealed the CIA's global covert hacking program. WikiLeaks also published secret trade deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Not one single person committing these murders, these illegal acts of torture, these war crimes, or these acts of espionage has been arrested. Yet the man who revealed them all is in solitary confinement facing multiple life sentences.

Julian Assange founded WikiLeaks because he believed in "privacy for the weak, transparency for the powerful." He is quoted as saying, "One of the best ways to achieve justice is to expose injustice."

Do we, the people, believe in justice? Do we, the people, have a right to the truth – the right to hold our government accountable? Do we, the people, still believe in the First Amendment? Is publishing the truth now a crime in our United States?

To preserve our First Amendment, we need to support Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.

For as long as Julian Assange is imprisoned, we will never be truly free.

Paula Iasella