

[medium.com](https://medium.com)

# Debunking All The Assange Smears

Caitlin Johnstone

102-129 Minuten

26. Feb. 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)



Have you ever noticed how whenever someone inconveniences the dominant western power structure, the entire political/media class rapidly becomes very, very interested in letting us know how evil and disgusting that person is? It's true of the leader of every nation which refuses to allow itself to be absorbed into the blob of the US-centralized power alliance, it's true of anti-establishment political candidates, and it's true of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Corrupt and unaccountable power uses its [political](#) and [media influence](#) to smear Assange because, as far as the interests of corrupt and unaccountable

power are concerned, killing his reputation is as good as killing him. If everyone can be paced into viewing him with hatred and revulsion, they'll be far less likely to take WikiLeaks publications seriously, and they'll be far more likely to consent to Assange's imprisonment, thereby [establishing a precedent](#) for the future prosecution of leak-publishing journalists around the world. Someone can be speaking 100 percent truth to you, but if you're suspicious of him you won't believe anything he's saying. If they can manufacture that suspicion with total or near-total credence, then as far as our rulers are concerned it's as good as putting a bullet in his head.

Those of us who value truth and light need to fight this smear campaign in order to keep our fellow man from signing off on a major leap in the direction of Orwellian dystopia, and a big part of that means being able to argue against those smears and disinformation wherever they appear. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find any kind of centralized source of information which comprehensively debunks all the smears in a thorough and engaging way, so with the help of [hundreds of tips](#) from my [readers](#) and [social media followers](#) I'm going to attempt to make one here. What follows is my attempt at creating a tool kit people can use to fight against Assange smears wherever they encounter them, by refuting the disinformation with truth and solid argumentation.

This article is an ongoing project which will be updated regularly where it appears on [Medium](#) and [caitlinjohnstone.com](#) as new information comes in and new smears spring up in need of refutation.

Here's a numbered list of each subject I'll be covering in this article for ease of reference. I've linked each section to its own separate Medium article so that people don't have to link this entire gigantic mega-article in order to address a specific smear. Hyperlinks to separate articles follow each section (except for the ones which can be debunked in a single sentence), and you can also get to them by clicking any subject on the following list:

## **0. How to argue against Assange smears.**

1. **"He's not a journalist."**
2. **"He's a rapist."**
3. **"He was hiding from rape charges in the embassy."**
4. **"He's a Russian agent."**
5. **"He's being prosecuted for hacking/espionage crimes, not journalism."**
6. **"He should just go to America and face the music. If he's innocent he's got nothing to fear."**
7. **"Well he jumped bail! Of course the UK had to arrest him."**
8. **"He's a narcissist/megalomaniac/jerk."**
9. **"He's a horrible awful monster for reasons X, Y and Z... but I don't think he should be extradited."**
10. **"Trump is going to rescue him and they'll work together to end the Deep State. Relax and wait and see."**
11. **"He put poop on the walls! Poop poop poopie!"**

12. ["He's stinky."](#)
13. ["He was a bad houseguest."](#)
14. ["He conspired with Don Jr."](#)
15. ["He only publishes leaks about America."](#)
16. ["He's an antisemite."](#)
17. ["He's a fascist."](#)
18. ["He was a Trump supporter."](#)
19. ["I used to like him until he ruined the 2016 election" / "I used to hate him until he saved the 2016 election."](#)
20. ["He's got blood on his hands."](#)
21. ["He published the details of millions of Turkish women voters."](#)
22. ["He supported right-wing political parties in Australia."](#)
23. ["He endangered the lives of gay Saudis."](#)
24. ["He's a CIA agent/limited hangout."](#)
25. ["He mistreated his cat."](#)
26. ["He's a pedophile."](#)
27. ["He lied about Seth Rich."](#)
28. ["He's never leaked anything on Trump."](#)
29. ["He conspired with Nigel Farage."](#)
30. ["He recklessly published unredacted documents."](#)

Wow! That's a lot! Looking at that list you can only see two possibilities:

1. Julian Assange, who [published many inconvenient facts](#) about the powerful and provoked the wrath of opaque and unaccountable government agencies, is literally the worst person in the whole entire world, OR
2. Julian Assange, who published many inconvenient facts about the powerful and provoked the wrath of opaque and unaccountable government agencies, is the target of a massive, deliberate disinformation campaign designed to kill the public's trust in him.

As it happens, historian Vijay Prashad noted in a [recent interview with Chris Hedges](#) that in 2008 a branch of the US Defense Department [did indeed set out](#) to "build a campaign to eradicate 'the feeling of trust of WikiLeaks and their center of gravity' and to destroy Assange's reputation."

Let's begin.

Before we get into refuting the specific points of disinformation, I'd like to share a few tips which I've found useful in my own experience with engaging people online who are circulating smears against Julian Assange.

**A — Be clear that your goal is to fight against a disinformation campaign, not to "win" or to change the mind of the person you're arguing with.**

If our interest is in advancing the cause of truth, we're not trying to get into arguments with people for egoic gratification, nor are we trying to change the mind of the smearer. Our first and foremost goal is to spread the truth to the people who are witnessing the interaction, who are always the target audience

for the smear. Doesn't matter if it's an argument at the Thanksgiving dinner table or a Twitter thread witnessed by thousands: your goal is to disinfect the smear with truth and solid argumentation so everyone witnessing is inoculated from infection.

So perform for that audience like a lawyer for the jury. When the smearer refuses to respond to your challenges, when they share false information, when they use a logical fallacy, when they are intellectually dishonest, call it out and draw attention to what they're doing. When it comes to other subjects there are a wide range of opinions that may be considered right or wrong depending on how you look at them, but when it comes to the whether or not it's acceptable for Assange to be imprisoned for his publishing activities you can feel confident that you'll always have truth on your side. So use facts and good argumentation to make the smearer look worse than they're trying to make Assange look, thereby letting everyone know that this person isn't an honest and trustworthy source of information.

**B — Remember that whoever you're debating probably doesn't really know much about the claim they're making.**

Last night I had a guy confidently assuring me that Assange and Chelsea Manning had teamed up to get Donald Trump elected in 2016. Most people just bleat whatever they think they've heard people they trust and people around them saying; when they make a claim about Assange, it's not usually because they've done a ton of research on the subject and examined possible counter-arguments, it's because it's an unquestioned doctrine within their echo chamber, and it may never have even occurred to them that someone might question it.

For a perfect example of this, check out the *New York Times'* Bari Weiss [experiencing an existential meltdown](#) on *The Joe Rogan Experience* when the host simply asked her to substantiate her claim that Tulsi Gabbard is an "Assad toadie". Weiss only ever operates within a tight establishment echo chamber, so when challenged on a claim she'd clearly only picked up secondhand from other people she turned into a sputtering mess.

Most people you'll encounter who smear Assange online are pulling a Bari Weiss to some extent, so point out the obvious gaps in their knowledge for the audience when they make nonsensical claims, and make it clear to everyone that they have no idea what they're talking about.

**C — Remember that they're only ever running from their own cognitive dissonance.**

Cognitive dissonance is the psychological discomfort we experience when we try to hold two strongly contradictory ideas as true at the same time, like the idea that we live in a free liberal democracy and the idea that a journalist is being imprisoned for publishing facts about the US government right in front of us.

Rank-and-file citizens generally help the mass media propagandists smear Assange not to help protect the world from the influence of a dangerous

individual, but to protect themselves from cognitive dissonance. People find themselves eager to believe smears about Assange because the raw facts revealed by WikiLeaks publications punch giant holes in the stories about the kind of world, nation and society that most people have been taught to believe they live in since school age. These kinds of beliefs are interwoven with people's entire egoic structures, with their sense of self and who they are as a person, so narratives which threaten to tear them apart can feel the same as a personal attack. This is why you'll hear ordinary citizens talking about Assange with extreme emotion as though he'd attacked them personally; all he did was [publish facts about the powerful](#), but since those facts conflict with tightly held identity constructs, the cognitive dissonance he caused them to experience can be interpreted as feeling like he'd slapped them in the face.

Ordinary citizens often find themselves eager to believe the smear campaigns against Assange because it's easier than believing that their government would participate in the deliberate silencing and imprisoning of a journalist for publishing facts. The fact that Assange's persecution is now exposing the ugly face of imperial tyranny presents them with even more to defend.

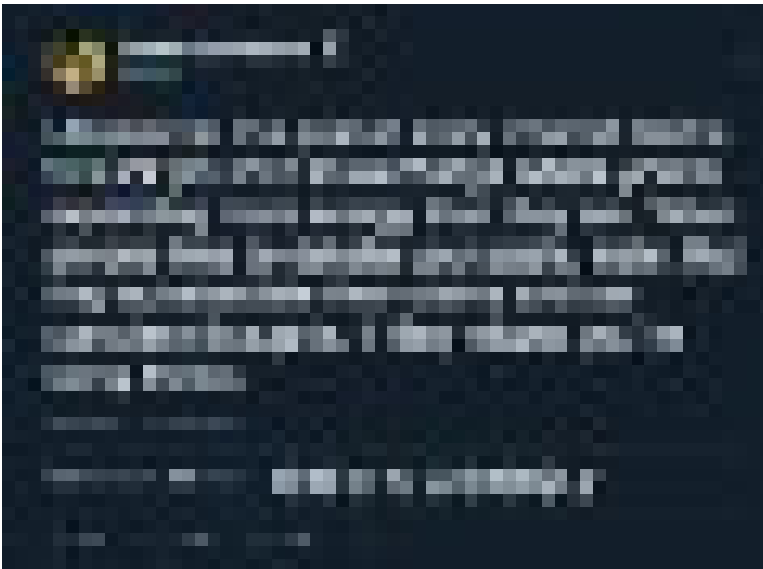
It might look like they're playing offense, but they're playing defense. They're attacking Assange because they feel the need to defend themselves from cognitive dissonance.

If people are acting strangely emotional and triggered when it comes to the issue of imprisoning Assange, it's got very little to do with facts and everything to do with the dynamics of psychological identity structures. There's not necessarily any benefit in pointing this out during a debate, but it helps to understand where people are coming from and why they're acting that way. Keep pointing out that people's feelings [have no bearing](#) on the threats that are posed to all of us by Assange's prosecution.

#### **D — Remember that the burden of proof is on the one making the claim.**

"Prove your claim." Use this phrase early and often. It's amazing how frequently I see people blurting out assertions about Assange that I know for a fact they have no way of proving: that he's a Russian agent, that he's a rapist, that he's a CIA asset, etc, which ties in with Point B above. The burden of proof [is always on the party making the claim](#), so if they refuse to do this you can publicly dismiss their argument. If someone comes in making a specific claim about Assange, make them present the specific information they're basing their claim on so that you can refute it. If they refuse, call them out on it publicly. Never let them get away with the fallacious tactic of [shifting the burden of proof](#) onto you, and remember that [anything which has been asserted without evidence may be dismissed without evidence](#).

#### **E — Never let them trick you into expending more energy than they're expending.**



This one's important. The internet is full of genuinely trollish individuals who spend their time acting out their inner pain by trying to suck the life out of other people, and political discussion is certainly no exception to this. A common tactic is to use short phrases, half-thoughts, or word salads which contain few facts and no actual arguments, but contain just enough of a jab to suck you into wasting energy making thorough, well-sourced arguments while they just lean back and continue making weak, low-energy responses to keep you going. This enables them to waste your time and frustrate you while expending little energy themselves, while also not having to reveal the fact that they don't know much about the subject at hand and don't really have an argument.

Don't let them lean back. Force them to lean in. If someone makes an unsubstantiated assertion, a brief quip, or a vague insinuation, tell them "Make an actual argument using complete thoughts or go away." If they throw an unintelligible word salad at you (a tactic that is [also common in abusers with narcissistic personality disorder](#) because it tricks the abusee into falling all over themselves guessing how to respond appropriately, thereby giving the abuser

power), tell them “That’s gibberish. Articulate yourself using clear arguments or go away.”

This often enrages them, partly because they’ve generally been getting away with this tactic their entire lives so they feel entitled to demand compliance with it from you, and partly because you’re forcing a very unconscious and unattractive part of themselves into attention and consciousness. But if they’re interested in having a real and intellectually honest debate they’ll do it; if they’re not they won’t. If they refuse to provide you with lucid, complete arguments that meet their burden of proof, make a show of dismissing them for their refusal to do so, and say you’re doing it because they’re too dishonest to have a real debate.

Never chase them. Make them chase you. Never let them lead the dance chasing them around trying to correct their straw man reframing of your actual words or guessing what their word salads are trying to articulate. Make them do the work they’re trying to make you do. Force them to either extend themselves into the light where their arguments can be properly scrutinized, or to disqualify themselves by refusing to.

#### **F — When attacking disinformation on Twitter, use this tactic:**

If you see a high-profile Twitter account sharing disinformation about Assange, debunk their disinfo as clearly and concisely as possible, then retweet your response to your followers. Your followers will like and retweet your response, sending it further up the thread so that casual viewers of the disinfo tweet will often also see your response debunking it. If your response is text-only, include a screenshot or the URL of the tweet you’re responding to before retweeting your response so that your followers can see the awful post you’re responding to. It comes out looking like this:

This serves the dual function of offsetting the damage done by their smear and alerting your followers to come and help fight the disinfo.

#### **G — Point out at every opportunity that they are advancing a smear.**

Never miss an opportunity to point out to everyone witnessing the exchange that the other party is advancing a smear that is being promulgated by the mass media to manufacture consent for the imprisonment of a journalist who exposed US war crimes. Keep the conversation in context for everyone: this isn’t just two people having a difference of opinion, this is one person circulating disinformation which facilitates the agendas of the most powerful people in the world (including the Trump administration, which you should always point out repeatedly if you know they hate Trump), and the other person trying to stop the flow of disinfo. Every time you expose a hole in one of their arguments, add in the fact that this is a dishonest smear designed to benefit the powerful, and that they are helping to advance it.

#### **H — Make it about Assange’s imprisonment and extradition.**

One of the very few advantages to Assange being behind bars in [the UK’s version of Guantanamo Bay](#) instead of holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy is that the arguments are so much clearer and more honest now. You can no

longer get away with claiming that Assange is just a coward hiding from justice who can “leave whenever he wants” and present yourself as merely a casual observer who just happens to want to share his opinion that the WikiLeaks founder is a fascist Russian spy rapist who smells bad and mistreats his cat, because you will always be entering a discussion involving the fact that Assange is in prison awaiting extradition to the United States. You are therefore always necessarily either supporting the extradition or distracting from the conversation about it.

So make that clear to everyone watching. Make them own it. They either support the imprisonment and extradition of Assange for his role in the Manning leaks, or they’re interrupting grown-ups who are trying to have an adult conversation about it. If they support Assange’s imprisonment and extradition to the United States, that clarifies your line of argumentation, and it makes them look like the bootlicking empire sycophants they are. Keep the fact that they support the extradition and imprisonment of a journalist for publishing facts on the front burner of the conversation, and keep making them own it.

### **I — Familiarize yourself with common logical fallacies.**



### **Fehler! Es wurde kein Dateiname angegeben.**

It’s fascinating how often people resort to fallacious debate tactics when arguing about Assange. One of the most interesting things to me right now is how the unconscious behaviors of our civilization [is mirrored](#) in the unconsciousness of the individuals who support those behaviors. Those who support Assange’s persecution are generally very averse to an intellectually

honest relationship with their own position, and with the arguments against their position that they encounter.

So get familiar with [basic fallacious debate tactics](#) like [straw man arguments](#) (claiming that you have a position that is different from the one you've actually put forth and then attacking that fake position they invented, e.g. "You're defending Assange because you worship him and think he's perfect"), [ad hominem](#)s (using personal attacks instead of an argument, e.g. "Assange is stinky and smeared poo on the embassy walls"), and [appeals to emotion](#) (using emotionally charged statements as a substitute for facts and reason, e.g. "You're defending Assange because you're a rape apologist"). These will give you a conceptual framework for those situations where it feels like the person you're arguing with is being squirmy and disingenuous, but you can't really put your finger on how.

### **J – Rely as much on fact and as little on opinion as possible.**

Don't get sucked into emotional exchanges about opinions. Facts are what matter here, and, as you will see throughout the rest of this article, the facts are on your side. Make sure you're familiar with them.

[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)

And now for the smears:

[Yes he is](#). Publishing relevant information so the public can inform themselves about what's going on in their world is the thing that journalism is. Which is why Assange [was just awarded](#) the GUE/NGL Award for "Journalists, Whistleblowers and Defenders of the Right to Information" the other day, why the WikiLeaks team has [racked up many prestigious awards](#) for journalism, and why Assange [is a member of Australia's media union](#). Only when people started seriously stressing about the very real threats that his arrest poses to press freedoms did it become fashionable to go around bleating "Assange is not a journalist."

The argument, if you can call it that, is that since Assange doesn't practice journalism in a conventional way, there's no way his [bogus prosecution](#) for his role in the Manning leaks could possibly constitute a threat to other journalists around the world who might want to publish leaked documents exposing US government malfeasance. This argument is a reprise of [a statement](#) made by Trump's then-CIA director Mike Pompeo, who proclaimed that WikiLeaks is not a journalistic outlet at all but a "hostile non-state intelligence service", a designation he made up out of thin air the same way the Trump administration designated Juan Guaido the president of Venezuela, the Golan Heights a part of Israel, and Iran's military a terrorist organization. Pompeo argued that since WikiLeaks was now this label he made up, it enjoys no free press protections and shall therefore be eliminated.

So they're already regurgitating propaganda narratives straight from the lips of the Trump administration, but more importantly, their argument is nonsense. As I discuss in [the essay hyperlinked here](#), once the Assange precedent has been set by the US government, the US government isn't going to be relying

on your personal definition of what journalism is; they're going to be using their own, based on their own interests. The next time they want to prosecute someone for doing anything similar to what Assange did, they're just going to do it, regardless of whether you believe that next person to have been a journalist or not. It's like these people imagine that the US government is going to show up at their doorstep saying "Yes, hello, we wanted to imprison this journalist based on the precedent we set with the prosecution of Julian Assange, but before doing so we wanted to find out how you feel about whether or not they're a journalist."

Pure arrogance and myopia.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

The feedback I've gotten while putting together this article indicates that this is the one Assange defenders struggle with most, and understandably so: it's a complex situation involving multiple governments, a foreign language, a foreign legal system, lots of legal jargon, many different people, some emotionally triggering subject matter, and copious amounts of information. These layers of complexity are what smearers rely upon when circulating this smear; most people don't understand the dynamics, so it's not evident that they're ingesting disinfo.

But just because the nature of the allegation is complex doesn't mean the argument is.

The strongest, simplest and most obvious argument against the "rapist" smear is that it's an unproven allegation which [Assange](#) has [always denied](#), and you'd have to be out of your mind to believe a completely unproven allegation about a known target of US intelligence agencies. It's just as stupid as believing unproven claims about governments targeted for US regime change, like believing Saddam had WMD. The fact of the matter is that if you go up against America's opaque and unaccountable government agencies, they have "six ways from Sunday of getting back at you," to quote from the [Gospel of Schumer](#).

I know we've all been told that we have to unquestioningly believe all women who say they've been raped, and as a general practice it's a good idea to tear away our society's patriarchal habit of dismissing anyone who says they've been raped. But as soon as you make that into a hard, rigid rule that can't have any room for questioning the agendas of the powerful, you can be one hundred percent certain that the powerful will begin using that rule to manipulate us.

The people aggressively promoting the "rapist" narrative and saying "You have to believe women!" do not care about rape victims, any more than all the Hillary supporters saying "Bernie says you have to behave!" after the 2016 convention cared about Bernie. Earlier this month I [had my Twitter privileges suspended](#) when I went off on a virulent Assange hater who said I was lying about having survived multiple rapes myself, *while* continuing to bleat his "believe all women" schtick. The political/media class of the western empire, which never hesitates to support the violent toppling of sovereign governments

and all the death, destruction, chaos, terrorism, suffering, and, yes, rape which necessarily comes along with those actions, does not care about rape victims in Sweden.

You could spend days combing through all the articles that have been written about the details of the Swedish preliminary investigation, but let me try to sum it up as concisely as possible:

Laws about consent and rape are significantly different in Sweden from most other societies. Assange had consensual sex with two women, "SW" and "AA" in Sweden in August 2010. SW and AA were acquainted with each other and texted about their encounters and, after learning about some uncomfortable sexual experiences SW said she'd had with Assange, AA convinced SW to go to the police together to compel Assange to take an AIDS test. AA took her to see her friend and political ally who was also a police officer. SW said one of the times Assange had initiated sex with her happened while she was "half-asleep" (legally and literally very different from asleep) and without a condom, and AA said Assange had deliberately damaged his condom before using it. SW freaked out when she learned the police wanted to charge Assange with rape for the half-asleep incident, and refused to sign any legal documents saying that he had raped her. She [sent a text](#) that she "did not want to put any charges against JA but the police wanted to get a grip on him," and [said she had been](#) "railroaded by police and others around her." AA went along with the process.

To gain a basic understanding of the events through 2012, I highly recommend taking ten minutes to watch [this animated video](#):

All the many, many, *many* gaping plot holes in this narrative have been compiled in [this excellent PDF](#) by UN Special Rapporteur on torture Nils Melzer. I highly recommend familiarizing yourself with it if you're in any way curious about this aspect of Assange's plight.

More info:

- This all occurred just months after Assange enraged the US war machine with the release of the [Collateral Murder video](#), and he was already [known to have had US feds hunting for him](#).
- It's obvious that there were some extreme government manipulations happening behind the scenes of the entire ordeal. More on that in subsequent bullet points.
- The condom AA produced as evidence that Assange had used a damaged condom [had no DNA on it](#), hers or Assange's.
- Assange has consistently denied all allegations.
- Neither accuser alleged rape. AA's accusation wasn't an accusation of rape and SW repeatedly refused to sign off on a rape accusation.
- AA [once authored an article](#) on how to get revenge on men who "dump" you.
- Sweden [has strict laws](#) protecting the confidentiality of the accused during preliminary investigations of alleged sexual offenses, but some

convenient leaks circumvented this law and allowed Assange to be smeared as a rapist ever since. Assange learned he'd been accused from the headlines of the local tabloid *Expressen*, where AA happens to have interned.

- After an arrest warrant was issued a senior prosecutor named Eva Finne pulled rank and canceled it, dropping the matter completely on August 25th saying the evidence "[disclosed no crime at all.](#)"
- Out of the blue it was restarted again on the 29th, this time by another prosecutor named Marianne Ny.
- On the 30th, Assange voluntarily went to the police to make a statement. In the statement, he told the officer he feared that it would end up in the *Expressen*. How do I know that? The full statement was leaked to the *Expressen*.
- Assange stayed in Sweden for five weeks waiting to be questioned, then went to the UK after a prosecutor told him he's not wanted for questioning.
- After leaving, InterPol bizarrely issued a Red Notice for Assange, typically reserved for terrorists and dangerous criminals, not alleged first-time rapists. This exceedingly disproportionate response immediately raised a red flag with Assange's legal team that this was not just about rape accusations, and they decided to fight his extradition to Sweden fearing that he was being set up to be extradited to the United States, a country who WikiLeaks had recently embarrassed with extremely damaging leaks about war crimes.
- In December 2010 Assange went to a UK police station by appointment and was arrested. He spends ten days in solitary confinement and was released on bail, then spent 550 days under house arrest with an electronic ankle bracelet.
- We now know that a grand jury had been set up in East Virginia already at this time to try and find a crime to hang him for, or at least put him away til the end of his life. Assange's lawyers were aware of this.
- The UK Supreme Court decided Assange should be extradited to Sweden, the Swedes refused to give any assurances that he would not be extradited on to the US, and the US refused to give any assurances that they would not seek his extradition and prosecution. If either country had provided such an assurance [as urged by Amnesty International](#), Assange would have traveled to Sweden and the ordeal would have been resolved.
- This was never resolved [because this was never about rape or justice](#). It was about extraditing Assange to the United States for his publications.
- As the window til extradition to Sweden closed, in 2012 Assange sought and won asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy as a journalist who risked unfair prosecution.
- A few days ago we learned that [the FBI affidavit](#) supporting Assange's arrest at the embassy asserts that "Instead of appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, in June 2012, Assange fled to the embassy." But [according to Assange](#), Marianne Ny had actually worked to cancel his

window to apply to appeal the matter at the European Court of Human Rights, reducing it from 14 days to zero days and thereby shutting that door in his face.

- In 2013 Sweden [attempted to drop extradition proceedings](#) but was dissuaded from doing so by UK prosecutors, a fact we wouldn't learn until 2018.
- In 2017 [we learned](#) that the UK's Crown Prosecution Service had dissuaded the Swedes from questioning Assange in London in 2010 or 2011, which could have prevented the entire embassy standoff in the first place, and that the CPS had destroyed crucial emails pertaining to Assange.
- We also learned that Marianne Ny [had deleted an email](#) she'd received from the FBI, claiming it could not be recovered.
- In May 2017 Marianne Ny closed her investigation, strangely [on the very day](#) she was due to appear in Stockholm court to face questions on why she had [barred Assange's defense lawyer](#) and [other irregularities](#) during his questioning in the embassy the previous November, and rescinded the extradition arrest warrant.
- Assange was never charged, despite having been [thoroughly interviewed](#) at the embassy by Swedish prosecutors before the investigation was closed. Some smearers claim that this is due to a technicality of Swedish law which made the government unable to charge him in absentia, but Sweden [can and has charged people](#) in absentia. They did not do so with Assange, preferring to keep insisting that he come to Sweden without any assurances against onward extradition to the US instead, for some strange reason.
- Shortly after Assange's embassy arrest *The Intercept's* Charles Glass [reported](#) that "Sources in Swedish intelligence told me at the time that they believed the U.S. had encouraged Sweden to pursue the case."
- It cannot be denied that governments around the world have an [extensive](#) and [well-documented](#) history of using sex to advance strategic agendas in various ways, and there's no valid reason to rule this out as a possibility on any level.
- Sometimes smearers will try to falsely claim that Assange or his lawyers admitted that Assange committed rape or pushed its boundaries during the legal proceedings, citing mass media reports on a strategy employed by Assange's legal team of arguing that what Assange was accused of wouldn't constitute rape *even if true*. This conventional legal strategy was employed as a means of avoiding extradition and in no way constituted an admission that events happened in the way alleged, yet mass media reports [like this one](#) deliberately twisted it to appear that way. Neither Assange nor his lawyers have ever made any such admission.

For more information on the details of the rape accusation, check out the following resources:

- [This 2012 4 Corners segment](#) titled "Sex, Lies, and Julian Assange"

- [This 2016 Observer article](#) titled "Exclusive New Docs Throw Doubt on Julian Assange Rape Charges in Stockholm"
- This [timeline of events](#) by Peter Tatchell titled "Assange: Swedes & UK obstructed sex crime investigation"
- [This John Pilger article](#) titled "Getting Julian Assange: The Untold Story"
- [This Justice Integrity Report](#) article titled "Assange Rape Defense Underscores Shameful Swedish, U.S. Tactics"
- [The aforementioned ten minute Youtube video.](#)
- [The aforementioned document](#) by Nils Melzer.

For some feminist essays on the infuriating hypocrisy of the entire patriarchal empire suddenly caring so, so deeply about the possibility that a man might have initiated sex in an inappropriate way, check out:

- [This Naomi Wolf essay](#) titled "J'Accuse: Sweden, Britain, and Interpol Insult Rape Victims Worldwide"
- [This Guardian article](#) by Women Against Rape titled "We are Women Against Rape but we do not want Julian Assange extradited — For decades we have campaigned to get rapists caught, charged and convicted. But the pursuit of Assange is political"

I see a lot of well-meaning Assange defenders using some very weak and unhelpful arguments against this smear, suggesting for example that having unprotected sex without the woman's permission shouldn't qualify as sexual assault or that if AA had been assaulted she would necessarily have conducted herself differently afterward. Any line of argumentation like that is going to look very cringey to people like myself who believe rape culture is a ubiquitous societal illness that needs to be rolled back far beyond the conventional understanding of rape as a stranger in a dark alley forcibly penetrating some man's wife or daughter at knifepoint. Don't try to justify what Assange is accused of having done, just point out that there's no actual evidence that he is guilty and that very powerful people have clearly been pulling some strings behind the scenes of this narrative.

Finally, the fact remains that even if Assange were somehow to be proven guilty of rape, the argument "he's a rapist" is not a legitimate reason to support a US extradition and prosecution which would set a precedent that poses a threat to press freedoms everywhere. "He's a rapist" and "It's okay that the western legal system is funneling him into the Eastern District of Virginia for his publishing activities" are two completely different thoughts that have nothing whatsoever to do with each other, so anyone attempting to associate the two in any way has made a bad argument and should feel bad.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

No he wasn't, he was hiding from US extradition. And his arrest this month under a US extradition warrant proved that he was right to do so.

People who claim Assange was "hiding from rape charges" are necessarily implicitly making two transparently absurd claims: one, that Assange had no reason to fear US extradition, and two, that Ecuador was lying about its official

reasons for granting him asylum — that in fact the Correa government was just in the business of protecting people from rape charges for some weird reason.

For its part, the Ecuadorian government was crystal clear in [its official statement](#) about the reasons it was providing Assange asylum, saying that “there are serious indications of retaliation by the country or countries that produced the information disclosed by Mr. Assange, retaliation that can put at risk his safety, integrity and even his life,” and that “the judicial evidence shows clearly that, given an extradition to the United States, Mr. Assange would not have a fair trial, he could be judged by a special or military court, and it is not unlikely that he would receive a cruel and demeaning treatment and he would be condemned to a life sentence or the death penalty, which would not respect his human rights.”

A lot of the rank-and-file Assange haters you’ll encounter on online forums are just completely clueless about what political asylum is and how it works, because they receive their information from the same mass media which led [seventy percent of Americans](#) to still believe Saddam was behind 9/11 six months after the Iraq invasion. They either believe that (A) Assange found some strange loophole which enabled him to hide from all criminal charges simply by staying in an embassy, without any permission from that embassy’s government, or that (B) the Ecuadorian government hands out political asylum willy nilly to anyone who’s been accused of sexual assault. These beliefs can only be maintained by a rigorous determination not to think about them too hard.

Assange wasn’t hiding from justice, he was hiding from injustice. His sole concern has only ever been avoiding extradition and an unjust trial, which was why he offered to go to Sweden to be questioned if they would only provide assurances that he wouldn’t face onward extradition to the US. Sweden refused. America refused. Now why would they do that? If Sweden were really only interested in resolving a rape investigation, why wouldn’t they provide assurances that they wouldn’t extradite him to the United States in order to accomplish that?

The fact that Assange was perfectly willing to travel to Sweden and see the investigation through is completely devastating to the “he’s hiding from rape charges” smear, and it casts serious doubt on the “he’s a rapist” smear as well.

The US government [tortured Chelsea Manning](#). Trump’s current CIA Director [was called “Bloody Gina”](#) because of her fondness for torture on CIA black sites. He had every reason to be mortally afraid of extradition, and to remain so. The correct response to anyone claiming Assange should have done anything which could have allowed him to be extradited is, “How well do you think you’d fare under torture, tough guy?”

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Not even the US government alleges that WikiLeaks knowingly coordinated with the Kremlin in the 2016 publication of Democratic Party emails; the Robert Mueller Special Counsel [alleged only](#) that Guccifer 2.0 was the source of

those emails and that Guccifer 2.0 was a persona covertly operated by Russian conspirators. The narrative that Assange worked for or knowingly conspired with the Russian government is a hallucination of the demented Russia hysteria which has infected all corners of mainstream political discourse. There is no evidence for it whatsoever, and anyone making this claim should be corrected and dismissed.

But we don't even need to concede that much. To this day we have been presented with exactly zero hard evidence of the US government's narrative about Russian hackers, and in a post-Iraq invasion world there's no good reason to accept that. We've seen assertions from opaque government agencies and their allied firms within the US-centralized power alliance, but assertions are not evidence. We've seen indictments from Mueller, but indictments are assertions and assertions are not evidence. We've seen claims in the Mueller report, but [the timeline is riddled with plot holes](#), and even if it wasn't, claims in the Mueller report are not evidence. This doesn't mean that Russia would never use hackers to interfere in world political affairs or that Vladimir Putin is some sort of virtuous girl scout, it just means that in a post-Iraq invasion world, only herd-minded human livestock believe the unsubstantiated assertions of opaque and unaccountable government agencies about governments who are oppositional to those same agencies.

If the public can't see the evidence, then as far as the public is concerned there is no evidence. Invisible evidence is not evidence, no matter how many government officials assure us it exists.

The only reason the majority believes that Russia is known to have interfered in America's 2016 election is because news outlets have been repeatedly referring to this narrative as an established and proven fact, over and over and over again, day after day, for years. People take this repetition as a substitute for proof due to a glitch in human psychology known as the [illusory truth effect](#), a phenomenon which causes our brains to tend to interpret things we've heard before as known truths. But repetitive assertions are not the same as known truths.

For his part, Julian Assange has stated unequivocally that he knows for a fact that the Russian government was not WikiLeaks' source for the emails, [telling Fox News](#) in January 2017 that "our source is not the Russian government or any state party." You may be as skeptical or as trusting of his claim as you like, but the fact of the matter is that no evidence has ever been made public which contradicts him. Any claim that he's lying is therefore unsubstantiated.

This is the best argument there is. A lot of people like to bring up the fact that there are [many experts](#) who dispute the Russian hacking narrative, saying there's evidence that the DNC download happened via local thumb drive and not remote exfiltration, but in my opinion that's generally poor argumentation when you're disputing the narrative about WikiLeaks' source. It's a poor tactic because it shifts the burden of proof onto you, making yourself into the claimant and then forcing you to defend complicated claims about data transfer rates and so on which most people viewing the argument won't understand,

even if you do. There's no reason to self-own like that and put yourself in a position of playing defense when you can just go on the offense with anyone claiming to know that Russia was WikiLeaks' source and just say "Prove your claim," then poke holes in their arguments.

There is no evidence that Assange ever provided any assistance to the Russian government, knowingly or unknowingly. In fact, WikiLeaks has published [hundreds of thousands of documents](#) pertaining to Russia, has [made critical comments about the Russian government](#) and defended dissident Russian activists, and in 2017 published an entire trove called [the Spy Files Russia](#) exposing Russian surveillance practices.

Of course, the only reason this smear is coming up lately is because people want to believe that the recent imprisonment of Julian Assange has anything to do with the 2016 WikiLeaks email publications. It isn't just the propagandized rank-and-file who are making this false claim all over the internet, but Democratic Party leaders like [Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer](#) and Center for American Progress president [Neera Tanden](#). As we should all be aware by now, Assange's [completely illegitimate arrest](#) in fact had nothing whatsoever to do with 2016 or Russia, but with the 2010 Manning leaks exposing US war crimes. Anyone claiming otherwise is simply informing you that they are brainwashed by Russia conspiracy theories and have no interest in changing that character flaw.

The smearer may claim "Well, he toes the Kremlin line!" When you ask them to explain what that means, they'll tell you it means that WikiLeaks speaks out against western interventionist and war propaganda narratives like Trump's bombing of Syria, or their criticism of the establishment Russia narrative which tries to incriminate WikiLeaks itself. That's not "toeing the Kremlin line," that's being anti-interventionist and defending yourself from evidence-free smears. Nobody who's viewed their 2010 video Collateral Murder will doubt that criticism of the US war machine is built into the DNA of WikiLeaks, and is central to its need to exist in the first place.

In reality, anyone who opposes western interventionism [will see themselves tarred as Russian agents](#) if they achieve a high enough profile, and right-wing empire sycophants [were fond of doing so](#) years before the brainwashed Maddow Muppets joined them. Russia, like many sovereign nations, opposes western interventionism for its own reasons, so anyone sufficiently dedicated to their own mental contortions can point at a critic of western imperialism and say "Look! They oppose this subject, and so does Russia! They're the same thing!" In reality a westerner opposing western interventionism is highly unlikely to have any particular loyalty to Russia, and opposes western interventionism not to protect their own geostrategic agendas as Moscow does, but because western interventionism is consistently evil, deceitful and disastrous.

The smearer may claim, "Well he had a show on RT in 2012!" So? What other network would air a TV program hosted by Julian Assange? Name one. I'll wait. If you can't name one, consider the possibility that Assange's appearances on

RT were due to the fact that western mass media have completely deplatformed all antiwar voices and all criticism of the political status quo, a fact they [could choose to change any time](#) and steal RT's entire audience and all their talent. The fact that they choose not to shows that they're not worried about RT, they're worried about dissident thinkers like Assange.

In reality, Assange's 2012 show "The World Tomorrow" was [produced separately from RT](#) and only picked up for airing by that network, in exactly the same way as Larry King's show has been picked up and aired by RT. Nobody who isn't wearing a tinfoil pussyhat believes that Larry King is a Russian agent, and indeed King is [adamant and vocal](#) about the fact that he doesn't work for RT and takes no instruction from them.

The only people claiming that Assange is a Russian agent are those who are unhappy with the things that WikiLeaks publications have exposed, whether that be US war crimes or the corrupt manipulations of Democratic Party leaders. It's a completely unfounded smear and should be treated as such.

[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)

No, he's being prosecuted for journalism. Assange [is being prosecuted based on the exact same evidence](#) that the Obama administration had access to when it was investigating him to see if he could be prosecuted for his role in the Manning leaks, but the Obama administration [ruled it was impossible](#) to prosecute him based on that evidence because it would endanger press freedoms. This is because, [as explained](#) by *The Intercept's* Micah Lee and Glenn Greenwald, the things Assange is accused of doing are things journalists do all the time: attempting to help a source avoid detection, taking steps to try to hide their communications, and encouraging Manning to provide more material. This is all Assange is accused of; there is no "hacking" alleged in the indictment itself.

Joe Emersberger of Fair.org [notes the following](#):

Now Assange could be punished even more brutally if the UK extradites him to the US, where he is charged with a "[conspiracy](#)" to help Manning crack a password that "would have" allowed her to cover her tracks more effectively. In other words, the alleged help with password-cracking didn't work, and is not what resulted in the information being disclosed. It has also not been shown that it was Assange who offered the help, according to Kevin Gosztola (**Shadowproof**, [4/11/19](#)). The government's lack of proof of its charges might explain why Manning is in jail again.

The [indictment](#) goes even further, criminalizing the use of an electronic "drop box" and other tactics that investigative journalists [routinely use](#) in the computer age to work with a confidential source "for the purpose of publicly disclosing" information.

The only thing that changed between the Obama administration and the Trump administration is an increased willingness to attack journalism. Assange is being prosecuted for journalism.

**UPDATE:** After this article's publication, Assange was smashed by the Trump

Department of Justice with [17 additional charges under the Espionage Act](#), just as many experts predicted. All charges relate to the same standard journalistic practices described above. Assange faces up to 170 years in prison under these new charges.

It's also worth noting here that [President Executive Order 13526, section 1.7](#) explicitly forbids the classification of material in order to hide government malfeasance, meaning it's perfectly reasonable to argue that Manning did not in fact break a legitimate law, and that those prosecuting her did.

"In no case shall information be classified, continue to be maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified in order to: (1) conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error; (2) prevent embarrassment to a person, organization, or agency," the section reads, while Manning's lawyer has [argued the following](#):

"The information released by PFC Manning, while certainly greater in scope than most leaks, did not contain any Top Secret or compartmentalized information. The leaked information also did not discuss any current or ongoing military missions. Instead, the Significant Activity Reports (SIGACTs, Guantanamo detainee assessments, Apache Aircrew video, diplomatic cables, and other released documents dealt with events that were either publicly known or certainly no longer sensitive at the time of release."

There was no legitimate reason for what Manning leaked to have been classified; it was only kept so to avoid US government embarrassment. Which was illegal. [To quote Assange](#): "The overwhelming majority of information is classified to protect political security, not national security."

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

This is the new "He can leave the embassy whenever he wants." Except this one's also being bleated by Trump supporters.

The only way to make it feel true for oneself that Assange stands a chance at receiving a fair trial in America is to believe that the US is a just nation with a fair judicial system, especially in the Eastern District of Virginia when trying the cases of people who expose incriminating information about the US war machine. Anyone who believes this has packing foam for brains.

"No national security defendant has ever won a case in the EDVA [Eastern District of Virginia]," Kiriakou [told RT](#) upon Assange's arrest. "In my case, I asked Judge Brinkema to declassify 70 documents that I needed to defend myself. She denied all 70 documents. And so I had literally no defense for myself and was forced to take a plea."

"He will not, he cannot get a fair trial," Kiriakou [said on a Unity4J vigil](#) when Assange was still at the embassy. "It's impossible, because the deck is stacked. And everybody knows what's gonna happen if he comes back to the Eastern District of Virginia. This is the same advice I gave Ed Snowden: don't come home, because you can't get a fair trial here. Julian doesn't have the choice, and that's what frightens me even more."

Assange is indeed being extradited to face trial [in the Eastern District of Virginia](#). Manning herself did not get a fair trial [according to her lawyer](#). Anyone who thinks Assange can expect anything resembling justice upon arrival on US soil has their head in something. Power doesn't work that way. Grow up.

**UPDATE:** It [has also been revealed](#) by John Rees of the Don't Extradite Assange campaign that the US [plans on placing Assange under "Special Administrative Measures"](#) once in the US, prior to any trial. This means as soon as Assange touches US soil he'll disappear into [the darkest corner of the American judicial system](#) under extreme isolation, and likely never be heard from again.

**UPDATE 2:** A Spanish court has heard evidence that Assange's conversations with his lawyers were recorded by security staff [and obtained](#) by US intelligence agencies. This is a severe and illegal intercession on lawyer/client privilege and [legal commentators say](#) that it in terms of Assange's extradition case, this evidence forms a strong legal argument showing that he could not receive a fair trial in the US, and therefore should not be extradited.

Still think sending Assange to America and rolling the dice on the impossible odds of fair treatment would in any way facilitate a just outcome and a just world?

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Never in my life have I seen so many people so deeply, deeply concerned about the proper adherence to the subtle technicalities of bail protocol as when Sweden dropped its rape investigation, leaving only a bail violation warrant standing between Assange and freedom. All of a sudden I had establishment loyalists telling me how very, very important it is that Assange answer for his horrible, horrible crime of taking political asylum from persecution at the hands of the most violent government on the planet to the mild inconvenience of whoever had to fill out the paperwork.

This smear is soundly refuted [in this lucid article](#) by Simon Floth, which [was endorsed](#) by the Defend Assange Campaign. Floth explains that under British law bail is only breached if there's a failure to meet bail "without reasonable cause", which the human right to seek asylum certainly is. The UK was so deeply concerned about this bail technicality that it waited a full nine days before issuing an arrest warrant.

After the Swedish government decided to drop its sexual assault investigation without issuing any charges, Assange's legal team attempted last year to get the warrant dropped. The judge in that case, Emma Arbuthnot, has [many shady establishment ties](#) and just [happens to be married](#) to former Tory junior Defence Minister and government whip James Arbuthnot, who [served as director](#) of Security Intelligence Consultancy SC Strategy Ltd with a former head of MI6. Lady Arbuthnot [denied Assange's request](#) with extreme vitriol, despite [his argument](#) that British law does have provisions which allow for the time he'd already served under house arrest to count toward far more time than would be served for violating bail. The British government kept police

stationed outside the embassy at taxpayers' expense with orders to arrest Assange on sight.

This, like America's tweaking the law in such a way that allows it to prosecute him for journalism and Ecuador's tweaking its asylum laws in such a way that allowed it to justify revoking Assange's asylum, was another way a government tweaked the law in such a way that allowed it to facilitate Assange's capture and imprisonment. These three governments all tweaked the law in unison in such a way that when looked at individually don't look totalitarian, but when taken together just so happen to look exactly the same as imprisoning a journalist for publishing inconvenient truths.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Assange has been enduring hardships far worse than most people ever have to go through in their lifetime because of his dedication to the lost art of using journalism to hold power to account. If that's what a narcissist/megalomaniac/jerk looks like to you, then whatever I guess.

But really the primary response to this smear is a simple, so what? So what if the guy's got a personality you don't like? What the hell does that have to do with anything? What bearing does that have on the fact that a journalist is being prosecuted in a legal agenda which threatens to set a precedent which is destructive to press freedoms around the world?

So many of the most common Assange smears boil down to simple [ad hominem fallacy](#), in which the person is attacked because the smearer has no real argument. Pointing out the absence of an actual argument is a more effective weapon against this smear than trying to argue that Assange is a nice person or whatever. Plenty of people say Assange has a pleasant personality, but that's ultimately got nothing to do with anything. It's no more material to meaningful discourse than arguing over his physical appearance.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

I always mentally translate this one into "I'm going to keep advancing the same propaganda narratives which manufactured public consent for Assange's current predicament... but I don't want people to see my name on the end result."

Even if you hate Assange as a man and as a public figure with every fiber of your being, there is no legitimate reason to turn yourself into a pro bono propagandist for the CIA and the US State Department. If you actually do sincerely oppose his extradition, then you should be responsible with the narratives you choose to circulate about him, because smears kill public support and public demand is what can prevent his extradition. If you're just pretending to truly oppose his extradition in order to maintain your public wokeness cred and you really just wanted to throw in a few more smears, then you're a twat.

When looked at in its proper context, what we are witnessing is the slow-motion assassination of Assange via narrative/lawfare, so by couching your support in smears it's just like you're helping put a few bullets in the gun but

loudly letting everyone know that you hope they shoot the blank.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Make no mistake, this is a smear, and it's just as pernicious as any of the others. People who circulate this hogwash [are hurting Assange](#) just as much as the MSNBC mainliners who hate him overtly, even if they claim to support him. At a time when we should all be shaking the earth and demanding freedom for Assange, a certain strain of Trump supporter is going around telling everyone, "Relax, Trump has a plan. Wait and see."

I've been told to calm down and "wait and see" many times since Assange's arrest. What "wait and see" really means is "do nothing." Don't do anything. Trust that this same Trump administration which issued an arrest warrant for Assange in [December 2017](#), whose extradition request [is now the sole reason for Assange's imprisonment](#), whose CIA director labeled WikiLeaks a "hostile non-state intelligence service" and pledged to destroy it, trust them to do the right thing instead of the wrong thing. Do absolutely nothing in the meantime, and especially don't help put political pressure on Trump to end Assange's persecution.

This strategy benefits someone, and that someone ain't Assange.

Please stop doing this. If you support Assange, stop doing this. Even if you're still chugging the Q-laid and still believe the reality TV star who hired Mike Pompeo as his Secretary of State is actually a brilliant strategist making incomprehensibly complex 8-D chess moves to thwart the Deep State, even if you believe all that, surely you'll concede that there's no harm in people pressuring Trump to do the right thing and end the persecution of Assange? If he really is a beneficent wizard, there'd surely be no harm in making a lot of noise telling him he'd better pardon Assange, right? Then why spend your energy running around telling everyone to relax and stop protesting?

One argument I keep encountering is that Trump is bringing Assange to America for trial because he can only pardon him after he's been convicted. This is false. A US president [can pardon anyone at any time](#) of any crime against the United States, without their having been convicted and without their even having been charged. After leaving office Richard Nixon was issued [a full presidential pardon](#) by Gerald Ford for "all offenses against the United States which he, Richard Nixon, has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 20, 1969 through August 9, 1974." Nixon had never been charged with anything. If Trump were going to pardon Assange he could have done it at any time since taking office, instead of [issuing a warrant for his arrest](#) in December 2017 and executing it on Thursday after [a series of international legal manipulations](#). A pardon is not in the plans.

Another [common belief](#) I keep encountering is that Trump is bringing Assange to America to get him to testify about his source for the 2016 Democratic Party emails in exchange for a pardon, thereby revealing the truth about Russiagate's origins and bringing down Clinton and Obama. This is false. Everyone who knows anything about Assange (including the Trump

administration) knows that he will never, ever reveal a source under any circumstances whatsoever. It would be a cardinal journalistic sin, a violation of every promise WikiLeaks has ever made, and a betrayal of his entire life's work. More importantly, imprisoning a journalist and threatening him with a heavy sentence to coerce him into giving up information against his will is evil.

But that isn't what Trump is doing. Trump is pursuing the imprisonment of a journalist for exposing US war crimes, so that he can scare off future leak publishers and set a legal precedent for their prosecution.

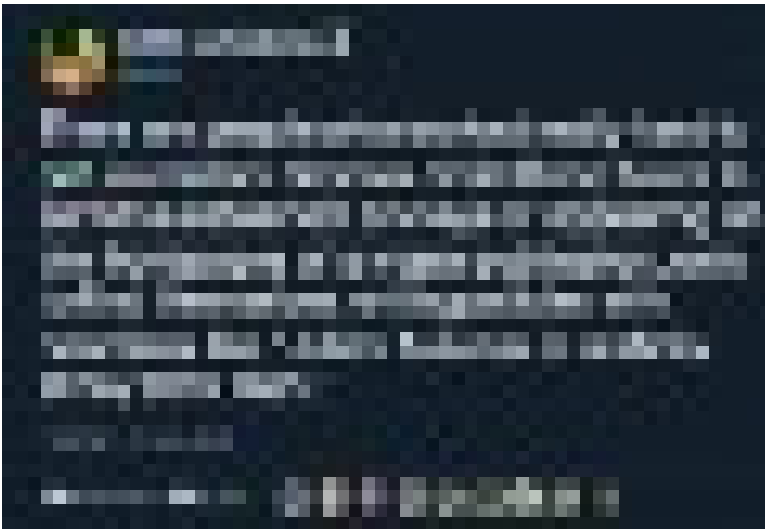
**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Of all the Assange smears I've encountered, I think this one best epitomizes the entire overarching establishment narrative churn on the subject. Like the rest of the smear campaign, it's a completely unsubstantiated claim designed not to advance a logical argument about the current facts of Assange's situation but to provoke disgust and revulsion towards him, so that when you think of Julian Assange you don't think about press freedoms and government transparency, you think about poo. In a way it's actually more honest than some of the other smears, just because it's so obvious about what it is and what it's trying to do.

People who advance this smear are literally always acting in very bad faith. As of this writing I've never even bothered trying to engage anyone in debate on the matter, because they're too gross and too internally tormented to make interacting with them anything but unpleasant, so I have no advice to give on how to argue with such creatures. Personally I just block them.

There is no reason to believe that this smear is true (his lawyer [flatly denies it](#)), and the Ecuadorian government would have had every incentive to lie in order to try and justify its revocation of asylum which WikiLeaks [says](#) is "in violation of international law." However, it's worth taking a minute to consider the fact that if this smear *were* true, the people running around mocking Assange and making poop jokes about him on social media today would be *even more* depraved. Because what would it mean if Assange really were spreading feces on the wall? It would mean that he'd cracked under the pressure of his embassy imprisonment and lost his mind. Which would mean that these people are running around mocking a man who's been driven to psychosis by his abusive circumstances. Which would be despicable.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**



### **Fehler! Es wurde kein Dateiname angegeben.**

It's amazing how many mainstream media publications have thought it newsworthy to write articles about Assange's body odor. Try advocating for him on any public forum, however, and you'll immediately understand the intention behind this smear. Try to argue against the extradition of a journalist for publishing inconvenient facts about the powerful, and you'll be swarmed by people making scoffing comments about how stinky and disgusting he is. As though that has anything to do with anything whatsoever.

For the record, people who visit Assange commonly [report](#) that he's clean and smells normal, but that's really beside the point. Trying to turn a discussion about a journalist who is being prosecuted by the US empire for publishing truth into a discussion about personal hygiene is despicable, and anyone who does it should feel bad.

### **[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

What he actually was was a target of the US war machine. The "bad houseguest" narrative serves only to distract from Ecuador's role in turning Assange over to the Metropolitan police instead of holding to [the reasons it granted Assange asylum](#) in the first place, and to seed disgust as in Smear 11 and Smear 12.

What actually happened was that Ecuador's new president Lenin Moreno quickly found himself being courted by the US government after taking office, [meeting with Vice President Mike Pence](#) and reportedly discussing Assange after US Democratic senators petitioned Pence to push for Moreno to revoke political asylum. The *New York Times* [reported last year](#) that in 2017 Trump's sleazy goon Paul Manafort met with Moreno and offered to broker a deal where Ecuador could receive debt relief aid in exchange for handing Assange over, and just last month Ecuador ended up [receiving a 4.2 billion dollar loan](#) from the Washington-based IMF. And then, lo and behold, we just so happen to see Ecuador justifying the revocation of political asylum under the absurd claim that Assange had violated conditions that [were only recently invented](#), using narratives that were [based on wild distortions and outright lies](#).

**UPDATE:** [New information has emerged](#) that the Trump administration's negotiations with the Ecuadorian government were carried out at the president's direction by Trump's now-Acting Director of National Intelligence Richard Grenell, whose sleazy manipulations [will be used as evidence in Assange's legal defense](#).

[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)

No he didn't. The [email exchanges](#) between Donald Trump Jr and the WikiLeaks Twitter account reveal nothing other than two parties trying to extract favors from each other, unsuccessfully. Here's what the WikiLeaks account sent:

- Information about a pro-Iraq war PAC which it said was now running an anti-Trump site, with the password to a press review site so he could see it and comment on its content.
- A request for help circulating a story about Hillary Clinton's alleged suggestion to "just drone" Julian Assange.
- A link and a suggestion that Trump get his followers digging through the Podesta emails for incriminating information.
- A solicitation for Trump's tax return which was hot news at the time. The WikiLeaks account reasoned with Don Jr that they could get the jump on any leaks to the establishment media by leaking it to WikiLeaks first.
- A suggestion that Trump not concede the election he was expected to lose so as to draw attention to the massive problems in America's electoral system, specifically "media corruption, primary corruption, PAC corruption etc."
- A suggestion that Trump ask Australia to make Assange ambassador to DC, knowing they "won't do it", but in order to "send the right signals" to the US allies who'd been collaborating with US power to keep him a de facto political prisoner.
- A couple more links it wanted more attention on.
- A suggestion that Don Jr. publish the information on his Trump Tower meeting with them.

The password to the website is getting a lot of attention as of this writing since the release of the Mueller report, with *Slate* [going so far as to argue](#) that Don Jr may be guilty of violating "the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which makes it illegal to access a computer using a stolen password without authorization" since he did use the password. This is nonsense. WikiLeaks didn't send Trump a password which enabled him to "access a computer", or do anything other than preview a website that was actively being publicized and viewed by many people using the same password.

The password WikiLeaks gave him was a press pass to preview a Russiagate website which was about to launch. [Here's a hyperlink](#) to an archive of a ([now missing](#)) article which discussed the website's launch at the time. The article shares an email that was being passed around clearly showing that many people were being invited to look at the site in the hopes that they'd write articles promoting it. The picture that's being painted of WikiLeaks hacking into

the back end of a website is completely inaccurate; there was a password to preview a website whose owners wanted people to look at it, lots of people had that password, and one of them reportedly gave it to WikiLeaks.

Beyond that, what is there? WikiLeaks trying unsuccessfully to get Don Jr to advance its agendas like giving them Trump's tax return (i.e. soliciting a potential source for leaks), challenging America's [broken electoral system](#), trying to get more eyes on their material, and a Hail Mary suggestion that the Trump administration shake things up by making Assange the Australian ambassador with a full acknowledgement that this will never happen. None of these things occurred, and WikiLeaks never responded to Don Jr's request for information about an upcoming leak drop.

Assange has agendas. Whoop dee doo. I have agendas too, otherwise I wouldn't be doing this. All journalists have agendas, it just happens that most of them have the agenda to become rich and famous by any means necessary, which generally means cozying up to the rulers of the establishment and manufacturing consent for the status quo. Assange's agenda is infinitely more noble and infinitely more reviled by the servants of power: to upset the status quo that demands war, corruption and oppression in order to exist. His communications with Don Jr are geared toward this end, as is the rest of his life's work.

### [Link to this section as its own article.](#)

This is just wrong and stupid. Do thirty seconds of research for God's sake.

Yes, yes, [we all know by now](#) that everyone who opposes the imperial war machine in any way is both a Russian agent and an antisemite. [Jeremy Corbyn knows it](#), [Ilhan Omar knows it](#), we all know it.

This one's been around a while, ever since [headlines blared](#) in 2011 that Assange had complained of a "Jewish conspiracy" against him after an account of a conversation by Private Eye editor Ian Hislop. Assange responded to this claim as follows:

"Hislop has distorted, invented or misremembered almost every significant claim and phrase. In particular, 'Jewish conspiracy' is completely false, in spirit and in word. It is serious and upsetting. Rather than correct a smear, Mr. Hislop has attempted, perhaps not surprisingly, to justify one smear with another in the same direction. That he has a reputation for this, and is famed to have received more libel suits in the UK than any other journalist as a result, does not mean that it is right. WikiLeaks promotes the ideal of 'scientific journalism' — where the underlying evidence of all articles is available to the reader precisely in order to avoid these type of distortions. We treasure our strong Jewish support and staff, just as we treasure the support from pan-Arab democracy activists and others who share our hope for a just world."

"We treasure our strong Jewish support and staff." Man, what a Nazi.

But that wasn't what cemented this smear into public consciousness. Two related events punched that ticket, and bear with me here:

The first event was the WikiLeaks account [tweeting](#) and then quickly deleting the following in July 2016: "Tribalist symbol for establishment climbers? Most of our critics have 3 (((brackets around their names))) & have black-rim glasses. Bizarre." The triple brackets are what's known as [echoes](#), which are a symbol that antisemites often put around words and names to hatefully indicate Jewishness in online discourse. In 2016 some Jewish people began putting the triple brackets around their own names on social media as a way of pushing back against this behavior, so if you really want to it's possible for you to interpret the tweet as saying 'All our critics are Jewish. Bizarre.'

But does that make sense? Does it make sense for the guy who announced "We treasure our strong Jewish support and staff" to then go making openly antisemitic comments? And if he really did suddenly decide to let the world know that he believes there's a Jewish conspiracy against WikiLeaks, why would he delete it? What's the theory there? That he was like "Oh, I just wanted to let everyone know about my Jewish conspiracy theory, but it turns out people get offended when an account with millions of followers says things like that"? That makes no sense.

If you look at the account's other tweets at the time, it becomes clear that its operator was actually just trying to communicate an obscure, subtle point that was completely unsuitable for a massive international audience and 140 characters. When a user responded to the tweet before it was deleted explaining that some Jewish people now put triple brackets around their names to push back against antisemitism, the [account responded](#), "Yes, but it seems to have been repurposed for something else entirely — a wanna be establishment in-group designator." When accused of antisemitism by another account, WikiLeaks [responded](#), "The opposite. We criticised the misappropriation of anti-Nazi critiques by social climbers. Like Ice Bucket Challenge & ALS."

It looks clear to me that whoever was running the WikiLeaks Twitter account that day was clumsily trying to communicate an overly complicated idea about "social climbers" and establishment loyalism, then deleted the tweet when they realized they'd screwed up and stumbled into a social media land mine.

Now, I say "whoever was running the WikiLeaks Twitter account that day" because it's been public knowledge for years that @WikiLeaks is a staff account shared by multiple people. [Here's](#) a tweet of the account saying "this is a staff account, not Assange." [Here's](#) a tweet of the account saying "@WikiLeaks is a shared staff account." This became self-evidently true for all to see when [Assange's internet access was cut](#) off by the Ecuadorian embassy for the first time in October 2016, but the WikiLeaks Twitter account [kept making posts](#) during that time without interruption. This takes us to the second event which helped cement the antisemitism smear.

The second event occurred in February 2018 when *The Intercept's* Micah Lee, who [has had a personal beef](#) with WikiLeaks and Assange for years, published a ghastly article which [made the following assertion](#):

"Throughout this article, The Intercept assumes that the WikiLeaks account is

controlled by Julian Assange himself, as is widely understood, and that he is the author of the messages, referring to himself in the third person majestic plural, as he often does.”

There is absolutely no reason for Lee to have made this assumption, and the fact that this [remains uncorrected](#) in his original article is journalistic malpractice.

The article reveals Twitter DMs from a group chat of which the WikiLeaks account was a member. One of the other accounts in the group chat [shared a tweet](#) by journalist Raphael Satter, who was posting a smear piece he’d written about WikiLeaks. The WikiLeaks account responded as follows:

“He’s always ben [sic] a rat.”

“But he’s jewish and engaged with the ((( ))) issue.”

When I first read about this exchange as written down by Micah Lee, I read it as “He’s always been a rat, but then, he is Jewish, and engaged with the ((( ))) issue.” Which would of course be gross. Calling someone a rat because they’re Jewish would obviously be antisemitic. But if you [read the DMs](#), whoever was running the account didn’t do that; they said “He’s always ben a rat,” followed by a full stop, then beginning a new thought.

Now if you [look at the date](#) on that exchange and compare it to [the date on the deleted \(\(\( \)\)\) tweet](#), you’ll see that this was one month after the infamous ((( ))) tweet that had caused such a tizzy. It appears likely to me that the operator of the account (who again could have been any of the WikiLeaks staff who had access to it) was saying that Satter was mad about “the ((( ))) issue”, meaning the tweet so many people were so recently enraged about and were still discussing, hence his attacking them with a smear piece.

There are also claims about an association between Assange and the controversial Israel Shamir, which WikiLeaks [denies unequivocally](#), saying in a statement:

Israel Shamir has never worked or volunteered for WikiLeaks, in any manner, whatsoever. He has never written for WikiLeaks or any associated organization, under any name and we have no plan that he do so. He is not an ‘agent’ of WikiLeaks. He has never been an employee of WikiLeaks and has never received monies from WikiLeaks or given monies to WikiLeaks or any related organization or individual. However, he has worked for the BBC, Haaretz, and many other reputable organizations.

It is false that Shamir is ‘an Assange intimate’. He interviewed Assange (on behalf of Russian media), as have many journalists. He took a photo at that time and has only met with WikiLeaks staff (including Asssange) twice. It is false that ‘he was trusted with selecting the 250,000 US State Department cables for the Russian media’ or that he has had access to such at any time.

Shamir was able to search through a limited portion of the cables with a view to writing articles for a range of Russian media. The media that subsequently employed him did so of their own accord and with no intervention or

instruction by WikiLeaks.

Now, we're on Smear #16. There's still a ways to go. If you've been reading this article straight through it should be obvious to you by now that there's a campaign to paint Assange as literally the worst person in the world by calling him all the worst things you can possibly call someone. Is it possible that he's some kind of secret Jew hater? Sure, theoretically, but there's certainly no good argument to be made for that based on the facts at hand, and given the extent the narrative shapers are going to paint him in a negative light, it's a mighty big stretch in my opinion.

### **[Link to this section as its own article.](#)**

Unlike most Assange smears this one is more common on the political left than the center, and it totally baffles me. Demanding that governments be transparent and powerful people held to account is not at all compatible with fascism. In fact, it's the exact opposite.

Italian investigative journalist and longtime WikiLeaks media partner Stephania Maurizi [told Micah Lee](#) the following on Twitter last year:

"I've worked as a media partner since 2009, I can bring my experience: I've NEVER EVER seen misogyny or fascism, rape apology, anti-semitism. I've anti-fascism deep in my DNA, due to the consequences for my family during Fascism."

I really don't know how people make this one work in their minds. "You guys know who the *real* fascist is? It's the guy who's locked behind bars by the most violent and oppressive government on the planet for standing up against the war crimes of that government." I mean, come on.

When I question what's behind this belief I get variations on Smear 18 and Smear 22, and the occasional reference to [one odd tweet](#) about birth rates and changing demographics that could look like a white nationalist talking point if you squint at it just right and ignore the fact that it appears on its own surrounded by a total absence of anything resembling a white nationalist worldview, and ignore [the tweet](#) immediately following it criticizing "emotional imperialism" and the theft of caregivers from less powerful nations. You have to connect a whole lot of dots with a whole lot of imaginary red yarn and ignore a huge mountain of evidence to the contrary in order to believe that Assange is a fascist.

Whenever I run into someone circulating this smear I usually just say something like, "You know there are powerful government agencies with a vested interest in making you think that, right?" Painting Assange as a right-winger has been immensely successful in killing Assange's support on the left, leaving only his support on the right, which can often be largely worthless when it comes to the Trump administration's war on WikiLeaks. Divide and conquer works.

### **[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

No he wasn't. He hated Hillary "[Can't we just drone this guy?](#)" Clinton for her

horrible record and her efforts as Secretary of State to shut down WikiLeaks, but that's not the same as supporting Trump. His hatred of Clinton was personal, [responding](#) to a complaint by a lead Clinton staffer about his role in her defeat with the words "Next time, don't imprison and kill my friends, deprive my children of their father, corrupt judicial processes, bully allies into doing the same, and run a seven year unconstitutional grand jury against me and my staff."

And he wanted her to lose. Desiring the loss of the woman who campaigned on a promise to [create a no-fly zone](#) in the same region that Russian military planes were conducting operations is perfectly reasonable for someone with Assange's worldview, and it doesn't mean he wanted Trump to be president or believed he'd make a good one. Preferring to be stabbed over shot doesn't mean you want to be stabbed.

In July 2016 Assange compared the choice between Clinton and Trump to [a choice between cholera and gonorrhea](#), saying, "Personally, I would prefer neither." When a Twitter user suggested to Assange in 2017 that he start sucking up to Trump in order to secure a pardon, Assange [replied](#), "I'd rather eat my own intestines." Could not possibly be more unequivocal.

Assange saw Trump as clearly as anyone at the time, and now he's behind bars at the behest of that depraved administration. Clinton voters still haven't found a way to make this work in their minds; they need to hate Assange because he helped Hillary lose, but when they cheerlead for his arrest they're cheering for a Trump administration agenda. These same people who claim to oppose Trump and support the free press are cheerleading for a Trump administration agenda which constitutes the greatest threat to the free press we've seen in our lifetimes. When I encounter them online I've taken to [photoshopping a MAGA hat](#) onto their profile pics.

Assange has never been a Trump supporter. But, in a very real way, those who support his imprisonment are.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

That's just you admitting that you have no values beyond blind partisan loyalty. Only liking truth when it serves you is the same as hating truth.

No he doesn't. There's no evidence anywhere that WikiLeaks helped cause anyone's death anywhere in the world. This smear has been enjoying renewed popularity since it became public knowledge that he's being prosecuted for the Manning leaks, the argument being that the leaks got US troops killed.

This argument is stupid. In 2013 the Pentagon, who had every incentive to dig up evidence that WikiLeaks had gotten people killed, [ruled](#) that no such instances have been discovered.

**[Link to this section as its own article.](#)**

No he didn't. The WikiLeaks website reports the following:

"Reports that WikiLeaks published data on Turkish women are false. WikiLeaks didn't publish the database. Someone else did. What WikiLeaks released were

emails from Turkey's ruling party, the Justice & Development Party or AKP, which is the political force behind the country's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is currently purging Turkey's judiciary, educational sector and press."

That "someone else" was Emma Best, then known as Michael Best, who also happens to be the one who [published the controversial Twitter DMs](#) used in Micah Lee's aforementioned Assange smear piece. Best [wrote an article](#) clarifying that the information about Turkish women was published not by WikiLeaks, but by her.

### **[Link to this section as its own article.](#)**

No he didn't. In 2013 Australia's WikiLeaks Party ended up giving preferential votes to right-wing parties in New South Wales as a result of over-delegation on Assange's part while he was busy trying to help Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, along with what the WikiLeaks party described as "administrative errors".

In 2012, WikiLeaks [announced on Twitter](#) that Assange was running for the Australian senate, and in 2013 the WikiLeaks Party was formally registered with the Australian Electoral Commission and fielded candidates in the states of Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. The other candidates in the party included a human rights lawyer, an ethicist, a former Greens candidate, a former diplomat, a law professor and a former president of the Ethnic Communities council in WA. It was a very left-wing offering with [unusual political ads](#).

In Australia we have preferential voting, which is also known in the US as ranked-choice voting. You are given two ballots, a small one for the house of representatives and [an arm's-length one](#) for the senate, which you number the candidates in order of your preference, number one being your first preference. Voting for the senate is an epic task so you are given the ability to number every single candidate in order of preference (which is called "voting below the line"), or back in 2013 you could simply nominate the party who you want to win "above the line" and if they were knocked out in the first round, their preferences were applied to your vote.

These preferences make up what's called a "How To Vote" card. Have a look at an example [here](#). It's a pamphlet given to voters on the day that suggests how to number your preferences to support your party, but it's also submitted to the electoral commission so that they can assign your chosen flow of preferences in the senate vote.

Every election there is a shit-storm over the How To Vote cards as parties bargain with each other and play each other off to try and get the flow of preferences to go their way. To make things even more complex, you have to create these cards for every state and seat you are putting up candidates for. The WikiLeaks Party preferences statement in one of the states, New South Wales, somehow wound up having two right wing parties preferred before the three major parties. The WikiLeaks Party said it was an administrative error and [issued this statement](#) in August 2013:

Preferences Statement: The WikiLeaks Party isn't aligned with any other political group. We'd rather not allocate preferences at all but allocating preferences is compulsory if your name is to go above the line.

In allocating preferences between 53 other parties or groups in NSW some administrative errors occurred, as has been the case with some other parties. The overall decision as to preferences was a democratically made decision of the full National Council of the party. According to the National Council decision The Shooters & Fishers and the Australia First Party should have been below Greens, Labor, Liberal. As we said, we aren't aligned with anyone and the only policies we promote are our own. We will support and oppose the policies of other parties or groups according to our stated principles.

So, in short, the entirety of the WikiLeaks Party gathered and voted to put those right wing parties down the ballot below Greens, Labor and Liberal parties but someone fucked up the form. The WikiLeaks Party ended up getting 0.66 percent of the vote and in NSW those preferences went to those right wing parties who also failed to get the numbers required to win a seat. Was there mismanagement? Yes. Was it deliberate? At least with regard to Assange, there's no reason to believe that it was.

This was all happening at the same time Chelsea Manning's case was wrapping up and Assange was busy helping Edward Snowden.

"I made a decision two months ago to spend a lot of my time on dealing with the Edward Snowden asylum situation, and trying to save the life of a young man," Assange [told Australian TV](#) at the time. "The result is over-delegation. I admit and I accept full responsibility for over-delegating functions to the Australian party while I try to take care of that situation."

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

No he didn't. The Saudi Cables were KSA government documents, i.e. information the government already had, so there was no danger of legal retaliation based on Saudi Arabia's laws against homosexuality. There is no evidence that anyone was ever endangered by the Saudi cables.

This smear was sparked by the aforementioned Raphael Satter at AP, whose executives WikiLeaks [sent a formal complaint](#) breaking down Satter's journalistic misconduct and requesting the publication of its response.

The WikiLeaks website [explains](#):

"The material in the Saudi cables was released in June 2015 and comprises leaked government information — that is data the Saudi government already had, including evidence of Saudi government persecution. The release revealed extensive Saudi bribing of the media, weapons amassed by the Saudi government, its brutal attacks on citizens and on Yemen, and the deals cut with the US and UK to get Saudi Arabia into a key position of the UN Human Rights Council. After WikiLeaks publication of DNC leaks in 2016, over a year after the material was published, an AP journalist made claims about the 2015 publication but refused to provide evidence when asked to do so. WikiLeaks has still not found evidence for the claims."

"Mr. Satter's article has itself highlighted specific private information which can be searched for on the internet, and which is available independently of the Wikileaks site (as Mr. Satter should know, the content of the Saudi Cables was published online before Wikileaks collated it as the 'Saudi Cables')," the WikiLeaks complaint to AP noted.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

I'm probably going to have to revisit this one because it's so all over the place that it's hard for me to even say exactly what it is. It only exists in fringe conspiracy circles, so there's no organized thought around it and when I ask people why they're so sure Assange is a CIA/Mossad agent/asset I get a bunch of different answers, many of them contradictory and none of them comprised of linear, complete thoughts. Mostly I just get an answer that goes something like "Well he spent some time in Egypt and he criticized 9/11 truthers, and he's a few degrees of separation from this one shady person, so, you know, you connect the dots."

No, *you* connect the dots. You're the one making the claim.

None of them ever do.

You'd think this smear would have subsided since Assange was imprisoned at the behest of the US government, but I'm actually encountering it way more often now. Every day I'm getting conspiracy types telling me Assange isn't what I think he is, right at the time when the MSM has converged to smear him with more aggression than ever before and right when he needs support more than ever.

I've never encountered anyone who can present a convincing (or even coherent) argument that Assange is working for any intelligence agency, so I generally just declare the burden of proof unmet and move on. If there's anyone out there who believes this and would like to take a stab at proving their claim, I have a few questions for you:

Why is a CIA/Mossad agent/asset/limited hangout/whatever being rewarded for his loyal service with a stay in Belmarsh Prison awaiting US extradition? How does that work, specifically? Are you claiming that he was an asset that got "burned"? If so, when did this happen? Was he still an asset while he was languishing in the embassy in failing health and chronic pain? Or was it before then? His persecution began in 2010 and the US government was [working on sabotaging him back in 2008](#), so are you claiming he hasn't been on their side since then? And if you're claiming that he used to be an asset but got burned, why are you spending your energy running around telling people on the internet he's an asset when he isn't one anymore, and now his prosecution threatens press freedoms everywhere? If you oppose his extradition, why are you engaged in this behavior? Are you just interrupting an adult conversation that grownups are trying to have about an urgent matter, or is it something else? Did you run around telling everyone that Saddam used to be a CIA asset instead of protesting the Iraq invasion? Or do you believe this whole US prosecution is fake? If so, what is Assange getting out of it? What's incentivizing him to comply at this point? What specifically is your claim about

what's happening?

My past experiences when engaging these types tells me not to expect any solid and thorough answers to my questions.

I've been at this commentary gig for about two and a half years, and during that time I've had people show up in my inbox and social media notifications warning me that everyone in anti-establishment circles is a CIA limited hangout. Literally everyone; you name a high-profile anti-establishment figure, and at one time or another I've received warnings from people that they are actually controlled opposition for a government agency.

This happens because for some people, paranoia is their only compass. They wind up in the same circles as WikiLeaks supporters because the lens of paranoia through which they perceive the world causes them to distrust the same power establishment and mass media that WikiLeaks supporters distrust, but beyond that the two groups are actually quite different. That same paranoia which causes them to view all the wrongdoers with suspicion causes them to view everyone else with suspicion as well.

Paranoia happens for a number of reasons, one of them being that people who aren't clear on [the reasons our society acts so crazy](#) will start making up reasons, like the belief that everyone with a high profile is a covert CIA agent. If you can't see clearly what's going on you start making things up, which can cause paranoia to become your only guidance system.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

There's just no limit to the garbage these smear merchants will cook up. Concern for the embassy cat picked up when the Moreno government began cooking up excuses to oust Assange from the embassy, the most highly publicized of them being a demand that he clean up after his cat. From that point on the narrative became that not only is Assange a stinky Nazi rapist Russian spy who smears poo on the walls... he also mistreats his cat. Ridiculous.

A bunch of "Where is Assange's cat??" news stories emerged after his arrest, because that's where people's minds go when a civilization-threatening lawfare agenda is being carried out. *The Guardian's* James Ball, who last year [authored an article](#) humiliatingly arguing that the US will never try to extradite Assange titled "The only barrier to Julian Assange leaving Ecuador's embassy is pride", [told his Twitter followers](#), "For the record: Julian Assange's cat was reportedly given to a shelter by the Ecuadorian embassy ages ago, so don't expect a feline extradition in the next few hours. (I genuinely offered to adopt it)."

Assange's cat is fine. It wasn't given to a "shelter"; the WikiLeaks Twitter account [posted a video](#) of the cat watching Assange's arrest on TV with the caption, "We can confirm that Assange's cat is safe. Assange asked his lawyers to rescue him from embassy threats in mid-October. They will be reunited in freedom."

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

Yes, of course they tried this one too, and I still run into people online from time to time who regurgitate it. CNN has had on guests who asserted that Assange is a pedophile, not once but twice. In January 2017 former CIA official Phil Mudd [said live on air](#) that Assange is “a pedophile who lives in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London,” and instead of correcting him on the spot CNN did nothing and [shared the video on Twitter](#), leaving the tweet up until [WikiLeaks threatened to sue](#). On what appears to have been right around the same day, Congressman Mike Rogers [claimed on CNN](#) that Assange “is wanted for rape of a minor.”

These claims are of course false, designed to paint Assange as literally the worst person in the world with all the very worst qualities you can imagine in a human being.

These claims came months after an [alarming narrative control operation](#) working behind the bogus dating website toddandclare.com persuaded a UN body called the Global Compact to grant it status as a participant, then used its platform to publicly accuse Assange, with whom it was communicating, of “pedophile crimes”. *McClatchy* [reports the following](#):

“Whoever is behind the dating site has marshaled significant resources to target Assange, enough to gain entry into a United Nations body, operate in countries in Europe, North America and the Caribbean, conduct surveillance on Assange’s lawyer in London, obtain the fax number of Canada’s prime minister and seek to prod a police inquiry in the Bahamas.”

So that’s a thing.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

I’m just going to toss this one here at the end because I’m seeing it go around a lot in the wake of the Mueller report.

Robert Mueller, who helped the Bush administration [deceive the world about WMD](#) in Iraq, has claimed that the GRU was the source of WikiLeaks’ 2016 drops, and claimed in his report that WikiLeaks deceived its audience by implying that its source was the murdered DNC staffer Seth Rich. This claim is unsubstantiated because, as we discussed in Smear 4, the public has not seen a shred of evidence proving who was or was not WikiLeaks’ source, so there’s no way to know there was any deception happening there. We’ve never seen any hard proof, nor indeed anything besides official narrative, connecting the Russian government to Guccifer 2.0 and Guccifer 2.0 to WikiLeaks, and Daniel Lazare for *Consortium News* documents that there are in fact some [major plot holes](#) in Mueller’s timeline. Journalist Aaron Maté [has further documented those plot holes](#). Longtime Assange friend and WikiLeaks ally Craig Murray [maintains](#) that he knows the source of the DNC Leaks and Podesta Emails were two different Americans, not Russians, and hints that one of them was a DNC insider. There is exactly as much publicly available evidence for Murray’s claim as there is for Mueller’s.

Mainstream media has been blaring day after day for years that it is an absolute known fact that the Russian government was WikiLeaks’ source, and

the only reason people scoff and roll their eyes at anyone who makes the indisputably factual claim that we've seen no evidence for this is because [the illusory truth effect](#) causes the human brain to mistake repetition for fact.

The smear is that Assange knew his source was actually the Russian government, and he implied it was Seth Rich to throw people off the scent. Mueller asserted that something happened, and it's interpreted as hard fact instead of assertion. There's no evidence for any of this, and there's no reason to go believing the WMD guy on faith about a narrative which incriminates yet another government which refuses to obey the dictates of the US empire.

**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

I'm surprised I forgot this one since it comes up constantly, not so much from the more finessed professional propagandists, but from the propagandized rank-and-file who just repeat bits and pieces of things they think they remember reading somewhere.

First of all, Assange is not a leaker, he's a publisher, meaning all that he and WikiLeaks have ever done is publish leaks that are brought to them by other people. They're not out there prowling around, hacking into government databases and publishing the results; they're just an outlet which came up with a secure anonymous drop box and invited leakers to use it so that their leaks can be published safely. If nobody brings them any leaks on a given subject, they've got nothing to publish on it. In the run-up to the 2016 election there were leaks on Trump, but their leakers went to other outlets; Trump's tax information was [leaked to the New York Times](#), and the infamous "grab her by the pussy" audio [was leaked to the Washington Post](#). There was no need for them to leak to WikiLeaks when they could safely leak to a mainstream outlet, and WikiLeaks couldn't force them to.

Secondly, WikiLeaks has publicly solicited leaks on Trump, and both [before](#) and [after](#) the election. WikiLeaks' controversial exchanges with Donald Trump Jr ([see Smear 14](#)) were largely just a leak publisher soliciting a potential source for leaks in language that that source would listen to, and the leaks they were asking for were from Trump. It's apparent that they've always wanted to publish leaks on Trump, and would if given the material.

Thirdly, the 2017 [Vault 7 CIA leaks](#) *were a Trump administration publication*. It enraged the Trump administration so much that the next month Mike Pompeo [gave a speech](#) declaring WikiLeaks a "hostile non-state intelligence service" and vowing to take the outlet down, and a few months later Trump's DOJ [issued a warrant](#) for Assange's arrest on a [made-up, bogus charge](#). Assange smearers don't like to count the CIA leaks because they don't contain any videos of Trump with well-hydrated Russian prostitutes, but they were indisputably a blow to this administration and it's stupid to pretend otherwise.

Fourthly, typing the words "Donald Trump" into WikiLeaks' search engine comes up with [14,531 results](#) as of this writing from the DNC Leaks, the Podesta emails, the Global Intelligence Files and other publications throughout WikiLeaks' history.

[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)



**Fehler! Es wurde kein Dateiname angegeben.**

This is yet another smear geared toward painting Assange as a right-winger so as to kill his support on the left, this one marketed more to a UK audience.

Assange is known to have met with Brexit leader Nigel Farage one time, and one time only, in March 2017. Both [WikiLeaks](#) and [Farage](#) have said that Farage tried to secure an interview with Assange on his show with LBC Radio, and that the request was politely declined. That was the meeting.

There is exactly zero evidence anywhere contradicting this. There have been attempts to circulate a narrative that Assange met with Farage multiple times, which Farage [dismissed](#) as “conspiratorial nonsense” and WikiLeaks [calls](#) “fabricated intelligence reports” [and](#) “information fed from Ecuadorian intelligence agency SENAIN”.

WikiLeaks’ claim is obviously credible for a number of reasons, the first being that one of the times Assange is alleged to have been visited by Farage was [the 28th of April 2018](#), by which time Assange had long been [forbidden by the Ecuadorian government](#) from receiving any visitors apart from his lawyers. This would have made such a visit impossible. Secondly, SENAIN [was a source](#) for the [ridiculous Guardian](#) story alleging that Assange had met repeatedly with Paul Manafort, now [known beyond a shadow of a doubt](#) to have been false. Thirdly, Glenn Greenwald [has described](#) the Ecuadorian embassy in London as “one of the most scrutinized, surveilled, monitored and filmed locations on the planet.” It wouldn’t be difficult for Ecuador or the UK to prove that Farage visited Assange apart from the March 2017 meeting, as determined as they’ve been to share information which smears him, but none of them ever have.

“Since the UK state engages in an illicit multi-million pound surveillance operation against my visitors, who are recorded using the hi-tech surveillance cameras it has emplaced on opposing buildings, I am sure it will be delighted to answer whether Mr. Farage visited me in 2016,” Assange [tweeted](#) in January 2018.

This was in response to congressional testimony made by former Wall Street Journal reporter Glenn Simpson, whose company Fusion GPS was responsible for the discredited Steele dossier. Here are Simpson's [actual words](#) to the House Intelligence Committee:

"I've been told and have not confirmed that Nigel Farage had additional trips to the Ecuadorian Embassy than the one that's been in the papers and that he provided data to Julian Assange."

"I've been told and have not confirmed." By the Fusion GPS guy. In the midst of a disinformation campaign from Ecuadorian intelligence. That's not a thing.

This complete absence of anything tangible didn't stop Russiagate kooks like [Seth Abramson](#), [Marcy Wheeler](#) and the usual lineup of MSM conspiracy mongers from running around treating this as an actual fact, and not unconfirmed hearsay from a guy whose major claim to fame is association with a notorious dossier that has been completely debunked by the Mueller report.

*The Guardian's* answer to Rachel Maddow, Carole Cadwalladr, took these entirely imaginary associations between Assange and Farage and shoved it into mainstream British consciousness with [article](#) after [article](#) after [article](#) filled with nothing but unsubstantiated conspiratorial innuendo and spin, and the smear was in the bloodstream. Cadwalladr has an [established record](#) of using [dishonest and unprofessional tactics](#) to deliberately smear WikiLeaks.

And so you can see that this is yet another example of a cluster of half-truths and outright fabrications being spun in a way to make Assange look awful and untrustworthy, then circulated and repeated as fact over and over until [the illusory truth effect](#) takes over.

### **[Link to this section as its own article.](#)**

The prosecution in the Assange extradition trial [has falsely alleged](#) that WikiLeaks recklessly published unredacted files in 2011 which endangered people's lives. In reality [the Pentagon admitted that no one was harmed](#) as a result of the leaks during the Manning trial, and the unredacted files were actually published elsewhere as the result of a *Guardian* journalist recklessly included a real password in a book about WikiLeaks.

A key government witness during the Chelsea Manning trial, Brig. Gen. Robert Carr, [testified under oath](#) that no one was hurt by them. Additionally, the Defense Secretary at the time, Robert M Gates, [said that the leaks](#) were "awkward" and "embarrassing" but the consequences for US foreign policy were "fairly modest". It was also [leaked at the time](#) that insiders were saying the damage was limited and "containable", and they were exaggerating the damage in an attempt to get Manning punished more severely.

As Assange's defense [highlighted during the trial](#), the unredacted publications were the result of a password being published in a book by *Guardian* reporters Luke Harding and David Leigh, the latter of whom [worked with Assange](#) in the initial publications of the Manning leaks. WikiLeaks [reported](#) that it didn't speak publicly about Leigh's password publication for several months to avoid drawing attention to it, but broke its silence when they learned a German

weekly called *Freitag* was preparing a story about it. There's [footage of Assange calling the US State Department](#) trying to warn of an imminent security breach at the time, but they refused to escalate the call.

It wasn't long after that that the full unredacted archive [was published on a website called Cryptome](#), where it still exists in its unredacted form today, completely free from prosecution. It wasn't until the leaks were forced into the public, at the initiation of Leigh's password shenanigans, that WikiLeaks published them in their unredacted form.

Assange's US criminal defense lawyer Barry Pollack [said in a press conference](#) after the second day of the extradition trial being held at Belmarsh Prison: "What was laid out in great detail in court today was that the United States government making this extradition request claimed that Julian Assange intentionally published names of sources without redaction. We learned today that the United States government knew all along that that wasn't true. That when others were about to publish those names without redaction, Julian Assange called the State Department to warn the State Department that others were about to publish, and pleaded with the State Department to take whatever action was necessary to protect those sources. The idea that the United States government is seeking extradition of Julian Assange when it, the United States government, failed to take any action is really unfathomable. I think we will learn more as this trial goes on that the United States government simply has not disclosed, in the extradition request, the underlying facts."

The US government doesn't care about unredacted publications, or it would have gone after Cryptome. The US government doesn't care about people being harmed by the Manning leaks; it knows that didn't happen. The US government cares about punishing a journalist for exposing its war crimes, plain and simple.

The attempts to smear Assange as reckless, cold and cavalier with the Manning leaks have been forcefully disputed by an Australian journalist named Mark Davis, who was following Assange closely at the time filming footage which would become the documentary *Inside WikiLeaks*. You can [listen to Davis' account of what transpired here](#), or you can [read about it in this WSWS article](#).

Davis details how *The Guardian*, the *New York Times*, and *Der Spiegel* journalists were putting Assange under extreme pressure to go to press *before* Assange had finished redacting names from the documents. None of the outlets offered any resources or support to help redact them, and Assange had to pull an all-nighter himself and personally cleanse the logs of over 10,000 names before going live.

Davis says that it was *Guardian* journalists such as Leigh and Nick Davies, the two most vocal critics of Assange, who were displaying the cavalier attitude toward redaction back then.

"Of course, it was apparent that they would be risking, if not the safety, certainly exposing the identity of many people — there's tens of thousands of documents there," said Davis. "I never witnessed a conversation where anyone

took that seriously. Not one.”

Davis says the only conversation that he witnessed on the topic of redaction was between Davies and Leigh, and Assange wasn’t present.

“It occurred to Nick Davies as they pulled up an article they were going to put in the newspaper — he said ‘Well, we can’t name this guy,’” recalls Davis. “And then someone said ‘Well he’s going to be named on the website.’ Davies said something to the effect of ‘We’ll really cop it then, if and when we are blamed for putting that name up.’ And the words I remember very precisely — from David Leigh was he gazed across the room at Davies and said: ‘But we’re not publishing it.’”

Indeed, the only ones who seem to concur with this “cavalier” characterization of Assange are those who’ve had a lot invested in making sure they weren’t blamed for the leaks.

Journalist Iain Overton [observed on Twitter](#) recently that his experience working on the Iraq war logs with Assange was very different to the gossip about him.

“I worked closely with Assange when editor of Bureau of Investigative Journalism on the Iraq War Logs,” Overton said. “This claim absolutely false when it applies to that. We went to great lengths to redact names, protect identities. This is an assault on whistleblowing.”

Finally there is a quote attributed to Assange by Leigh, “They’re informants, they deserve to die,” with regard to the sources in the logs that he painstakingly redacted all their names from. It was supposedly said at a dinner that was attended by John Goetz from *Der Spiegel*, who [provided a testimony](#) saying that he heard no such thing from Julian.

In a classic case of projection, it appears that Assange’s enemies are charging him with the very sins they were committing.

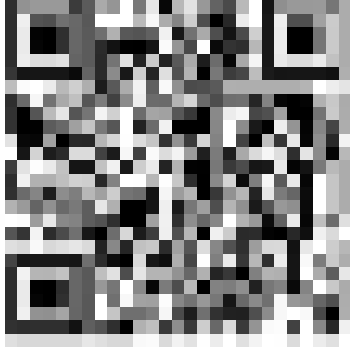
**[Link to this section as its own article here.](#)**

And I guess that’s it for now. Again, this article is an ongoing project, so I’ll be updating it and adding to it regularly as new information comes in and new smears need refutation. If I missed something or got something wrong, or even if you spotted a typo, please email me at [admin@caitlinjohnstone.com](mailto:admin@caitlinjohnstone.com) and let me know. I’m trying to create the best possible tool for people to refute Assange smears, so I’ll keep sharpening this baby to make sure it cuts like a razor. Thanks for reading, and thanks to everyone who helped! Phew! That was long.

---

*Everyone has my [unconditional permission](#) to republish or use any part of this work (or anything else I’ve written) in any way they like free of charge. My work is [entirely reader-supported](#), so if you enjoyed this piece please consider sharing it around, liking me on [Facebook](#), following my antics on [Twitter](#), throwing some money into my hat on [Patreon](#) or [Paypal](#), purchasing some of my [sweet merchandise](#), buying my new book [Rogue Nation: Psychonautical](#)*

[Adventures With Caitlin Johnstone](#), or my previous book [Woke: A Field Guide for Utopia Preppers](#). The best way to get around the internet censors and make sure you see the stuff I publish is to subscribe to the mailing list for my [website](#), which will get you an email notification for everything I publish. For more info on who I am, where I stand, and what I'm trying to do with this platform, [click here](#).



**Fehler! Es wurde kein Dateiname angegeben.**

*Bitcoin donations: 1Ac7PCQXoQoLA9Sh8fhAgiU3PHA2EX5Zm2*