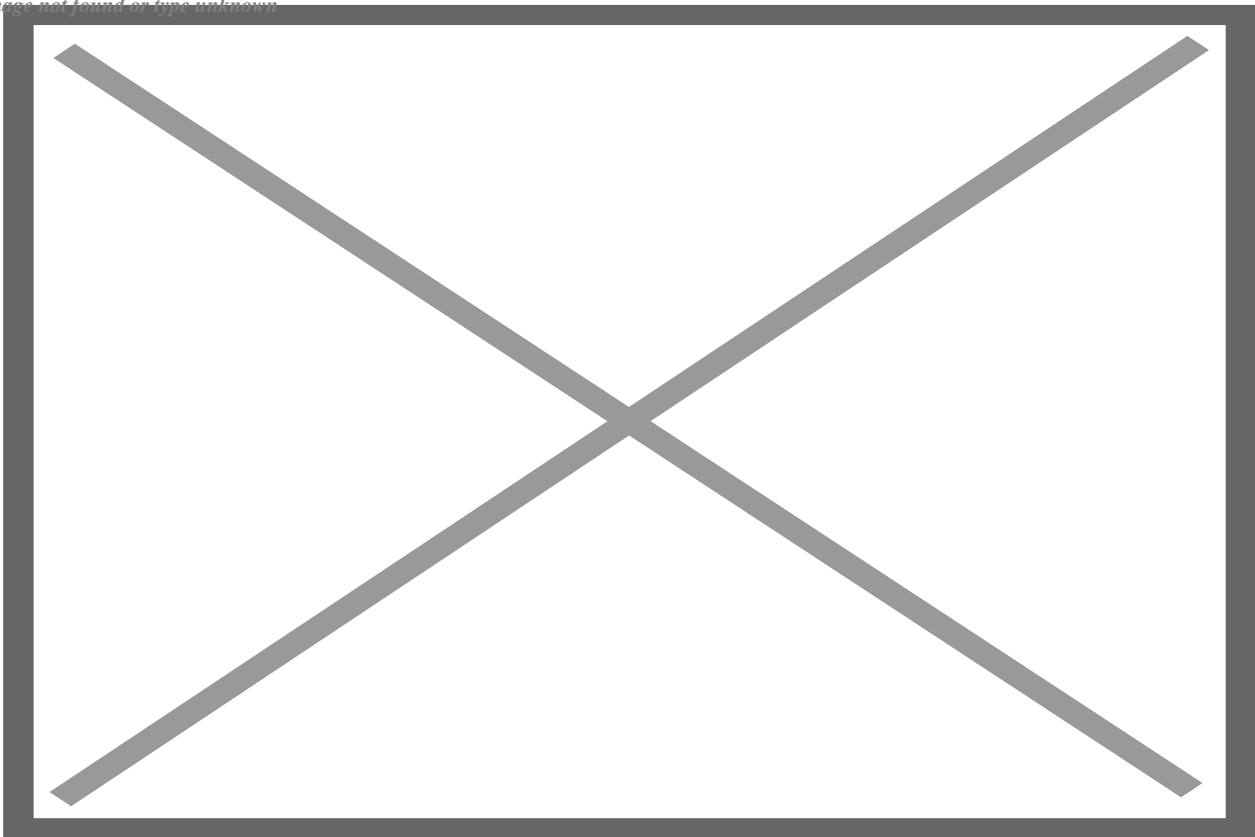


Exclusive interview with John Shipton, father of Julian Assange

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As the impending verdict on extradition to the country of the stars and stripes keeps activists around the world on edge, one calm and collected man is confident about Julian Assange's future. His name is John Shipton, and among the wonders that life may have bestowed upon him, perhaps the most extraordinary has been to give - and give us - the Australian journalist. With unwavering determination and dedication, Julian Assange's father has always been at the forefront of defending his son's cause. However, there are still too many unanswered questions that justice fails to resolve. So we caught up by phone with John Shipton, who, from Australia, gave us an insider's perspective on Julian's current situation, the progress of

the legal battle and the worldwide support the case has garnered. At a time when transparency is increasingly under scrutiny, his voice reminds us that the search for the truth is the responsibility of all of us.

How is Julian doing?

Julian is now entering the 15th year of one form or another of incarceration. So not very well. And it looks like he's very close to being extradited to the United States, which makes things worse.

When was the last time you saw him?

Last October. So I will go again this October to say hello to him. However, I think it is better for Stella to go and visit the children.

To set up this interview we shared some emails using a service that encrypts the email itself. Was that something Julian recommended you use?

Yes. Julian did. Julian encrypts all of his communications. It's better to do it that way because they for one reason or another, 10, 15 years ago transparency was that we could see what governments do and what corporations do. Now transparency has been turned on its head and now governments want to see everything we do. This is wrong, you know?

How do you see Julian as a son, what's the person behind him?

Well, you know, those are not the questions I can answer, because first of all it's secretive, and secondly, it's better not to make private things public. And as I just mentioned, nowadays, privacy has been reversed. So governments like privacy and secrecy and we are supposed to have none. But what little we have left, our feelings for each other, are based on us keeping them private.

I see you in interviews and in your documentary *Ithaka*, always smiling and with a positive attitude. But how can you always face it with positive energy?

I believe that in every human heart there is a hunger for justice and revulsion to injustice. This is very encouraging and has proven to be true, as support for my son has grown around the world in an extraordinary way. Now, one third of Greece's parliament and 45% of Australia's parliament support Julian as president. All the presidents of major Latin American countries and all European parliaments, Italy in particular, have an "Assange group". Millions of people around the world. So my feeling is correct that people are hungry to see justice. Yes, and this lifts spirits and keeps spirits high.

What did you mean when you said during the documentary that "Italy has a wide variety of views and really cares about the case", do you mean that we have many active groups?

In Italy there are many active groups, from the Swiss border to Palermo. I could say this, that senators in Italy were the first to bring before the Council of Europe, the situation of the persecution of Julian Assange. And as a consequence of the activities of the Italian senators the Council of Europe issued a statement (well, two statements), in support of my son. This is really important. It started three years ago and they have repeated that statement of support again two years ago.

What about the Australian Parliament and the Australian community? I just saw that Kennedy spoke to the Sydney Morning Herald about Julian's situation. What is the atmosphere like in Australia?

Here 88% of the population is calling for Julian to come home. In Parliament there are fifty MPs in the "Assange group" and 100 MPs called for Julian to be released. A delegation of MPs and Senators will travel to the United States on September 20 to ask the U.S. to allow Julian to return to Australia. Both the

Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are making statements in support of Julian. It is safe to say that all of Australia's politics: people, parliamentarians and institutions want Julian to return to Australia and for the persecution to be lifted.

So what is going to happen soon? This is Julian's last chance with the British Court, what is the plan, are they going to seek the help of the ECtHR (European Court of Human Rights)?

The latest I've heard is that Julian has an application in the UK High Court for a hearing, a review of his circumstances. That decision has not yet been made. So the High Court has not announced its decision. As for the appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, it cannot go ahead until all other avenues have been resolved. So if the High Court rejects the hearing, then Julian can make an application to the ECtHR, and I'm sure Julian will do that. I read in the paper the other day that the UK is thinking, or someone in the institutions of saying that Julian should not be allowed to travel to Brussels to make the appeal. I don't know whether that's true or not. I just read it in the paper. It would be a huge scandal if the UK prevented or tried to prevent Julian from appealing to the European Court of Human Rights. So let it be another scandal.

What would you say to Mrs. Clinton who, a few years ago, on the Assange case told a journalist that whoever did something had to pay the consequences?

Hillary Clinton organized the destruction of Libya, she participated in the destruction of Iraq and also in the destruction of Pakistan. In other words, nobody pays any attention to a bloodthirsty, murderous woman like her: she is no longer a significant figure in the world and the people of the United States, when she ran for president, rejected her.

How is Julian dealing with all those things, how is he coping with the news and everything that is being said about him?

The smearing and the mobbing that Julian went through and the malice and the unscrupulous scandals, the lies, it's very debilitating. The United Nations rapporteur on torture and unusual punishment, Professor Milzer, described those events, the smearing, the harassment, the lies, the unscrupulous scandals, the malice, the collapse of due process, the degradation of Julian's human rights. He describes it as torture, psychological torture. And he also went on to explain to us that all torture, physical or mental, aims to change your mind. Its goal is not to hurt your finger. Their goal is to do something to your mind. They want you to reveal something or change your mind. So if we take into account that Julian's treatment has been declared psychological torture in the final analysis of his 26-page report, which he submitted, Melzer, to the United Nations General Assembly. to the United Nations General Assembly and it was received. He describes it as "a slow-motion murder before our eyes". I cannot say more strongly than that, that we have witnessed and are witnessing the UK and the US and previously Sweden attempt to murder someone through process, through the degradation of their human rights, the abandonment of due process and malicious prosecution.

What do you tell Gabriel and Max, Julian's sons, when they ask you about their father?

I tell them some nonsense to divert their attention. "Oh look, there's a cute little kitty.... Who's the first one to see a big black dog?". I don't answer, you know, I just divert attention to, somehow, something nice.

Are they aware of the situation?

They're small. So this is what they're used to. But they miss their father. It's nice to have a father.

Mr. Shipton, what happened that day in the kitchen when Julian told you about WikiLeaks and his activity?

I just heard, you know, because he had this fantastic idea that it would bring security to people who were sources of information and publish it in a way that everybody in the world could have access to this information and do their own analysis and, consequently, form knowledge.

What would you say to all the people who, after reading this interview, are going to go back to their lives, their children and normal things?

It is a very good question. The reason they censor what we say and what we can read is because they understand that speech is important. So all we have to do is talk to each other about subjects about which we have no exchange of ideas and, as a consequence, construct the truth. That's all we have to do. And from truth will come action. It is not difficult.

I don't want to add anything else. Thank you very much.

I would just like to leave you with this... With the last line of Dante's Inferno: "And then we emerge once more to see the stars."

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