



## **Assange Update: Audio Recording Exposes US Weak Case**

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**Taylor Hudak:** Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich, and welcome back to another Julian Assange case update. Over the years, the US case against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has had a series of legal irregularities, including an illegal spying operation, an assassination attempt, and a sitting judge who had close ties to the British military and intelligence apparatus. But in June of 2021, it was revealed in the Icelandic publication Stundin that the US prosecution's key witness Siggi Thordarson lied to investigators about Assange in exchange for immunity. And earlier this month, newly released recordings from Thordarson's exclusive interview with Stundin provide more evidence of corruption in the handling of the Assange case.

**Reporter:** Did you tell the FBI that...

**Siggi:** That I hacked them? No.

**Reporter:** ...and that Assange asked you to hack them?

**Siggi:** No.

**Reporter:** Then why does the indictment claim you said that?

**Siggi:** I can't answer that.

**Reporter:** Is it because you don't want to, or is it because of the FBI you can't answer?

**Siggi:** I can't answer that.

**Reporter:** Why can't you answer?

**Siggi:** Because I'm not allowed to.

**TH:** Siggi Thordarson volunteered for WikiLeaks in 2010, but was subsequently fired after embezzling more than 50000 dollars from the organization. According to Stundin, Thordarson, who has a well documented history of financial fraud in Iceland, misled US investigators, claiming that Assange instructed him to hack or commit computer intrusions. Claims that Thordarson now says are false.

**Reporter:** They just say to you, here is the situation, and they lay it out. And that did not paint a pretty picture, according to my sources.

**Siggi:** Indeed.

**Reporter:** They were perhaps even pointing out that you were headed to prison imminently.

**Siggi:** Indeed.

**Reporter:** ...if you didn't answer FBI's questions and work with the FBI on this. You were panicking at that point.

**Siggi:** I don't look at it as a threat. Stating the obvious isn't necessarily a threat.

**Reporter:** Look... it feels like the Icelandic police were telling you that they would make the charges in Iceland disappear.

**Siggi:** Yes.

**Reporter:** ... and the FBI would make the American charges disappear? So by making an immunity deal with the Americans you would be off the hook for anything that could cause you problems back home?

**Siggi:** Huh. That's news to me.

**TH:** And despite this revelation, Assange remains in Belmarsh prison without charge and the US continues to prosecute this case. In July 2021, a senior high court judge, Mr Justice Jonathan Swift, granted the US limited permission to appeal Judge Vanessa Baraitser decision, which blocked the US extradition request. In his decision, Justice Swift denied the US the ability to revisit the factual findings on appeal. According to Stella Moris campaign update, Swift found that Judge Baraitser had rightly relied on expert evidence and supported her assessment on the integrity of the expert witnesses. But during an August 11th preliminary appeal hearing, judges Timothy Holroyd and Judith Farbey reversed this decision, granting the US full permission to appeal Judge Baraitser's ruling. During the August 11th hearing the Crown representing the US government argued to reintroduce two additional grounds for appeal, which revisit the factual findings in the case.

**Stella Moris:** The US government was exploiting the inherently unfair arrangement between the US and the UK. They're exploiting the inherently unfair extradition arrangements with this country in order to prolong- to arbitrarily prolong his imprisonment. The imprisonment of an innocent man accused of practicing journalism.

**TH:** The Crown sought to discredit defense witness psychiatrist Michael Kopelman, whose testimony was referenced in Judge Baraitser's decision. Kopelman evaluated Assange in prison and determined that he has autism spectrum disorder and clinical depression and

therefore is at an increased risk of suicide if extradited. Based on part of this testimony, Baraitser determined it would be oppressive to extradite Assange to the United States given his poor mental health condition. In her decision Baraitser referenced Professor Kopelman's testimony, stating, Professor Kopelman is an experienced neuropsychiatrist with a long and distinguished career. He has taken great care to provide an informed account of Mr Assange background and psychiatric history. I had no reason to doubt his clinical opinion. During the hearing, the Crown argued that the weight given to Kopelman's testimony should be revisited. This is due to Kopelman's decision to not disclose the existence of Assange's fiancée and two youngest children in his first report to the court. However, Kopelman withheld this personal information in order to protect Assange's family, whom he felt could be at risk. Judge Baraitser acknowledged that Kopelman should have disclosed this information to the court, but found it was an understandable human response to Moris's situation.

**SM:** What has not been discussed today is why I feared for my safety and the safety of our children and Julian's life. The constant threats and intimidation that we have endured for years. Which has been terrorizing us and has been terrorizing joining for over ten years. The threats against me, threats against our children, threats against- death threats against Julian's eldest son Daniel, threats on Julian's life, threats of one hundred and seventy five year prison sentence and the actual ongoing imprisonment of a journalist for doing his job. These are sustained threats to his life for the past ten years. These are not just items of law. This is our lives. We have the right to exist. We have a right to live. And we have a right for this nightmare to come to an end once and for all.

**TH:** The US government's decision to pursue this case continues to be increasingly unpopular. Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, renewed their call for the United States to drop the charges against Julian Assange.

**Simon Crowther:** We are calling on the US government to drop the charges against Julian Assange. The Department of Justice should not be proceeding with this case. And it's in their gift to call off this case.

**Rebecca Vincent:** We call again on the US government to drop this case. Julian Assange should be immediately released. He should certainly not be extradited to the United States. We repeat our position, that he has been targeted for his contributions to public interest reporting. He should not be in this position. And we retain serious concerns about the state of his mental and physical health in Belmarsh prison. He should be allowed to go home to his family. He should not be detained as this appeals process drags on.

**TH:** Additionally, several major press freedom organizations issued statements in defense of the WikiLeaks founder. This includes the International Federation of Journalists, Freedom of the Press Foundation, Committee to Protect Journalists, the European Center for Press and Media Freedom, PEN International and the Global Network for Press Freedom. The full appeal hearing will take place on October 27th and 28th in the UK. AcTVism Munich will continue to cover this case and is dedicated to keeping you informed on the latest developments. Please make sure that you are subscribe to our YouTube channel and hit the bell so you are notified each time we post a new video. As an independent organization that takes no money from any corporation or state government, we rely on your support to keep us going. So please donate to our organization so we can continue with our public interest

journalism. I want to thank you all for watching this Julian Assange case update. I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich, and I'll see you in my next report.

**END**