



Julian Assange & CIA backed Assassination Plots: Stella Moris | Truth to Power with Lowkey

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Stella Moris in Introduction: This is the problem when I talk about Julian's case. For the average person, I think it just sounds so incredible when you talk about the CIA or this Las Vegas mogul or, you know, security companies trying to steal nappies. It sounds maybe like a fiction film. But this happened to us, there's evidence in court cases, this is how badly they want to silence Julian. They are capable of anything.

Video Introduction: Keep your hand on your gun. Don't you trust anyone. Keep your hands on your gun. Don't you trust anyone.

Lowkey: Australian journalist and founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange has been suffering some form of detention for the last nine years. From unfreedom in the Ecuadorian embassy to the unfreedom of a cell at Belmarsh prison. The United States is attempting to extradite Julian Assange to the US from the UK for the crime of journalism. Despite the fact that a British court has ruled that he is a suicide risk if he were to be transported to a US cell, he still remains kept in Belmarsh while his family waits at home. He has this constant threat of extradition hanging over him while the US prepares to appeal the decision of the British court. Today, we talk to Mother Campaigner and also someone who happens to be the partner of political prisoner Julian Assange. We're joined today by Stella Moris. How are you Stella?

SM: I'm OK.

Lowkey: Thank you for joining us for this interview. Julian today, despite the ruling of the court that extraditing him to the United States would be dangerous for him, still sits in

Belmarsh prison. When you last saw him, how was he? Are you concerned for his physical or mental health?

SM: I'm always concerned for Julian's health. He's been having to go through incredible hardship for the seven years that he was in the Ecuadorian embassy. It was a small apartment, no outdoor space, he didn't have any sunlight for seven years. And then he was dragged to Belmarsh and he hasn't stepped outside Belmarsh, other than in the courtroom since April 2019. Belmarsh is a horrible, grim place that exists to isolate people to crush their hope. It has, I think, three times the average prison suicide rate, three times more than the average UK prison. Julian's lost a friend in Belmarsh prison in November 2020, who committed suicide and that's because it's a terrible environment and he has very little stimulation. He describes it as sensory deprivation. He describes prison as a meat processing factory. They just keep them alive. So it's a very nasty environment to be in, especially if you don't know how long it's going to last. I mean, Julian's been in there, he's not serving a sentence, he's there as a remand prisoner and many convicted criminals who he's met over the years have come and gone, you know, they've served their sentence. When I speak to the family members of other prisoners, they ask me, well, how long has he got left? And I tell them, well, we don't know. And they can't understand how that's possible. Julian faces 175 years in the US, so, you know, it's potentially forever. So it's a difficult environment he's in but the prospect of the US extradition is what the gravest fear is around. Because in the United States he would be placed in extreme isolation. Solitary confinement in the US prison system is routine. And on any given day, it's estimated that 80,000 people are in solitary confinement in the United States. But because his case concerns the publication of classified material, it's considered a national security case, and so they have an excuse to say it's a national security case, so we have to place him in isolation. The fact that he's a suicide risk also gives them reason to isolate him. And that's why there's just no question that if he goes to the US, he will be extremely isolated, far, far worse than anything he's experiencing in Belmarsh.

Lowkey: In consideration of all of these things, would you then agree with the UN rapporteur that describes what has happened to Julian is torture?

SM: Absolutely. The UN special rapporteur on torture went to Belmarsh with two forensic psychiatrists to assess Julian, and that was their formal and medical assessment. But I've experienced it, I've seen what they've done to Julian. In the embassy, once the government turned hostile, they tried to harass him, isolate him, create an environment that was so arbitrary and so uncertain to try to dehumanise him, to try to take away all his agency. But it's not just what happened in the embassy, it's an accumulation of forces trying to crush Julian, crush his public image, crush his legacy, lie about what WikiLeaks does, what his motivations are, what he said, what he thinks, an incredible campaign to deceive the public. A case like Julian's, which is the most significant press freedom case of our century, which raises the most fundamental issues about what it means to live in a democracy, about our ability to know what governments do in our name, with our money. The fact that governments cover

these things up and if they're exposed are- they will go after you. It's just such a shocking case, what's happened to Julian it's monstrous. It's the worst things happening to the best person or the worst forces attacking the greatest virtues. And getting their way, for the most part so far.

Lowkey: I mean, and also when you consider that a lot of these press platforms benefited greatly from millions of cables that they would have advertised for fossil fuel companies on the same page as stories based on WikiLeaks cables, whether it's The Guardian or The New York Times, when also considering that the very same, this legal precedent is established, the very same sword can be wielded against them, supposedly. But then also on top of it, it's this kind of willingness to amplify what powerful people say and suspend this core idea that a person is innocent until proven guilty. So removing that entire process and being absolutely ignorant to the very ways in which these journalists and these newspapers would have benefited so greatly from all the work that WikiLeaks and Julian did. I mean, it is deeply ungrateful and that's even putting it generously. But also, I am interested in this change that you mentioned when it moved from the Rafael Correa government in Ecuador to the Lenín Moreno government. Was it really like a flick of a switch or was it a kind of a longer process in terms of that change within the embassy?

SM: With Moreno, it wasn't clear from the very beginning that Julian was in danger. It was clear that he was either very badly briefed or outright hostile. And I think it was a bit of both. He had no idea why Julian was being- what the political persecution against Julian was. He had no interest to know, he was about, he wanted to re-establish ties with the US and was willing to, basically, to do whatever to get that. And he did. He even allowed the US military to establish an airstrip in the Galapagos. I mean, that's how Moreno is, or was.

Lowkey: And of course, Correa's idea had been if you have a military base here in Ecuador, I want a military base in Miami.

SM: Exactly. Yes. He had the biggest US military base outside, well in Latin America, was in Ecuador and Correa had kicked it out. But now there is effectively also a military base and very close ties between the US and Ecuador and all that is down to Moreno. But basically what Moreno did was progressively silence and isolate Julian in the embassy, and then he also exchanged all the diplomatic stuff in the embassy with whom Julian had a good relationship and put people who he trusted there explicitly to get Julian expelled. And I mean, everyone was exposed to the outrageous lies that the ambassador and others, Moreno himself, then went on TV to say about Julian, which was all false. But basically there was this, yes, a campaign to isolate him, to make his life very difficult inside the embassy and then to lie and discredit him, to create a political environment that would allow his expulsion from the embassy. And that was facilitated by the media in this country. Those claims were just received unquestioningly, summarily removing a person's political asylum and having UK police drag them out of an embassy is, legally, well, completely illegal from an international

law perspective, but at the very least, politically controversial and no hard questions were asked there. The political and media environment was shaped so that Julian could be arrested.

Lowkey: I mean, also think about the potential ramifications for the 180.000 people in this country who are refugees, who have refugee status. Does that then mean that because the government of Sudan, for example, or Saudi Arabia wants somebody here who has political asylum and that they can therefore take them back? You know, the interesting thing is, of course, WikiLeaks's work rubbed the wrong way, you know, multiple governments from the government of Russia, Saudi Arabia, China, Iran, The Vatican, Turkey, but yet the governments that have worked to torture Julian are the US government, with the collaboration of the British and the Ecuadorian government and other NATO pro-US governments have collaborated in different ways along this period. And when thinking about it, it's those governments that trumpet themselves as the biggest defenders of democracy, of human rights and freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

SM: Yes, it's not just a contradiction or a hypocrisy. What they're doing to Julian is really setting a standard, as you say, that others will then repeat. Yes, with people who have international legal protection, if Ecuador could strip Assange of his political asylum, then so can we, they can say. But on the specific accusations against Julian, Julian is explicitly being accused of receiving, possessing and communicating information. That is a description of what journalism is. He's not being accused of actually stealing information, he was just the recipient, he was a journalist, and that's what he's being accused of. And so when you're talking about what standard this sets- well, it says that you can prosecute journalists. It's fine to put journalists in prison. It's fine to treat them as criminals because they're doing their job. And, you know, many countries are catching on. The Chinese foreign ministry has had tweets talking about Julian's case. It's very interesting that they're using Julian's case, in what the US coins 'whataboutism'. They don't cancel each other out. What happens is that you set a standard where journalists are prosecuted in China, in the UK, in the US, everywhere. So it's not, you know- I get a little bit frustrated when people are just talking about Western hypocrisy. It's not just about that, it's about setting new standards, it's about losing democracy. It's about others being then feeling licenced to do the same thing and absolutely it's not that they're justified, but they can't, the UK and the US have no leg to stand on. They set up this media freedom initiative. At the same time as they were preparing to expel Julian from the embassy, I don't think it's a coincidence. It's like approving a coal mine in England while holding the climate conference. It's exactly the same thing. It's a race to the bottom, and the UK and the US are undermining their own democracy by keeping Julian in prison, by continuing to seek his extradition and prosecuting him.

Lowkey: At a point in the Ecuadorian embassy, there was a security company who within its own emails said, we've joined the dark side, meaning that they were coordinating with the CIA, with the FBI, with the agencies of US intelligence on information that they were gleaning from the embassy. That included, as far as I understand, cameras put in the toilets. It

also included the using of the nappies of one of your children or of your children in order to test for relation to Julian. As a mother, as a person, as a human being in the face of this inhumanity, when you heard about it or if you knew about it before it became apparent to the rest of us, you probably did- how did it make you feel?

SM: Well, angry and... While I was in the embassy, you know, the environment was so dangerous and you had this instinct of self-preservation, of self-preservation I mean in relation to us as a family. Because we could feel the threat, we didn't know what was going on, we suspected the security company was hostile or, you know but... We had no idea what they were up to, but we absolutely didn't trust them or the Ecuadorian authorities, they were clearly hostile. We didn't know about this. I mean the nappy actually, I didn't know because one of the security company workers followed me out of the embassy one day and came up to me and told me that I shouldn't bring the baby in anymore because he had been told to steal a nappy. And then once Julian was expelled from the embassy and the US indictment was unsealed, then several whistleblowers from that security company went to the press and that's why there's a legal case in Spain. These people, well, I say these people, it's not the Spanish security company, these people were acting on instruction. They were receiving emails saying, install that camera there, install a microphone under the fire extinguisher, steal that nappy, look at ways to poison Assange, look at ways to kidnap him from the embassy. It was a complete- basically the embassy became like a black site, completely lawless. Julian tried to, you know, take a protection action in the Ecuadorian courts. The Ecuadorian courts were completely corrupt. But then the media was reporting it as if it was about a court case about his cat, whereas in reality it was about him not being able to receive visitors, his Internet being cut off, his phone's being cut off, harassment, you know. So the situation in the embassy was dangerous and lawless. And you end up having- Julian had to confront this day by day, he was in that embassy twenty four seven with these security guards that were plotting against him and harassing him and harassing me. And it was just a horrible, nasty environment. And I wasn't surprised when these things came out, what I was surprised about was who was sending the instructions and what it turned out, it turned out that this company was, yes, it was working for the Ecuadorian government, but at the same time, it had a contract with a corporation owned by Sheldon Adelson, who died a few months ago, Donald Trump's biggest financial backer, a man who has a casino, had a casino empire in Las Vegas. He is Mr. Las Vegas, basically a casino gangster. And that corporation, his casino corporation, had hired this company and was sending them instructions about spying on our baby. This is a problem when I talk about Julian's case. For the average person, I think it just sounds so incredible when you talk about the CIA or this Las Vegas mogul or, you know, security companies trying to steal nappies. It sounds like maybe like a fiction film, but this happened to us, you know. There's evidence in court cases. This is how bad, how badly they want to silence Julian. They are capable of anything.

Lowkey: I understand that this has, you know, as we said before the interview, since 2010 in general, it must have been a busy time for everyone anywhere near Julian but you when you

fell in love with Julian as far as I understand, you described it as a rebellion against the multitude of governments who were seeking to harm him. Can you explain that?

SM: Well, being in the kind of in the eye of the storm, you become conscious of the power of Julian's enemies, what they're capable of, what they're prepared to do, which is just about anything. The unlimited resources, the hostility and hatred for him and what he's trying to do and also you come to realise how important it is to be surrounded by good people. Julian is the best person I know, the most principled man, the man I want to be with for the rest of my life. And in this extremely hostile environment, our love was not only equal, but stronger than the power of these forces that we're trying to crush him. And we charted our own destiny, our own bond, our own nurturing environment. And that's more powerful than any of the- than the US Army or the US intelligence agencies. They couldn't stop us from loving each other. They couldn't stop us from starting a family or making the decision to start a family. So it's incredibly empowering to fall in love and in a siege like that was, and you know, it's a very difficult environment, it was incredibly hostile and dangerous. And now Julian is in Belmarsh prison which is also a very difficult circumstance. But we have each other and it's the vision of our being reunited, of him, you know, being able to be the father to our children and for this injustice to end, that is really, it helps us get it through- get through every day. It's a struggle that's just as you see the negative, you also see the incredibly positive.

Lowkey: So in a way, you were driven together by this will to contradict what was being aimed at him really at that time. And it must have also been an immediate change to your life, also.

SM: I mean, just entering into contact with Julian was a huge change because I was aware that he was being persecuted and hounded. And it was quite clear from the beginning that some very- he had very powerful enemies. And over the course of the years, I got to know him as a person and I fell in love with him. And in this incredibly adversarial environment that he found himself in, you know, people's situations that really test you, you get to know people's characters very well, and I think we got to know each other very well. I say the act of rebellion is really the act of saying, you know, fuck it, fuck these people, we want to- this is our lives, actually, you can't get into our heads and into our hearts and come what may. Yeah, it was very personal. In a way falling in love is always an act of rebellion, but under these circumstances- I bet the US government didn't want Julian to fall in love. I bet they didn't want him to start a family. I bet they wanted him to feel hopeless and alone and the opposite happened.

Lowkey: I mean, Durkheim's work on suicide looks at the death of social bonds as a key facilitator of, you know, that kind of process and, you know, this defiant and brave act to entwine, you know, your life and your faith really with somebody who was, you know, in danger in that way is certainly a remarkable and an important act. Why do you think it is that the judge, Vanessa Baraitser, refused to give anonymity to you and your family?

SM: I'm not sure about the motivations of the judge. You know, until that point, what had happened was that just at the beginning of Covid Julian had been in prison for almost a year at that point. And I decided that I would write to the judge as part of our bail application. We were doing the bail application anyway, but we thought she has to be informed about his family circumstances, the fact that he has a home, that he has two young children, that he has me, you know, these things are relevant in a bail application because he has a home to go to. And so I wrote to the judge and we asked for my name to be out of the public eye, to be removed from the public record. And that was denied. I don't think the judge took into consideration, you know, the threats that there are, that we face as a family. You know, part of the reason why I didn't want to be public was because I also became a target as an extension of Julian, because it's public now that Julian cares about me and they want to get- they'll try to get to him any way they can. And that also includes, you know, so there's a risk with my exposure and I was worried about the risk and of course, more so with the exposure of the children. And once we were exposed, I think then there was a decision to be taken. Well, if I'm going to be in the public eye, then I'm not going to hide. And I'm going to tell my story and I'm going to tell people what's going on here and it's a bit of a contradiction, because while we were private, obviously the security company knew we were in a relationship, suspected Julian was the father of our baby at that point. At that point, you know, we were still, I still felt there was risk and threat towards us, and that's partly why they wanted to establish the paternity with the nappy. Now everyone knows about our relationship, so they're, so there's more exposure also to hostile intent, but at the same time, I can talk about his situation and I can talk about the case and that also raises awareness. So it's different considerations in the end, I think. On balance, it's good that I can speak openly.

Lowkey: Whereas when you didn't have visibility, you couldn't speak...

SM: I couldn't speak openly. And, you know, I'm actually very shy and I'm an introvert. And so the whole idea of public exposure was terrifying to me. You overcome that kind of thing with purpose, and I, you know, I want to speak about his situation now, you know, I wish I had done it sooner, actually.

Lowkey: Really?

SM: Yeah, but it's, you know, it's difficult because our youngest was born in 2019. Julian was arrested in April 2019. So I've also been having to campaign for him with two young children. So it's, I don't think I was ready when I kind of became public, I wish I had a little bit more time. But on the other hand, if I had, you know, for Julian's sake the more people who speak out for him, the better. You know, the enemies, they create this fiction, but they can't keep it up over time, the true nature of things is exposed. So just the fact that Julian is in prison for, you know, almost two and a half years, he's just accused of publishing evidence of war crimes. This is the essence of it. And so you can talk about all these distracters, they just

last a little short while, but I think the average person is able to see through that if they're given enough elements and the time lapse is really a big factor in people realising the sheer injustice of this.

Lowkey: And specifically what they want to prosecute him for is the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs and the Guantanamo Bay information. Were it not for that information, we would not know that you literally had four of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay taken when they were 13 to 14 years old. It's that space of rightlessness of the, quote, unquote, terrorist. You know, you have things like Mitch McConnell and others, the US government, who have used words like this to refer to Julian. This is the space of rightlessness that they have tried to force him into throughout this process. And recently, a key witness of the US government has admitted to falsifying evidence against Julian. Can you tell us about that, please?

SM: This is a new development in the case, a really significant one. An Icelandic investigative newspaper published a long piece about the US government's key witness, who told them himself that the key allegations that the US has been pushing in the prosecution against Julian are fabricated by him. That means that the accusations against Julian- basically what happened is that the US has brought three indictments against Julian. Each new indictment cancels out the previous one. The final indictment was issued just a few weeks before Julian's extradition hearing restarted in September 2020, and they introduced the testimony of this key witness in relation to their computer charge. There's a single computer charge and they had realised at that point that the computer charge, as it related to Chelsea Manning, was so weak that we had basically knocked it off through our forensic expert. And so what they did was try to pad out this computer charge with this key witness and this key witness is literally a diagnosed sociopath, a fraudster who was already convicted in Iceland of impersonating Julian and defrauding WikiLeaks, embezzling WikiLeaks of, I think 50 or 60 thousand dollars. And so he did this interview for this Icelandic publication where he admits that what he said, what he told US prosecutors is fabricated and he did that in exchange for total immunity. So the US prosecutors went to him and said, we're not going to prosecute you. And so he had, under the protection of the US government, he then continued his crime spree. It's not just against WikiLeaks. He's defrauded dozens or at least a dozen Icelandic companies and been convicted for it. And it seems he's under investigation again. He's accused of forging his own lawyer's signature in a company registry. So this is their key witness. This is what the US has to resort to, to try to keep Julian in prison. Julian's imprisonment today, right now, is based on lies. It's false imprisonment. Julian is politically, you know, this is- it's the last resort of the DOJ having to go to a convicted fraudster, diagnosed sociopath, who has no credibility. So this development shows that the case is completely baseless and is falling apart.

Lowkey: Just to end with, if you had one message for the US and the British government on behalf of your family, what would that message be?

SM: The US is the one that is formally and legally prosecuting Julian. But the UK authorities are the ones that hold the key to his cell door. To the UK authorities I'd say stop degrading the United Kingdom by participating in facilitating the persecution of one of the greatest journalists of our times. And that's the way that most of the world perceives Julian, because they understand what his work is about. And by keeping Julian imprisoned, the UK is really undermining its international reputation in ways that are only beginning to start to show. The damage of keeping Julian in prison will last forever. So they should stop now, before it's too late. In relation to the US, the Biden administration claims to want to restore respect for the Constitution, respect for the First Amendment, which the Trump administration attacked and the only way to do that really is to stop the prosecution against Julian. Because everyone agrees, all the big organisations, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, you name it, Reporters Without Borders, that Julian's case is the single greatest threat to press freedom and to the protections for freedom of expression in the US. And the US has the gold standard of press freedom and freedom of expression in the West and in the world, much stronger than in the UK. But this case completely removes that protection, because if you can treat a person, a journalist, as a criminal and put them away for life, for publishing true information that was in the public interest, then you're no longer a democracy. And a superpower with a free press is very different from a superpower that does not have a free press.

Lowkey: Thank you very much, Stella Moris, really appreciate your time with us today and any way that we can be involved to assist the campaign to free Julian Assange, we are here one hundred percent, twenty four hours a day. Thank you very much.

SM: Thank you.

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