



The CIA Plot to assassinate Assange | Former CIA Officer Speaks out!

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

Textfield: Shadowproof's Kevin Gosztola and former CIA officer John Kiriakou discuss a major report of CIA plans to kidnap or kill Julian Assange and destroy WikiLeaks.

John Kiriakou: I woke up this morning to a half dozen different friends, having e-mailed me this article and there were accompanying expressions of shock. That's the only word I can really think of to use here is shock. Mike Isikoff is a Pulitzer prize winning investigative journalist. He's worked at the biggest, most important, best funded news outlets in America. The guy is a serious journalist. And you know, for Mike Isikoff to say something is definitive, as the CIA was trying to murder Julian Assange or to capture Julian Assange and then to go into detail of exactly how they were planning to do that. You have to take that very seriously. He interviews more than 30 current and former CIA officers and former administration officials who were privy to this information. It's so well sourced, 99 percent of it. It's so well covered that I have to believe it. We know that the CIA was obsessed, that Pompeo specifically was obsessed with Julian Assange and WikiLeaks because of the Vault 7 revelations. That was akin to the crown jewels of the mid-1970s being released and by God, Pompeo and Gina Haspel were determined to put an end to Julian Assange and to put an end to WikiLeaks. So it wasn't just these insane plans to murder Assange, but there were accompanying plans to infiltrate and to neutralise WikiLeaks as an organisation. And Isikoff says in the article that the CIA had some success in infiltrating WikiLeaks in collecting information from inside the organisation in determining WikiLeaks future plans and intentions. They really targeted WikiLeaks directly and went after WikiLeaks. So, you know, disruption is the easy part. Collection against WikiLeaks is the easy part. I'm stuck on this murder plot. This is just so, you know, if I were still at the CIA, if this were 2004 and somebody said, Oh, listen, we're going to plan to murder this Australian national because he

keeps publishing our stuff and we don't like his politics. That would have been like a bad joke, I mean, I don't even know anybody in 2004 who would have said words like that out loud, it's just so outrageous. And now, you know, we read it and we say, Wow, you know, CIA, they were pretty mad, but this is what they do. They have to go after WikiLeaks. No! This whole thing bothers me. There were a couple of revelations in this piece, Kevin, that were very, very disturbing to me, to the point where, like, I'm having trouble wrapping my brain around it. For example, they talked about the possibility of having to engage in a shootout in the streets of London outside the Ecuadorian embassy. They talked about the possibility of shooting the tires out of a Russian diplomatic plane. So it couldn't lift off from an airport outside London if Julian Assange had been on the plane. OK, these are acts of war. You can't do things like this. And then almost as an aside, Isikoff says the British agreed that they would be the ones doing the shooting. Well, that doesn't make it any less of an act of war. If Julian Assange had been released, for example, and if he had been granted asylum in Russia and if the Russians had sent a plane to pick him up, that is a diplomatic vehicle, right? It has all the same diplomatic protections that an embassy would or an embassy car would. You can't shoot the tires out. That is like firing a rocket at the Russian mainland. You just can't do things like that. But apparently, Mike Pompeo was so obsessed with taking down Julian Assange that that's exactly what they were planning to do. Now there is a way at the CIA that you go about doing something like this. First of all, you have to declare a person a clear and present danger to the United States. It appears that that's what they did with Julian. They said he is a clear and present danger to the safety and security of the United States, and as such, he has to be executed. But he's an Australian national. He's an Australian national and Australia is one of the Five Eyes countries. And so the United States would have had to bring the Australians in on the operation. They would have had to have Australian permission to go ahead and murder an Australian national. There's no paragraph saying, the Australians said, now Pompeo, wait a minute. He's an Australian national and while we don't like him either, you can't kill an Australian national. We didn't see any of that. So what are we supposed to conclude? That the US did not inform Australia or that the Australians were in on it? Now it says in the article that the British certainly were in on it, that the British were the ones who agreed to shoot out the Russian planes or to carry out the gun battle that would have taken place in front of the Ecuadorian embassy. Does that mean Australia has changed too? And the Australians were willing to allow the British and the Americans to conspire to murder one of their nationals? So number one you've got to get permission from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. It appears that they got that. Number two, you would have to get the agreement of the Australian government. It appears that they got that too. Number three, and this is one that sort of makes me want to swallow my tongue, you have to get the approval of the congressional oversight committees. Now if they were serious about this operation and the planning for the operation went as far as it did that means that they got the permission of the oversight committees. I complained a lot in a lot of interviews that the oversight committees are little more than cheerleaders for the CIA, and they've been little more than cheerleaders from the CIA since the 1990s. But this is ridiculous. This is murder, murder of an Australian national, murder of somebody who has never been convicted in a US

court of committing any crime. In fact, the British courts deemed the accusation of his crime not even worthy of extradition. So, you know the revelations in this article, if they're even half true and like I say, he interviewed something like 30 former CIA people and administration officials, we have to believe him. I mean, this is just over the top.

Kevin Gosztola: The fact that they were talking about killing him, but then also seriously considering a rendition operation against an editor, a publisher of a media organisation.

JK: This is insane shooting out the tires of a Russian diplomatic flight that would have, you know, taken him into exile in Russia. You can't do that. You might as well shoot the plane down out of the sky. It's an act of war. You can't do it. You know, we see these cute little scenes on Law and Order where they trick this Iranian diplomatic car into opening its doors, and they grab the guy out of the diplomatic car. That doesn't happen in real life. You can't do that because then what's going to happen if the Russians decide to shoot the wheels, shoot out the tires of an American diplomatic plane or to violate American diplomatic sovereignty, maybe go into a classified diplomatic pouch? You can't do things like that. So the fact that it went all the way to the president? Wow. I don't even have words.

KG: So yeah, I mean, when you add in the FBI's informant, when you add in the FBI's informant, you add in what the CIA's conduct is in this. And then also, I should mention the FBI stole Julian Assange's legally privileged material.

JK: Yes, they did.

KG: Yeah. All of that together, there is no reason why this case should still be going.

JK: No. Any criminal defence attorney of any repute at all should be able to pick this case apart in a day. The entire, the government's entire case is based on a convicted paedophile's lies. Now, for whatever reason, he confessed to an Icelandic journalist that he lied about his access to Julian Assange. He lied about his position in WikiLeaks. He embezzled money from WikiLeaks and then went on to molest young boys and was convicted of paedophilia. And that's their star witness.

Textfield: Don't Extradite Assange

Yanis Varoufakis in Video: Well first, they're getting Julian. Then they will get you, me, everyone. This is a clear struggle for freedom of the press and for the right of citizens to know what governments are doing behind their backs, supposedly on their behalf.

Textfield: Will Press Freedom Survive?

YV in Video: The circumstances in which he's held in there, are an affront to civilization.

Abby Martin in Video: [00:02:54] I think this case has absolutely devastating, horrifying and wide reaching implications for press freedom and journalism as a whole. And unfortunately, people have already made up their mind about Julian Assange. They're not taking a stand the way they should be.

Jill Stein in Video: He is being punished, as is Julian Assange and Edward Snowden for releasing the truth.

John Shipton in Video: Every single human right of Julian's has been arbitrarily broken. Distortions of procedure, falsification of witness statements, the lot, the whole rotten, a lot of it.

Textfield: Will The Truth Be Free?

Tariq Ali in Video: He's on death row. He will be on death row, if he is extradited.

Nils Melzer in Video: If this man gets extradited to the United States, he will be tortured until the day he dies.

Jennifer Robinson in Video: It may now be Julian and it may now be Glenn Greenwald, but who will be next?

Stella Moris in Video: Julian is a publisher. Julian is also a son, he's a friend. He's my fiance. And a father. Julian needs his freedom and our democracy needs a free press.

Textfield: Can We Save Julian Assange?

NM in Video: Yes, it is about Julian Assange, but it is much more also about all of you and your children and your families. And 20 years from now, will you still be able to know the truth about what your government is doing? Or when it has become a crime to inform you about what your government is doing with your tax money to other people that have not done anything wrong in their lives.

Textfield: Past Work of acTVism Munich on Julian Assange

Taylor Hudak in Video: Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich. I'm in

London outside the Old Bailey courthouse.

TH in Video: Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak and I'm outside London's Belmarsh Prison.

Srećko Horvat in Video: We are all Julian Assange. How would you know about all the crimes committed in our names, if there weren't the billions of leaks published by WikiLeaks?

Angela Richter in Video: If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth.

AM in Video: We're going to lock people away facing 200 years in prison for exposing war crimes. What kind of country, what kind of world are we going to live in? So we have to stand up and collectively say, no more.

Glenn Greenwald in Video: If you're an activist of any kind, right, left, center, an animal rights activist and environmental activist, a socialist activist, any kind of an activist against global institutions and you're not capable of setting aside whatever emotional feelings you have for Julian Assange to defend basic press freedom and stand opposed to the efforts of Trump's government and Boris Johnson's Tory government to criminalize the activities of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks and publishing information in the public interest, you are going to create a world for yourself in which the presidents you're now acquiescing to or cheering out of some misplaced hatred, Julian Assange are going to be used against you.

NM in Video: When you're in a dark room, one person switching on the lights will make everyone see. Don't look for the light somewhere else. Go and switch it on yourself.

Noam Chomsky in Video: We should all thank Julian for his courage and integrity in providing us with this precious gift at great cost to himself, much to our shame.

Edward Snowden in Video: Think about the opportunities that you have, right. Because there are no heroes. Nobody's going to save you. But there are only heroic actions. There are only heroic choices. There are only people who moment by moment see bad things and recognize, maybe I can do something, maybe I can't fix everything, but maybe I can make progress. Maybe I can make things better. Maybe I am the one that I'm waiting for. And as soon as you start thinking like that, you'll realize that you are.

Vivian Westwood in Video: Free Assange, Rock and Roll.

END