



Taylor Hudak Speech on the Fight to Free Julian Assange

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Andrew Smith (AS): Taylor actually stepped out of doing our live streams and into a legitimate career in journalism, which I am ecstatic for. She's a reporter with acTVism Munich, - I probably butchered it - Munich, one of the two. And she has helped to radicalize Germany. Most people don't really know it and you can't really see it from here in the U.S., but Germany is one of the countries that has some of the most on the ground, some of the loudest support for Julian Assange. And I would in no small part, thank Taylor for that. And the work that she's done traveling literally the world, covering Julian's case. In February of 2020, she sent out, by herself, with no spending money, with a cell phone camera and the hope of getting close to the court case to cover Julian's trial. Two years later, she's interviewed almost anyone there is involved in this case to interview. She does wonderful reports every single week and has been able to educate almost the entire continent of Europe for those willing to listen about Julian's case. So without further ado, everybody, Taylor Hudak.

Taylor Hudak (TH): All right, Andrew, I want to thank you for that introduction, and I also want to thank the Shiptons for being here. John Shipton, it is good to see you again. And Gabriel, thank you for also being here. And a big thank you to Action 4 Assange for hosting this event. Excellent work. They're doing live streams every single week for hours covering this case and speaking about the importance of this case. It's also something that obviously is very important to me. And I spent quite a bit of time covering it. And I want to begin, first of all, by reiterating a point that WikiLeaks editor in chief Kristinn Hrafnsson mentioned. This was on the day before the first part of the extradition hearings, and he said that whatever one's passion is or cause is, the outcome of this case will impact your ability to fight for what means so much to you. Whether that be privacy rights, anti surveillance, censorship, animal rights, gay rights, whatever your causes, Julian Assange's situation - his fate is inherently tied to your fate as well. And if you're not an activist, if you're not a journalist, if you're just a member of the public who is concerned about how the United States engages with the rest of the world and you're curious about politics, this case impacts your right to know. An attack on Julian Assange is an attack on all of us.

Now, covering this case in London extensively, it is no secret that there have been numerous challenges to covering the case, whether NGO observers whose professional job it is to monitor these court proceedings and were unable to, to the journalists like myself, who had some difficulty connecting to the video conference link. This is the most consequential press

freedom case of our time. And this is the public interest to learn about these proceedings here, about what's happening in this courtroom. We also must ask ourselves why this is happening. Why are we keeping this case in the dark? Why has the media largely remained silent? Fortunately, because of groups like Action 4 Assange and other grassroots journalists, more and more people in the mainstream media, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, among other publications, are stepping up and they're speaking out and saying, enough is enough. This is wrong. This is an attack on all journalists. So it's not just a fringe group of activists anymore. That is not at all the case. Every single major civil liberties organization in the United States and throughout the world is calling for Julian Assange to be freed and for this case to be dropped. The journalism that won Julian Assange numerous awards is the same journalism that has him in a prison today. He is in one of the worst prisons, if not the worst prison in England right now. And I want to reiterate right now, especially to the Biden administration, that every day that Julian Assange is sitting in Belmarsh prison and each day that the United States, this country, continues to prosecute this case is another day that the United States betrays its own constitution. How can we allow this? Does this make any sense? No, it doesn't. Right.

And lastly, at the end of the second half of the extradition proceedings, I spoke with Lauri Love, who was one of the very few people who can understand what Julian Assange is going through as far as facing extradition to the United States. And Lauri Love said something to me that was very profound. He said that oftentimes the process can be the punishment. This process is a punishment. And we're seeing that happen right now, especially with the judge's latest decision back earlier in winter where she denied his bail. Absolutely devastating decision. But one thing that we all have to remember is that - I want to end off, first of all, with a message from Edward Snowden. I said this a few months ago, but I think it's really important to keep remembering this. And I think all of us here who are activists and journalists, especially independent journalists, know this, but we cannot rely on elected leaders to solve our problems. And while I am going to call upon the Biden administration to separate itself from Trump-era attacks on the free press by dropping this case and freeing Assange, we must all depend on each other as well, because real change begins with me. It begins with all of you here. It begins with the organizers of this event. It begins with everyone who is fighting for this case and who cares about the future of the free press. Another thing to hear is that this is not just a broader press issue or First Amendment issue. This is someone's life. And I think that's why it's important to have these events, to have Julian Assange's family here. So we know this is a real person who is being impacted by this. Nils Melzer, the U.N. special rapporteur on torture, said that he's been subjected to torture for a decade. This is completely unacceptable. And the UK government, the US, Ecuador and Sweden have not been held accountable for this. Julian Assange ought to be freed and he also ought to be compensated for the horrific state crimes that have been leveled against him. If we constantly raise awareness and collectively act together like we are today, we can impact Julian Assange's tomorrow. We can save free speech and free press around the world, and we can save the life of Julian Assange. Thank you.

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