

- Julian Assange¹
 - The founder of WikiLeaks has long been targeted by the United States for his role in releasing secret government documents, many pertaining to the actions of the US military in the Middle East and the detention of people at Guantanamo Bay.
 - More recently he has come under attack for his organization's release during the 2016 presidential campaign of thousands of emails stolen from the DNC, damaging both the party and then presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.
 - In November of 2018, a court filing revealed that the Justice Department had prepared an indictment against Assange. The existence of the indictment became known only after prosecutors inadvertently mentioned possible charges against him in an unrelated case.
 - A newly unsealed indictment showed that American Prosecutors have charged Assange with conspiring to hack a government computer.²
 - The United States charged Assange with one count of conspiracy to hack a computer related to his role in the 2010 release of secret American documents.
 - The single charge stemmed from what prosecutors said was his agreement to break a password to a classified US government computer.
 - It was not an espionage charge, a detail that press freedom advocates had watched closely.
 - When asked by reporters whether he still loved WikiLeaks, as he claimed in October 2016 after the organization published Democrats'

¹ "How Julian Assange and WikiLeaks became targets of the US government" - NY Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/world/julian-assange-wikileaks.html>

² "WikiLeaks founder charged in computer hacking conspiracy" - US Attorney's Office Eastern District of Virginia
<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/wikileaks-founder-charged-computer-hacking-conspiracy>

hacked emails, Donald Trump said, “I know nothing about WikiLeaks. It’s not my thing.”³

- ⁴In 2013 the Obama DOJ decided not to prosecute Assange for publishing classified information. The Obama administration charged government employees and contractors (Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning) for leaking classified information in violation of the Espionage Act but officials said that although Assange published classified documents, he did not leak them.
 - “The problem the department has always had in investigating Julian Assange is there is no way to prosecute him for publishing information without the same theory being applied to journalists,” said former Justice Department spokesman Matthew Miller. “And if you are not going to prosecute journalists for publishing classified information, which the department is not, then there is no way to prosecute Assange.”
- Assange’s current charge carries a 5 year sentence but nothing is stopping the US from adding charges (espionage) once he’s here in the US. The reason they haven’t charged him with more is because the UK won’t extradite someone for political reasons or who’s facing the death penalty. US authorities want to maximize their chances of getting him on US soil but could completely flip once he is.
 - I seriously doubt the US is going through all this effort to lock him up for just 5 years.
- How this news is being received
 - Edward Snowden [tweeted](#):
 - “The weakness of the US charge against Assange is shocking. The allegation he tries (and failed?) to help crack a password during their world-famous reporting has been public for nearly

³“The Charges against Julian Assange, explained” - PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/the-charges-against-julian-assange-explained>

⁴ “Julian Assange unlikely to face US charges over publishing classified documents” - The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

a decade: it is the count Obama's DOJ refused to charge, saying it endangered journalism.”

- In November Glenn Greenwald [wrote](#):
 - “Nothing has changed since 2010 apart from a more thoroughly propagandized populace and a more depraved US government, which means that this new charge that the Trump administration issued in December 2017 is based on nothing other than a diminished respect for press freedoms and an increased willingness to crush them. This makes it fraudulent and illegitimate, and the precedent that is being set by it should be rejected and opposed by everyone in the world who claims to support the existence of a free press.”
- Senator Ben Sasse [tweeted](#):
 - “This arrest is good news for freedom-loving people. Julian Assange has long been a wicked tool of Vladimir Putin and the Russian intelligence services. He deserves to spend the rest of his life in prison.”
- Assange did what thousands of journalists do every day. He was contacted by a source with potentially useful information; he encouraged that source to get and give him as much information as possible; and then he worked with others to publish the information.
- Those who commit war crimes go unpunished and often profit but those who expose said war crimes are risking their lives and freedom.
- Assange used to have a lot more support, especially from people on the left, but ever since he published DNC and Clinton emails during the 2016 election, he is only seen as a “Russian puppet and Donald Trump supporter”. They couldn't care less about everything he has helped uncover, including the heinous war crimes committed by the US. They just see him as the reason Donald Trump, not Hillary Clinton is president. It's actually incredible to see how many people are now against Assange and would love to see him spend decades in prison.

- Many in the MSM dislike him and do their best to discredit him as a “journalist”. For example, the Washington Post Editorial Board wrote:
 - “Mr. Assange is not a free-press hero. Yes, WikiLeaks acquired and published secret government documents, many of them newsworthy, as shown by their subsequent use in newspaper articles (including in The Post). Contrary to the norms of journalism, however, Mr. Assange sometimes obtained such records unethically - including, according to a separate federal indictment unsealed Thursday, by trying to help now-former US Army soldier Chelsea Manning hack into a classified US computer system.”
 - “Also unlike real journalists, WikiLeaks dumped material into the public domain without any effort independently to verify its factuality or give named individuals an opportunity to comment. Nor, needless to say, would a real journalist have cooperated with a plot by an authoritarian regime intelligence service to harm one US presidential candidate and benefit another.”
 - “...To the contrary, Mr. Assange’s transfer to US custody, followed possibly by additional Russia-related charges or his conversion into a cooperating witness, could be the key to learning more about Russian intelligence efforts to undermine democracy in the West. Certainly he is long overdue for personal accountability.
- Tucker Carlson spoke about Assange [saying](#):
 - “Assange’s real sin was preventing Hillary Clinton from becoming president. There was a time, not so long ago, when reporters didn’t applaud the arrest of other journalists for publishing information.”
 - “At NBC, when they tell you ‘many believe’ something, it means they believe it,” Carlson said about the network's coverage of Assange.

- “The guardians of speech are now its enemies. The people charged with policing power are now colluding with it. There’s a reason you see John Brennan on NBC all the time. They’re all on the same team. We’re not saying any of this to defend Julian Assange. We just want to be absolutely clear about who hurts this country more. It’s not him.”
- “...So what’s going on here? A couple of things. First, Julian Assange embarrassed virtually everyone in power. He published documents that undermined the official story on the Iraq War and Afghanistan. He got Debbie Wasserman Schultz fired from the DNC. He humiliated Hillary Clinton, by showing that the Democratic primaries were in fact rigged. Pretty much everyone in Washington has a reason to hate Julian Assange. Rather than just admit that - “he made us look like buffoons, so now we’re sending him to prison” - they’re denouncing him as, you guessed it, a Russian agent.”

- Timeline of Events⁵⁶

- 2006 - WikiLeaks is founded by Assange.
- 2007 - WikiLeaks posts the procedures manual for Camp Delta, the US detention center in Guantanamo Bay.
- September 2008 - WikiLeaks posts emails from vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin’s Yahoo account

⁵ “Julian Assange in the Ecuadorian embassy: timeline” - BBC
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11949341>

⁶ “Julian Assange Fast Facts” - CNN
<https://www.cnn.com/2013/01/18/world/julian-assange-fast-facts/index.html>

- April 5, 2010 - WikiLeaks posts a video showing a US military helicopter firing on and killing several Iraqi civilians in 2007. The military claims that the helicopter crew believed the targets were armed insurgents, not civilians.
- July 25, 2010 - WikiLeaks posts more than 90,000 classified documents related to the Afghanistan war.
- August 20, 2010 - Swedish prosecutors issue an arrest warrant for Assange based on allegations of sexual assault.
- October 22, 2010 - WikiLeaks publishes classified military documents from the Iraq war.
- November 28, 2010 - The Stockholm Criminal Court issues an international arrest warrant for Assange
- December 7, 2010 - Turns himself in to London authorities. Assange is remanded in custody.
- December 16, 2010 - is released on bail and put on house arrest.
- February 24, 2011 - A judge rules in support of Assange's extradition to Sweden. Assange's lawyers file an appeal.
- April 24, 2011 - WikiLeaks begins releasing classified military documents providing details on the behavior and treatment of detainees being held at Guantanamo Bay.
- September 2, 2011 - WikiLeaks releases its archive of more than a quarter million US diplomatic cables.
- November 2, 2011 - Appeals court judges in London rule in favor of Assange being extradited to Sweden.
- November 15, 2011 - The UK Judicial Office announces Assange has applied to take his appeal against extradition to Sweden to the Supreme Court of the UK
- May 30, 2012 - The British Supreme Court denies Assange's appeal against extradition to Sweden but grants him two weeks to file and appeal.
- June 19, 2012 - Assange enters the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, requesting political asylum.

- August 16, 2012 - Ecuador announces it has granted asylum to Assange.
- August 19, 2012 - Makes a public address from the balcony of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, demanding that the United States drop its witch-hunt against WikiLeaks.
- August 13, 2015 - Swedish prosecutors announce they are dropping allegations involving sexual molestation and coercion as statute of limitations in the investigation run out. However, the allegation of suspicion of rape still stands, and he may be investigated until 2020.
- July 22, 2016 - WikiLeaks publishes nearly 20,000 emails from DNC staffers. The hacked emails appear to show the committee favoring Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders during the 2016 primary.
- September 15, 2016 - WikiLeaks announces via Twitter that “If Obama grants Manning clemency, Assange will agree to US prison in exchange, despite its clear unlawfulness,”
- October 7, 2016 - WikiLeaks begins publishing emails from Clinton’s campaign chairman, John Podesta.
- April 20, 2017 - US Attorney General Jeff Sessions announces that the Department of Justice is preparing charges for Assange, and that his arrest is a “priority”.
- November 2018 - An inadvertent court filing in a case unrelated to Assange reveals that the WikiLeaks founder has been charged under seal in a US federal court.
- April 11, 2019 - Assange is arrested by the Metropolitan Police in London on an extradition warrant from the US Justice Department. He is charged with conspiracy to attempt to hack a computer in connection with the 2010 release of classified military info obtained via Manning.