



Julian Assange's fiancée (and children) interviewed for the first time

This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.

Stella Morris: [talking to her children] Hello, sweetheart. Come say hello.

I'm Stella Morris, I am Julian Assange's partner. I met him in 2011. We got together in 2015 and we have two children, Max and Gabriel.

I had received an email from Jennifer Robinson, who put out a request through her Oxford Network that the case that she was involved in, which involved Julian Assange, needed more people. Our first meeting was in Paddington at the Frontline Club. I was scheduled to be at an interview. I didn't know who I was going to meet. I rang the doorbell and went up the stairs and he was sitting alone at a table, which really came as a surprise because at the time he was already a world famous figure. And he asked me who I was. And I said I had come for an interview. He thought I was an American journalist who was there to interview him. So he immediately was quite guarded. And thought who was this woman who had just walked into the room? And I said, no, no. I'm here to be interviewed, which immediately relaxed him. And he offered me the tea he was drinking.

And then other people came in and I talked about my background, the fact that I was a fluent Swedish speaker and the fact that I had studied law and started working with Baltasar Garzon, who was the international coordinator of Julian's international legal team. In 2012, he took political asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy. Just like my language skills in Swedish had been relevant for the Swedish case. My Spanish language skills, fluent in Spanish, became important for the political asylum context. I had been in the embassy almost every single day and got to know Julian very well. And in 2015, we got together.

Interviewer: You started a relationship?

Stella Morris: Yeah. I mean, we fell in love. And you know, this is a person that I knew well by then, the person I know the most in this world and he's extraordinary. He's generous and he's very tender and loving.

[talking to her children] On the computer. Yeah. And you like on your phone? On your cameras.

Forming a family was a deliberate decision to kind of break down those walls around him and see life, imagine a life beyond that prison. And so while for many people, it would seem insane to start a family in that context, for us, it was the sane thing to do. It was what keeps things real. And it does, it grounds me and when Julian sees the children, it gives him a lot of peace and nurturing and support and that's good. And they're very happy (the children).

It equals [being] traumatized by what's happened over the last few years actually. I compare it to being in a war zone. Constant, relentless attacks. You know that there are operations underway and it's not some crazed conspiracy theory. It's part of the reality of the context in which everything to do with Julian exists. And just like in war, people fall in love and decide to live their lives in an act of rebellion I think. Falling in love is kind of an act of rebellion in a context where there's a lot of attempts to destroy your life and your reason for doing what you're doing.

This is the younger one. Max with the cat. And that's a little one. There's a big one. That's a big one. Same same picture. They're quite similar looking. When you look at them like that. The older one is actually very much like Julian. He looks a lot like Julian. Especially around the eyes. The kind of the eyebrows and the gaze is very much Julian. The little one looks more like me and he has Julian's ears and Julian's size because he's very big and he looks like his brother. But of the two of them, the older one is very Julian.

We have seen him in prison and so I'm struggling to think of how to explain it [to the children]. Why is there someone.... You also don't want to... You know, you want them to feel a positive feeling about going there as well. So kind of it's a bit of a charade. I don't think people understand the extreme situation and pressure that we've been under because Julian is a public figure, because everything about him is newsworthy. Anything can be used against him. It has been used against him.

And so this was a real dilemma about having a relationship in these circumstances means you try to insulate it and protect it as fiercely as you can. And that's what I've done because that's kind of a haven, an oasis, from the crazy context.

I knew there was some spying going on when I found out that my baby was targeted. A guard actually went up to me and told me that they were trying to steal the DNA.

I realised that I couldn't really protect my family, even if I took all these steps, more steps than most people try to preserve our privacy and our security and Julian's safety ultimately. In a way, it was beyond my control and that was very difficult to realise. I understood that the powers that were against Julian were ruthless and had no there were no bounds to it because there's a lawlessness around it. And, you know, they were after my baby's DNA. But what else? You know, what else are they after? And that's partly why I feel now that I have to. I have to do this because I've taken so many steps for so many years and I feel like Julian's life might be coming to an end. It's been 10 years, nine years, no, 10 years of breaking someone down, of trying to destroy his life. And it's a well-known pattern. You know, whistleblowers, people who expose the powerful. They destroy them. And we know that when this happens and somehow everyone has failed, Julian. They've all failed Julian. It is taking a really negative angle. They have been able to ...you can do that to anyone. You can destroy anyone like that. You just need to get over analysing them.

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