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Jan. 30, 2011

## Julian Assange, The Man Behind WikiLeaks

Talks To Steve Kroft About The U.S. Attempt To Indict Him And The Criticism Aimed At Him For Publishing Classified Documents

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VIDEO WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 1

(CBS) Just a few months ago, most people had never heard of a Web site called WikiLeaks, or of its mysterious and eccentric founder, Julian Assange. But in that short period of time both have managed to rattle the worlds of journalism, diplomacy, and national security. WikiLeaks, which solicits and publishes secrets and suppressed material from whistleblowers around the world, has been under cyber attack from governments that want to shut it down. And Assange is currently under legal attack from the U.S. government which would like to charge him with espionage for publishing volumes of classified material from the Pentagon and the State Department.

"60 Minutes" and correspondent Steve Kroft spent two days with him in Great Britain where he is under house arrest, while fighting extradition to Sweden for questioning in two sexual assault cases, which he's called part of a smear campaign against him. In his most extensive television interview to date, Assange talked to us about his work, his vision and the prospects of facing criminal charges in the

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attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.



VIDEO WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 2

Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

VIDEO

Watching at home, it might seem simple to assemble the interviews and produce the pieces that you see on "60 Minutes" every Sunday night. Well, there was nothing "simple" about getting Julian Assange to sit down for his first major TV interview.

- Assange: WikiLeaks Played "Inside the Rules"
- Poll: What's your take on WikiLeaks?
- Segment: Julian Assange, Part 1
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### Extra: Assange On Playing By The Rules

Julian Assange argues that while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)



Steve Kroft: You've been called a lot of names. You've been characterized as a hero and as a villain. A martyr. Terrorist.

Julian Assange: I'm not yet a martyr.

Kroft: Right.

Assange: Let's keep it that way.

For now, Assange is holed up on a bucolic 600-acre English estate with an ankle bracelet, a 10 p.m. curfew, and a slow Internet connection. He declined to talk to us about the allegations in Sweden, on the advice of his attorney. He has not been charged and proclaims his innocence.

Kroft: Well, I suppose if you have to be under house arrest, there could be worse places.

Assange: Well it's a gilded cage. It's still a cage. But when you are forced to stay somewhere against your will, it does become something that you want to leave.

It's a radical departure from the lifestyle that the peripatetic Internet muckraker is used to - bounding from city to city, country to country, and regularly changing his cell phones, hair styles and general appearance, he says, to elude surveillance and avoid being killed, kidnapped or arrested.

And there are reasons for his paranoia: in the last four years, WikiLeaks has released information that played some role in deciding the 2007 election in Kenya, and fueling the anger that recently brought down the government in Tunisia. It has also divulged the membership rolls of a neo Nazi organization in Great Britain, and secret documents from the Church of Scientology. And that was before Assange began publishing U.S. secrets, provoking what he calls threatening statements from people close to power.

Kroft: What statements are you referring to?

Assange: The statements by the Vice President Biden saying, for instance that I was a high-tech terrorist. Sarah Palin calling to our organization to be dealt with like the Taliban, and be hunted down. There's calls either for my assassination or the assassination of my staff or for us to be kidnapped and renditioned back to the United States to be executed.

Kroft: Well as you know, we have a First Amendment and people can say whatever they want, including politicians. I don't think that many people in the United States took seriously the idea that you were a terrorist.

Assange: I would like to believe that. On the other hand the incitements to murder are a serious issue. And unfortunately there is a portion of the population that will believe in them and may carry them out.

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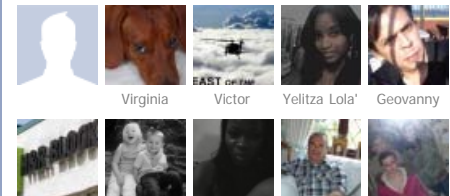


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by kimbaleo January 31, 2011 3:40 PM EST

As many posters, I am deeply disappointed with last night's interview.

It reminded me more of 'push polls' I have received, "Many people think..." is not fact based reporting. The supposed consensus expressed more accurately describes the way Assange has been portrayed in the press. Judging from this comment chain, many Americans have more nuanced views.

Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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by xerbbb January 31, 2011 3:28 PM EST

Is this an editorial or an interview? Inthebyte is spot on -- this is a hatchet job. "Some have argued that..." Oh come on! And then Kroft goes on for two paragraphs on defamatory stuff that "some" have argued. Well, come on sir. Act like a real journalist. Who are the "some", what is their stake or bias? Or are the "some" you refer to really just your masters?

This is why I never watch network news any more, and rarely check out sites like this. Just nonsense and a waste of time...

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:06 PM EST

Shame, shame double shame on 60 Minutes & CBS for allowing such cynical and bias opinions of their staff! I always thought 60 Minutes was above that and was true to their convictions of non partisan .... not according to what I saw last night! Shame on me I guess - click you out CBS!

WTGo Julian - keep big brother and big business watching their behinds...as obviously big business CBS sure as heck isn't following a good example.

One question I'd ask Julian - is why NOT name the banks or the info on which banks they have hidden, if infact they are for "the people"...come on Julian tell us all how badly we're all getting screwed or do we need Bill Maher to interview you? ..... 2nd thought...That'd be great

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by CitizenMikeM January 31, 2011 3:23 PM EST

When Assange originally released these documents, I took the side of our Government as did much of the Public. Since then, I look at what he did as nothing more and nothing less than free speech. If it caused embarrassment to some of our diplomats--perhaps they had it coming. Talk about someone behind their backs and eventually it will get back to them. My parents taught me that when I was little. We seem to applaud the 1st Amendment until we're told that it is not in our best interests. Let me be the judge of whether or not it is in my best interest. I applaud Assnage for what he did--it helps to keep our moral compass pointing the right direction.



by drffc January 31, 2011 2:24 PM EST

WikiLeaks did not break into any server.

The information (not devices) Wikileaks has was given to it by whistleblowers working from within the various governments/organizations Wikileaks has published information about.

Nothing was sold.

It was given by persons working within them whose consciences were so outraged by what they were being told to do by their government/organization, and those of others, that they found Wikileaks as their outlet to let the rest of the world know of the criminal activities their government/organization were engaged in, oftentimes in direct contrast to what those governments/organizations were stating publically.

If you object to Wikileaks then you also object to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg who published the so-called Pentagon Papers. If you object to that, then you would prefer America to still be engaged in the Vietnam war for Ellsberg's heroic effort was a turning point in America's commitment to that illegal activity and removed a criminal President from office.

The Vietnam War was a struggle for the rights and freedom from French colonialism of the 19th century by the Vietnamese against the French.

But further, it was a continuation of the THOUSAND year struggle of the vietnamese for their freedom from Chinese domination.

America used Vietnam for profit, blowing up millions of civilians.

Ho Chi Minh fought WITH the Allies in WWII against AGAINST the Japanese, who were the latest in the chain of enslavers to that time in December 1941, to invade and occupy their country.

At the end of WWII Ho Chi Minh and his people believed they were finally on the right side of the coin having outed the Japanese WITH the Allies and so had finally won their independence.

Not so.

The French wanted their colony back and so, as thanks for helping the Allies win the war in the Pacific against the Japanese, with US financing, weapons and etc, the French began the first half of the Vietnam war.

(If you believe that the French were in their right to want their colony back, then you also believe England should reclaim the United States)

In 1954 after having their butts handed to them by the forces of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu, the French left Vietnam. But the US still wouldn't have it and the rest is history.

This history is what Ellsberg let the American people know about, in addition to the outright lies and fabrications created by Johnson and McNamara to gain the hearts & minds of Americans in August 1964 after the so-called Gulf of Tonkin "incident" when the spy & sabotage ship USS Maddox was "fired" upon by the North Vietnamese (right after we had blown up one of their radar/radio towers a day or so before. This in the peaceful days before the war. James Stockdale was flying a jet around the Maddox and knew and stated years later that the Maddox was firing at ... nothing).

If you don't like the truth, you prefer lies.

"The truth shall set you free," as Dr. Martin Luther King quoted.

Wikileaks publishes the truth and should be applauded by all for its courage to do so.

The military-industrial-intelligence complexes of the world --whom Eisenhower warned us to guard against-- must be checked. They've made enough money from the blood of innocents. To whatever extent it can, Wikileaks is providing mankind that service.

Nothing was sold to Wikileaks.

Wikileaks bought nothing.

Any information it is in possession of was freely given by the whistleblower, and both of them are heroes.

Furthermore, one of the women accusing Assange is herself a CIA agent. Does it get anymore obvious?? (see: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/assange-rape-accuser-cia-ties/>)

This is the old "kill the message by killing the messenger" routine practiced by the ancients thousands of years ago. They couldn't kill the message then, and it can't be stopped now.

A democracy can only survive through transparency and accountability to its citizenry.

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by mactheknife January 31, 2011 1:59 PM EST

From the onset, the bias was evident: Steve Kroft can only be described as a grumpy old man in this interview. He did not serve journalism as he clearly showed some kind of anger or annoyance with the subject of his interview. Maybe it was jetlag.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:10 PM EST

Totally agree! Don't give Steve any room for excuses lol



by baronightwolf January 31, 2011 1:54 PM EST

Julian Assange is such a sad, impotent individual. It's no wonder he has so much contempt for humanity in general and authority -- in particular. He was probably still a virgin when he sexually assaulted whoever it was. And therefore it is no wonder that he is so cavalier and self-absorbed in regard to whatever harm Wikileaks accomplishes. So many hackers are people who can't cope with their own social isolation and abuse by their contemporaries. Many of them are sexually and socially dysfunctional, and very often have a history of being bullied and being forced into a lifetime of involuntary celibacy. Ergo: it's no wonder Assange is under the delusion of his own self-importance and feels that he and only he knows what is right for the world. But although the poor bloke is potentially dangerous, he doesn't really deserve being imprisoned for life in a criminal holding-facility. Rather, he needs to be sentenced to life in the strong ward of a mental-health institution and aggressively medicated with Mellaril, Xanax, and other appropriate anti-psychotic medications. Oh, and getting him "conjugal visits" with Nevada-certified prostitutes from time to time would also be highly recommended. And something tells me that most of the rest of the Wikileaks crew can benefit from similar psychiatric treatment.

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 2:25 PM EST

Thank you for your professional psychiatric analysis of Mr. Assange and his sexual orientation, etc. I wonder if you would also care to analyze Mr. Kroft? You're so insightful, but the issue here is not killing the messenger, it is the right to deliver the message.



by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:12 PM EST

@ Inthebyte - that's a big BINGO! Well done clap clap!! where's the like button round here anyway??



by jnyren-2009 January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

Beginning with no opinion, I concluded after listening twice that Assange is honest and worthy of being taken seriously, but his questioner is anything but !!!

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

This was an obvious hatchet job. Don't just blame Kroft, he's just another corporate media sychophant doing what he is told, so he can collect his huge salary. He gets his orders from above. I thought Assange handled and exposed him and the hypocrisy of corporate "journalism" with ease. I caught on to Kroft, his associates, and how 60 Minutes operates years ago. The really important political stuff is handled with smoke and mirrors. The editing, and the questions not asked speak volumes. I don't watch it much anymore, just happened to surf it on and saw it was Assange. I'll take an ounce of truth and freedom for a pound of "security" any day.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:14 PM EST

Booyeah! Amen to that!!



by GreenGestalt January 31, 2011 1:40 PM EST

Look how the governments, from the Country that used to be the USA to the Globalist Bankers, want both control and surveillance. They want to know what we are doing to the point that soon we won't even have "Loose Change" to spend without it being registered somewhere. So they can influence and outright control us.

They want all this knowledge, but they want it only for themselves.

Then they become offended when he releases leaked documents about what they do, such as "Lions of Islam" who bend over and spread for Israel and the USA and help to stab a back in the real defenders of Islam in exchange for having a lavish lifestyle.

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by chatmandu7451 January 31, 2011 12:52 PM EST

You can justify anything for your actions in your mind but not in reality.

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by drffc January 31, 2011 2:00 PM EST

What action(s) have you/are you justifying in your mind?



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### WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 1

Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

(CBS) If nothing else, WikiLeaks is the latest demonstration that a small group of people with a powerful idea can harness technology and affect large institutions. In WikiLeaks' case it was the idea to aggregate state and corporate secrets by setting up an online electronic drop box where whistleblowers around the world could anonymously upload sensitive and suppressed information. The secrets are stored on servers around the world, beyond the reach of governments or law enforcement, then released worldwide on the Internet.

Assange: The U.S. does not have the technology to take the site down

Kroft: Because?

Assange: Just the way our technology is constructed, the way the Internet is constructed. It's quite hard to stop things reappearing. So, we've had attacks on particular domain names. Little pieces of infrastructure knocked out. But we now have some 2,000 fully independent in every way Web sites, where we're publishing around the world.

WikiLeaks first caught the attention of most Americans last April when it released a video which shows a U.S. Apache helicopter crew in Iraq opening fire on a group of suspected insurgents who were standing on a street corner in Baghdad.

Some of the men were armed, but two of them were

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[WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 2](#)  
Julian Assange, the controversial founder of

WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.



VIDEO  
[Extra: Assange On Playing By The Rules](#)

Julian Assange argues that while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)

journalists from Reuters.

At least a dozen people were killed in the attack, some of them innocent civilians. Then last July, WikiLeaks released 76,000 classified field reports of U.S. operations in Afghanistan that provided a chaotic and bleak ground level view of the war. In October there were another 400,000 classified documents released from Iraq showing that civilian casualties there were much higher than the Pentagon had claimed; and finally in November, thousands of State Department cables that lifted the veil on highly sensitive back room diplomacy.

The documents revealed that Arab leaders were lobbying the U.S. to attack Iran, and that the State Department had been secretly collecting intelligence on leaders at the United Nations. It triggered outcries that Assange was a political actor trying to damage the U.S. government.

Kroft: Are you a subversive?

Assange: I'm sure there are certain views amongst Hillary Clinton and her lot that we are subverting their authority. But you're right, we are subverting illegitimate authority. The question is whether the authority is legitimate or whether it is illegitimate.

Kroft: Do you consider the U.S. State Department a legitimate authority?

Assange: It's legitimate insofar as its actions are legitimate. It has actions that are not legitimate.

Kroft: And you've gone after the ones that you think are illegitimate?

Assange: We don't go after. That's a bit of a misconception. We don't go after a particular country. We don't go after a particular organizational group. We just stick to our promise of publishing the material that is likely to have a significant impact.

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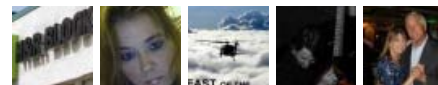
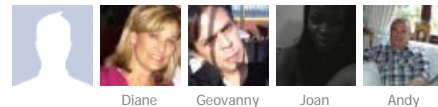


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Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

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I expect more from 60 minutes.

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The Vietnam War was a struggle for the rights and freedom from French colonialism of the 19th century by the Vietnamese against the French.

But further, it was a continuation of the THOUSAND year struggle of the vietnamese for their freedom from Chinese domination.

America used Vietnam for profit, blowing up millions of civilians.

Ho Chi Minh fought WITH the Allies in WWII against AGAINST the Japanese, who were the latest in the chain of enslavers to that time in December 1941, to invade and occupy their country.

At the end of WWII Ho Chi Minh and his people believed they were finally on the right side of the coin having outed the Japanese WITH the Allies and so had finally won their independence.

Not so.

The French wanted their colony back and so, as thanks for helping the Allies win the war in the Pacific against the Japanese, with US financing, weapons and etc, the French began the first half of the Vietnam war.

(If you believe that the French were in their right to want their colony back, then you also believe England should reclaim the United States)

In 1954 after having their butts handed to them by the forces of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu, the French left Vietnam. But the US still wouldn't have it and the rest is history.

This history is what Ellsberg let the American people know about, in addition to the outright lies and fabrications created by Johnson and McNamara to gain the hearts & minds of Americans in August 1964 after the so-called Gulf of Tonkin "incident" when the spy & sabotage ship USS Maddox was "fired" upon by the North Vietnamese (right after we had blown up one of their radar/radio towers a day or so before. This in the peaceful days before the war. James Stockdale was flying a jet around the Maddox and knew and stated years later that the Maddox was firing at ... nothing).

If you don't like the truth, you prefer lies.

"The truth shall set you free," as Dr. Martin Luther King quoted.

Wikileaks publishes the truth and should be applauded by all for its courage to do so.

The military-industrial-intelligence complexes of the world --whom Eisenhower warned us to guard against-- must be checked. They've made enough money from the blood of innocents. To whatever extent it can, Wikileaks is providing mankind that service.

Nothing was sold to Wikileaks.

Wikileaks bought nothing.

Any information it is in possession of was freely given by the whistleblower, and both of them are heroes.

Furthermore, one of the women accusing Assange is herself a CIA agent. Does it get anymore obvious?? (see: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/assange-rape-accuser-cia-ties/>)

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by chatmandu7451 January 31, 2011 12:52 PM EST

You can justify anything for your actions in your mind but not in reality.

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by drffc January 31, 2011 2:00 PM EST

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Jan. 30, 2011

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Talks To Steve Kroft About The U.S. Attempt To Indict Him And The Criticism Aimed At Him For Publishing Classified Documents

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VIDEO

WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 1

Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

(CBS) To increase the impact of the U.S. documents, Assange decided to share them with some of the leading news organizations in the world, including The New York Times - a relationship that grew testy when Assange published the first set of war logs without removing the names of Afghans who were cooperating with U.S. forces.

Kroft: The most persistent criticism from within the press has been that you have behaved recklessly from time to time. And the example that they cite is the fact that you've decided to release Afghan documents without redacting the names of people who had provided intelligence to the U.S. government.

Assange: There's no evidence, or any credible allegation, or even any allegation from an official body that we have caused any individual at any time to come to harm in the past four years.

Kroft: The Pentagon said that they've gone through all of these documents and they found the names of 300 people.

Assange: Well, that's new public information to us. It's possible that there are 300 names in the publically released Afghan material. We don't pretend that that process is absolutely perfect. We did hold back one in five documents for extra harm minimization review and we also improved our process. So, when Iraq came around there was not even a

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VIDEO  
[WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 2](#)  
Julian Assange, the controversial founder of

WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.



VIDEO  
[Extra: Assange On Playing By The Rules](#)  
Julian Assange argues that

while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)

single name in it.

Kroft: I mean, there have been reports of people quoting Taliban leaders, saying that they had the names of these people and that they were going to take retribution.

Assange: The Taliban is not a coherent outfit. But we don't say that it is absolutely impossible that anything we ever publish will ever result in harm. We cannot say that.

Kroft: There's a perception on the part of some people who believe that your agenda right now is anti-American.

Assange: Not at all. In fact, our founding values are those of the U.S. revolution. They are those of the people like Jefferson and Madison. And we have a number of Americans in our organization. If you're a whistleblower and you have material that is important, we will accept it, we will defend you and we will publish it. You can't turn away material simply because it comes from the United States.

After the release of the State Department cables, Attorney General Eric Holder condemned WikiLeaks for putting national security at risk. "There's a real basis. There is a predicate for us to believe that crimes have been committed here," Holder said at a press conference.

Holder announced that the Justice Department and the Pentagon were conducting a criminal investigation. They are reportedly looking at the Espionage Act of 1917 and other statutes to find a way to prosecute Assange and extradite him to the U.S.

Assange: It's completely outrageous.

Kroft: Are you surprised?

Assange: I am surprised, actually.

Kroft: But you were screwing with the forces of nature. You have made some of the most powerful people in the world your enemies. You had to expect that they might retaliate.

Assange: Oh, no. I fully expected they'll retaliate.

Kroft: You took, you gathered, you stored all sorts of classified cables and documents. And then released them to the world on the Internet. They see that as a threat.

Assange: They see it as highly embarrassing. I think what it's really about is keeping the illusion of control. I'm not surprised about that. I am surprised at how the sort of flagrant disregard for U.S. traditions. That is what I'm surprised about.

Kroft: You're shocked? Someone in the Australian government said that, "Look, if you play outside the rules you can't expect to be protected by the rules." And you played outside the rules. You've played outside the United States' rules.

Assange: No. We've actually played inside the rules. We didn't go out to get the material. We operated just like any U.S. publisher operates. We didn't play outside the rules. We played inside the rules.

Kroft: There's a special set of rules in the United States for disclosing classified information. There is longstanding...

Assange: There's a special set of rules for soldiers. For members of the State Department, who are disclosing classified information. There's not a special set of rules for publishers to disclose classified information. There is the First Amendment. It covers the case. And there's been no precedent that I'm aware of in the past 50 years of prosecuting a publisher for espionage. It is just not done. Those are the rules. You do not do it.

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by kimbaleo January 31, 2011 3:40 PM EST

As many posters, I am deeply disappointed with last night's interview.

It reminded me more of 'push polls' I have received, "Many people think...." is not fact based reporting. The supposed consensus expressed more accurately describes the way Assange has been portrayed in the press. Judging from this comment chain, many Americans have more nuanced views.

Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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by xerbbb January 31, 2011 3:28 PM EST

Is this an editorial or an interview? Inthebyte is spot on -- this is a hatchet job. "Some have argued that..." Oh come on! And then Kroft goes on for two paragraphs on defamatory stuff that "some" have argued. Well, come on sir. Act like a real journalist. Who are the "some", what is their stake or bias? Or are the "some" you refer to really just your masters?

This is why I never watch network news any more, and rarely check out sites like this. Just nonsense and a waste of time...

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:06 PM EST

Shame, shame double shame on 60 Minutes & CBS for allowing such cynical and bias opinions of their staff! I always thought 60 Minutes was above that and was true to their convictions of non partisan .... not according to what I saw last night! Shame on me I guess - click your out CBS!

WTGo Julian - keep big brother and big business watching their behinds...as obviously big business CBS sure as heck isn't following a good example.

One question I'd ask Julian - is why NOT name the banks or the info on which banks they have hidden, if infact they are for "the people"...come on Julian tell us all how badly we're all getting screwed or do we need Bill Maher to interview you? ..... 2nd thought...That'd be great

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by CitizenMikeM January 31, 2011 3:23 PM EST

When Assange originally released these documents, I took the side of our Government as did much of the Public. Since then, I look at what he did as nothing more and nothing less than free speech. If it caused embarrassment to some of our diplomats--perhaps they had it coming. Talk about someone behind their backs and eventually it will get back to them. My parents taught me that when I was little. We seem to applaud the 1st Amendment until we're told that it is not in our best interests. Let me be the judge of whether or not it is in my best interest. I applaud Assnagne for what he did--it helps to keep our moral compass pointing the right direction.



by drffc January 31, 2011 2:24 PM EST

WikiLeaks did not break into any server.

The information (not devices) Wikileaks has was given to it by whistleblowers working from within the various governments/organizations Wikileaks has published information about.

Nothing was sold.

It was given by persons working within them whose consciences were so outraged by what they were being told to do by their government/organization, and those of others, that they found Wikileaks as their outlet to let the rest of the world know of the criminal activities their government/organization were engaged in, oftentimes in direct contrast to what those governments/organizations were stating publically.

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Jan. 30, 2011

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(CBS) No one has accused Assange of stealing secrets. The Apache video and the classified documents were allegedly provided to WikiLeaks by Private First Class Bradley Manning, a low-level intelligence analyst in Iraq who is accused of copying them from a classified government network that a half a million people have access to.

Manning is now in solitary confinement at a military prison in Virginia, facing charges that could put him away for 50 years.

Kroft: You've called him as a prisoner of a conscience, correct?

Assange: I've said that if the allegations against him are true then he is the foremost prisoner of conscience in the United States. There's no allegation it was done for money. There's no allegation it's done for any other reasons than a political reason. Now, I'm sorry if people in the United States don't want to believe that they are keeping a political prisoner. But in Bradley Manning's case, the allegations are that he engaged in an illegal activity for political motivations.

Kroft: People in the United States think he's a traitor.

Assange: That's clearly not true.

Regardless of what happens to Private Manning, any prosecution of Assange will be fraught with problems because

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[WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 2](#)  
Julian Assange, the controversial founder of

WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.



VIDEO  
[Extra: Assange On Playing By The Rules](#)  
Julian Assange argues that

while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)

WikiLeaks wasn't alone in the publishing the classified material. The New York Times also published some of it. If the government were to try and prosecute WikiLeaks and not The New York Times, it would likely need to prove that Assange was actively involved in a conspiracy to illegally obtain the documents.

Kroft: Did you encourage anyone to leak this material to you? Or have you done anything in connection with the U.S. cases in terms of encouraging an individual to provide you with material?

Assange: No, never.

Kroft: There are people that believe that it has everything to do with the next threat. That if they don't come after you now that what they have done is essentially endorsed small, powerful organization with access to very powerful information releasing it outside their control. And if they let you get away it, then they are encouraging...

Assange: Then what? They will have to have freedom of the press?

Kroft: That it's encouragement to you...

Assange: And? And?

Kroft: ...or to some other organization?

Assange: And to every other publisher. Absolutely correct. It will be encouragement to every other publisher to publish fearlessly. That's what it will encourage.

Kroft: To publish information much more dangerous than this information.

Assange: If we're talking about creating threats to small publishers to stop them publishing, the U.S. has lost its way. It has abrogated its founding traditions. It has thrown the First Amendment in the bin. Because publishers must be free to publish.

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by rmoore17 January 31, 2011 4:05 PM EST

It would be interesting to hear what he knew about the banks and their doings.

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by kimbaleo January 31, 2011 3:40 PM EST

As many posters, I am deeply disappointed with last night's interview.

It reminded me more of 'push polls' I have received, "Many people think..." is not fact based reporting. The supposed consensus expressed more accurately describes the way Assange has been portrayed in the press. Judging from this comment chain, many Americans have more nuanced views.

Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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by xerbbb January 31, 2011 3:28 PM EST

Is this an editorial or an interview? Inthebyte is spot on -- this is a hatchet job. "Some have argued that..." Oh come on! And then Kroft goes on for two paragraphs on defamatory stuff that "some" have argued. Well, come on sir. Act like a real journalist. Who are the "some", what is their stake or bias? Or are the "some" you refer to really just your masters?

This is why I never watch network news any more, and rarely check out sites like this. Just nonsense and a waste of time...

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:06 PM EST

Shame, shame double shame on 60 Minutes & CBS for allowing such cynical and bias opinions of their staff! I always thought 60 Minutes was above that and was true to their convictions of non partisan .... not according to what I saw last night! Shame on me I guess - click your out CBS!

WTGo Julian - keep big brother and big business watching their behinds...as obviously big business CBS sure as heck isn't following a good example.

One question I'd ask Julian - is why NOT name the banks or the info on which banks they have hidden, if infact they are for "the people"...come on Julian tell us all how badly we're all getting screwed or do we need Bill Maher to interview you? ..... 2nd thought...That'd be great

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by CitizenMikeM January 31, 2011 3:23 PM EST

When Assange originally released these documents, I took the side of our Government as did much of the Public. Since then, I look at what he did as nothing more and nothing less than free speech. If it caused embarrassment to some of our diplomats--perhaps they had it coming. Talk about someone behind their backs and eventually it will get back to them. My parents taught me that when I was little. We seem to applaud the 1st Amendment until we're told that it is not in our best interests. Let me be the judge of whether or not it is in my best interest. I applaud Assnagne for what he did--it helps to keep our moral compass pointing the right direction.



by drffc January 31, 2011 2:24 PM EST

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WikiLeaks did not break into any server.

The information (not devices) Wikileaks has was given to it by whistleblowers working from within the various governments/organizations Wikileaks has published information about.

Nothing was sold.

It was given by persons working within them whose consciences were so outraged by what they were being told to do by their government/organization, and those of others, that they found Wikileaks as their outlet to let the rest of the world know of the criminal activities their government/organization were engaged in, oftentimes in direct contrast to what those governments/organizations were stating publically.

If you object to Wikileaks then you also object to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg who published the so-called Pentagon Papers. If you object to that, then you would prefer America to still be engaged in the Vietnam war for Ellsberg's heroic effort was a turning point in America's commitment to that illegal activity and removed a criminal President from office.

The Vietnam War was a struggle for the rights and freedom from French colonialism of the 19th century by the Vietnamese against the French.

But further, it was a continuation of the THOUSAND year struggle of the vietnamese for their freedom from Chinese domination.

America used Vietnam for profit, blowing up millions of civilians.

Ho Chi Minh fought WITH the Allies in WWII against AGAINST the Japanese, who were the latest in the chain of enslavers to that time in December 1941, to invade and occupy their country.

At the end of WWII Ho Chi Minh and his people believed they were finally on the right side of the coin having outed the Japanese WITH the Allies and so had finally won their independence.

Not so.

The French wanted their colony back and so, as thanks for helping the Allies win the war in the Pacific against the Japanese, with US financing, weapons and etc, the French began the first half of the Vietnam war.

(If you believe that the French were in their right to want their colony back, then you also believe England should reclaim the United States)

In 1954 after having their butts handed to them by the forces of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu, the French left Vietnam. But the US still wouldn't have it and the rest is history.

This history is what Ellsberg let the American people know about, in addition to the outright lies and fabrications created by Johnson and McNamara to gain the hearts & minds of Americans in August 1964 after the so-called Gulf of Tonkin "incident" when the spy & sabotage ship USS Maddox was "fired" upon by the North Vietnamese (right after we had blown up one of their radar/radio towers a day or so before. This in the peaceful days before the war. James Stockdale was flying a jet around the Maddox and knew and stated years later that the Maddox was firing at ... nothing).

If you don't like the truth, you prefer lies.

"The truth shall set you free," as Dr. Martin Luther King quoted.

Wikileaks publishes the truth and should be applauded by all for its courage to do so.

The military-industrial-intelligence complexes of the world --whom Eisenhower warned us to guard against-- must be checked. They've made enough money from the blood of innocents. To whatever extent it can, Wikileaks is providing mankind that service.

Nothing was sold to Wikileaks.

Wikileaks bought nothing.

Any information it is in possession of was freely given by the whistleblower, and both of them are heroes.

Furthermore, one of the women accusing Assange is herself a CIA agent. Does it get anymore obvious?? (see: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/assange-rape-accuser-cia-ties/>)

This is the old "kill the message by killing the messenger" routine practiced by the ancients thousands of years ago. They couldn't kill the message then, and it can't be stopped now.

A democracy can only survive through transparency and accountability to its citizenry.

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by mactheknife January 31, 2011 1:59 PM EST

From the onset, the bias was evident: Steve Kroft can only be described as a grumpy old man in this interview. He did not serve journalism as he clearly showed some kind of anger or annoyance with the subject of his interview. Maybe it was jetlag.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:10 PM EST

Totally agree! Don't give Steve any room for excuses lol



by baronightwolf January 31, 2011 1:54 PM EST

Julian Assange is such a sad, impotent individual. It's no wonder he has so much contempt for humanity in general and authority -- in particular. He was probably still a virgin when he sexually assaulted whoever it was. And therefore it is no wonder that he is so cavalier and self-absorbed in regard to whatever harm Wikileaks accomplishes. So many hackers are people who can't cope with their own social isolation and abuse by their contemporaries. Many of them are sexually and socially dysfunctional, and very often have a history of being bullied and being forced into a lifetime of involuntary celibacy. Ergo: it's no wonder Assange is under the delusion of his own self-importance and feels that he and only he knows what is right for the world. But although the poor bloke is potentially dangerous, he doesn't really deserve being imprisoned for life in a criminal holding-facility. Rather, he needs to be sentenced to life in the strong ward of a mental-health institution and aggressively medicated with Mellaril, Xanax, and other appropriate anti-psychotic medications. Oh, and getting him "conjugal visits" with Nevada-certified prostitutes from time to time would also be highly recommended. And something tells me that most of the rest of the Wikileaks crew can benefit from similar psychiatric treatment.

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 2:25 PM EST

Thank you for your professional psychiatric analysis of Mr. Assange and his sexual orientation, etc. I wonder if you would also care to analyze Mr. Kroft? You're so insightful, but the issue here is not killing the messenger, it is the right to deliver the message.



by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:12 PM EST

@ Inthebyte - that's a big BINGO! Well done clap clap!! where's the like button round here anyway??



by jnyren-2009 January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

Beginning with no opinion, I concluded after listening twice that Assange is honest and worthy of being taken seriously, but his questioner is anything but !!!

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

This was an obvious hatchet job. Don't just blame Kroft, he's just another corporate media sychophant doing what he is told, so he can collect his huge salary. He gets his orders from above. I thought Assange handled and exposed him and the hypocrisy of corporate "journalism" with ease. I caught on to Kroft, his associates, and how 60 Minutes operates years ago. The really important political stuff is handled with smoke and mirrors. The editing, and the questions not asked speak volumes. I don't watch it much anymore, just happened to surf it on and saw it was Assange. I'll take an ounce of truth and freedom for a pound of "security" any day.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:14 PM EST

Booyeah! Amen to that!!



by GreenGestalt January 31, 2011 1:40 PM EST

Look how the governments, from the Country that used to be the USA to the Globalist Bankers, want both control and surveillance. They want to know what we are doing to the point that soon we won't even have "Loose Change" to spend without it being registered somewhere. So they can influence and outright control us.

They want all this knowledge, but they want it only for themselves.

Then they become offended when he releases leaked documents about what they do, such as "Lions of Islam" who bend over and spread for Israel and the USA and help to stab a back in the real defenders of Islam in exchange for having a lavish lifestyle.

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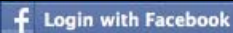
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Jan. 30, 2011

# Julian Assange, The Man Behind WikiLeaks

## Talks To Steve Kroft About The U.S. Attempt To Indict Him And The Criticism Aimed At Him For Publishing Classified Documents

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WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 1

Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

(CBS) Assange is not your average journalist or publisher, and some have argued that he is not really a journalist at all. He is an anti-establishment ideologue with conspiratorial views. He believes large government institutions use secrecy to suppress the truth and he distrusts the mainstream media for playing along.

Some people have called him an anarchist, which he denies. Assange prefers to be called a libertarian, and believes that the only people who can adequately police the system are those on the inside who are in a position to notice the abuse and blow the whistle. While most reporters pride themselves in gathering information and interpreting it for a larger audience, the WikiLeaks model is different - it prefers to take raw data, make it available and let others decide the meaning.

Regardless of whether you agree with this idea or not, it beats close to the heart of the Internet, and a younger generation, and it runs through the life of Assange.

Kroft: You obviously have a mistrust of authority. Where does that come from?

Assange: I think it comes from experience with various types of authorities.

Assange gave us an example from his childhood, a story

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Julian Assange (CBS)

about him and his mother Christine, who was present at one of his recent court hearings. She was a political activist who helped scientists gather information about nuclear tests conducted by the British in the Australian outback. He remembers them being stopped late one night and questioned by authorities, one of whom said:

Assange: Look lady, you're out at two o'clock in the morning with this child...it could be suggested that you're an unfit mother. I suggest you stay out of politics. And which she did for the next ten years in order to make sure nothing happened to me. So that's a very early abuse of power and the secrecy that I saw in my life.

His was an unconventional and sometimes tumultuous childhood in which he was frequently uprooted and moved around the countryside. He attended 37 different schools.

Kroft: So you've always been a little bit of an outsider?

Assange: I've certainly, when I was a child, going from one school to another, you are the outsider to begin with and you have to find your way in. But in most of the places where I stayed long enough, I did find my way in.

One of the first places Assange found his way into was populated by teenagers and computers. And he knew how to program them before most people had them.

Kroft: You got involved with computers pretty early? With hacking?

Assange: Well, I first became involved with computers when I was 13 or so. And I was unusually adept and I saw a sort of intellectual opportunity understanding how to program, understanding how these complex machines work. And that

was part of a social culture in cracking codes to prove that you could do it. And this is something that is very actually normal and healthy amongst young men. You see it in skateboarders competing to show that they are capable in learning the best tricks.

Kroft: And your tricks were like breaking into computers at the Department of Defense and Los Alamos National Laboratory, NASA and NORTEL, some Canadian banks.

Assange: Yeah. All that happened.

At age 20, Assange was arrested by the Australian Federal Police and eventually pled guilty to multiple counts of computer hacking. He managed to get off with no jail time because the judge concluded Assange hadn't stolen any information or done any damage.

Kroft: Is that still one of your skills?

Assange: Not really. Unfortunately, I've been sort of, you know, promoted up into management, so I don't get to do that so much. But I know the terrain which means I know what is possible. I mean, Bill Gates could program but he certainly doesn't program anymore. But he knows what is possible for other people to do.

Except that Assange is not Bill Gates and WikiLeaks is not Microsoft. The shoestring operation that created all the havoc has no permanent offices and is headquartered wherever Assange happens to be. WikiLeaks is a small non-profit organization with a handful of anonymous employees, a secret cadre of international programmers, and a legion of worldwide volunteers.

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Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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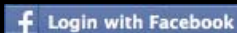
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Jan. 30, 2011

# Julian Assange, The Man Behind WikiLeaks

## Talks To Steve Kroft About The U.S. Attempt To Indict Him And The Criticism Aimed At Him For Publishing Classified Documents

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[WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 1](#)

Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

(CBS) Its finances are administered by the Wau Holland Foundation based in Berlin and named after a famous hacker. According to the ledgers, WikiLeaks took in \$1.3 million last year in donations, with expenses of about \$500,000.

Kroft: For somebody who abhors secrets, you run a pretty secret organization.

Assange: That's not true. What we want is transparent government, not transparent people. We are an organization who one of our primary goals is to keep certain things secret to keep the identity of our sources secret so secrecy is an inherent part of our operation.

Kroft: The State Department would make the same argument. They have...doing very sensitive work that they're trying to make peace and negotiate situations around the world. Very delicately. It's very important that they do this in secrecy. What's the difference?

Assange: We don't say that the State Department should have no secrets. That's not what we're saying. Rather, we say that if there are people in the State Department who say that there is some abuse going on, and there's not a proper mechanism for internal accountability and external accountability, they must have a conduit to get that out to the public. And we are the conduit.

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[WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, Pt. 2](#)

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VIDEO  
[Extra: Assange On Playing By The Rules](#)

Julian Assange argues that while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)

Given all the attention that Assange has received, we were curious about how he thought he was being perceived in the United States. He told us that he hasn't had the time to give it much thought.

Kroft: Do you want me to give you my characterization of what I think people think?

Assange: Sure.

Kroft: Mysterious. Little weird. A cult-like figure. Little paranoid.

Assange: Well, you're repeating all the ad hominem attacks by our critics. My role when I do something like speak about that we have discovered the deaths of 109,000 individual people in Iraq, 15,000 civilian casualties never before reported anywhere, that's a very serious role. That is not a role where I can engage in humor. So I'm not used to performing under the spotlight. And I am learning this as time's going by.

Kroft: You have shown a fair amount of contempt for the mainstream press over the years. Why did you decide to as you used, the word "partner" with them, in some of these most recent releases?

Assange: We're a small organization. We're in a position, say, with Cablegate, where we have 3,000 volumes of material that are very important to get out to the public in a responsible manner that have the potential for great change - for example, this recent revolution in Tunisia. It is logistically impossible, so instead our organization delegates its excess source material to other journalists, who will have more impact. Who will do a better job.

Kroft: There is an element of the press, most of the mainstream press, nobody wants to see you prosecuted, because it could affect the way that they do their business. But there's also a feeling within the community that you're not one of them, that you play a different game.

Assange: We do play a different game. And I hope we're a new way.

Kroft: The point that they're making I think is that you're not -- you're -- you're a publisher, but you're also an activist.

Assange: Wait, whoa. We're a particular type of activist. In the U.S. context, there seems to be communist activists or something, so it's a...

Kroft: Right. Agitator.

Assange: It's a dirty word in the U.S.

Kroft: It's a dirty word. And people think that what you're trying to do is to sabotage the workings of government.

Assange: No. We're not that type of activists. We are free press activists. It's not about saving the whales. It's about giving people the information they need to support whaling or not support whaling. Why? That is the raw ingredients that is needed to make a just and civil society. And without that you're just sailing in the dark.

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by rmoore17 January 31, 2011 4:05 PM EST

It would be interesting to hear what he knew about the banks and their doings.

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by kimbaleo January 31, 2011 3:40 PM EST

As many posters, I am deeply disappointed with last night's interview.

It reminded me more of 'push polls' I have received, "Many people think..." is not fact based reporting. The supposed consensus expressed more accurately describes the way Assange has been portrayed in the press. Judging from this comment chain, many Americans have more nuanced views.

Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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by xerbbb January 31, 2011 3:28 PM EST

Is this an editorial or an interview? Inthebyte is spot on -- this is a hatchet job. "Some have argued that..." Oh come on! And then Kroft goes on for two paragraphs on defamatory stuff that "some" have argued. Well, come on sir. Act like a real journalist. Who are the "some", what is their stake or bias? Or are the "some" you refer to really just your masters?

This is why I never watch network news any more, and rarely check out sites like this. Just nonsense and a waste of time...

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:06 PM EST

Shame, shame double shame on 60 Minutes & CBS for allowing such cynical and bias opinions of their staff! I always thought 60 Minutes was above that and was true to their convictions of non partisan .... not according to what I saw last night! Shame on me I guess - click your out CBS!

WTGo Julian - keep big brother and big business watching their behinds...as obviously big business CBS sure as heck isn't following a good example.

One question I'd ask Julian - is why NOT name the banks or the info on which banks they have hidden, if in fact they are for "the people"...come on Julian tell us all how badly we're all getting screwed or do we need

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Bill Maher to interview you? ..... 2nd thought...That'd be great

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by CitizenMikeM January 31, 2011 3:23 PM EST

When Assange originally released these documents, I took the side of our Government as did much of the Public. Since then, I look at what he did as nothing more and nothing less than free speech. If it caused embarrassment to some of our diplomats--perhaps they had it coming. Talk about someone behind their backs and eventually it will get back to them. My parents taught me that when I was little. We seem to applaud the 1st Amendment until we're told that it is not in our best interests. Let me be the judge of whether or not it is in my best interest. I applaud Assnage for what he did--it helps to keep our moral compass pointing the right direction.



by drffc January 31, 2011 2:24 PM EST

WikiLeaks did not break into any server.

The information (not devices) Wikileaks has was given to it by whistleblowers working from within the various governments/organizations Wikileaks has published information about.

Nothing was sold.

It was given by persons working within them whose consciences were so outraged by what they were being told to do by their government/organization, and those of others, that they found Wikileaks as their outlet to let the rest of the world know of the criminal activities their government/organization were engaged in, oftentimes in direct contrast to what those governments/organizations were stating publically.

If you object to Wikileaks then you also object to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg who published the so-called Pentagon Papers. If you object to that, then you would prefer America to still be engaged in the Vietnam war for Ellsberg's heroic effort was a turning point in America's commitment to that illegal activity and removed a criminal President from office.

The Vietnam War was a struggle for the rights and freedom from French colonialism of the 19th century by the Vietnamese against the French.

But further, it was a continuation of the THOUSAND year struggle of the vietnamese for their freedom from Chinese domination.

America used Vietnam for profit, blowing up millions of civilians.

Ho Chi Minh fought WITH the Allies in WWII against AGAINST the Japanese, who were the latest in the chain of enslavers to that time in December 1941, to invade and occupy their country.

At the end of WWII Ho Chi Minh and his people believed they were finally on the right side of the coin having outed the Japanese WITH the Allies and so had finally won their independence.

Not so.

The French wanted their colony back and so, as thanks for helping the Allies win the war in the Pacific against the Japanese, with US financing, weapons and etc, the French began the first half of the Vietnam war.

(If you believe that the French were in their right to want their colony back, then you also believe England should reclaim the United States)

In 1954 after having their butts handed to them by the forces of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu, the French left Vietnam. But the US still wouldn't have it and the rest is history.

This history is what Ellsberg let the American people know about, in addition to the outright lies and fabrications created by Johnson and McNamara to gain the hearts & minds of Americans in August 1964 after the so-called Gulf of Tonkin "incident" when the spy & sabotage ship USS Maddox was "fired" upon by the North Vietnamese (right after we had blown up one of their radar/radio towers a day or so before. This in the peaceful days before the war. James Stockdale was flying a jet around the Maddox and knew and stated years later that the Maddox was firing at ... nothing).

If you don't like the truth, you prefer lies.

"The truth shall set you free," as Dr. Martin Luther King quoted.

Wikileaks publishes the truth and should be applauded by all for its courage to do so.

The military-industrial-intelligence complexes of the world --whom Eisenhower warned us to guard against-- must be checked. They've made enough money from the blood of innocents. To whatever extent it can, Wikileaks is providing mankind that service.

Nothing was sold to Wikileaks.

Wikileaks bought nothing.

Any information it is in possession of was freely given by the whistleblower, and both of them are heroes.

Furthermore, one of the women accusing Assange is herself a CIA agent. Does it get anymore obvious?? (see: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/assange-rape-accuser-cia-ties/>)

This is the old "kill the message by killing the messenger" routine practiced by the ancients thousands of years ago. They couldn't kill the message then, and it can't be stopped now.

A democracy can only survive through transparency and accountability to its citizenry.

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by mactheknife January 31, 2011 1:59 PM EST

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Julian Assange, the controversial founder of WikiLeaks, speaks to Steve Kroft about the U.S. attempt to indict him on criminal charges and the torrent of criticism aimed at him for publishing classified documents.

(CBS) There have been clear signs that Assange - under the threat of possible indictment by the Justice Department - has moderated some of his views. Before releasing the last two batches of classified documents, Assange and his lawyers contacted both the Pentagon and the State Department offering to explore ways to minimize potential harm. In both cases their offer was rebuffed. Assange acknowledged that his fundraising has been hurt by the decision of PayPal, MasterCard, Visa and Bank of America to cease handling donations. But he dismissed reports that WikiLeaks is wracked by internal dissent and mass defections.

Assange: We're talking about Daniel Domscheit-Berg, who was a German spokesman, had a limited role in the organization. We had to suspend him some five months ago.

Kroft: Describes you as being authoritarian, secretive, punitive.

Assange: I'm the boss that suspended him, that's correct.

Kroft: You don't care to elaborate?

Assange: I think I just did.

Kroft: You said you have this package of very damaging documents, sort of a poison pill, that's going to be released if anything bad happens to you.

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VIDEO  
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Julian Assange argues that while there are rules for soldiers and members of the State Department on disclosing classified information, his actions are protected by the First Amendment.



Julian Assange (CBS)

Assange: No, that's not at all true. That's some kind of media hype. What we do have is a system whereby we distribute encrypted backups of things we have yet to publish. There are backups distributed amongst many, many people, 100,000 people and that all we need to do is give them an encrypted key and they will be able to continue on.

Kroft: This wasn't intended to be a blackmail threat.

Assange: Not at all.

Kroft: What would trigger that encryption code being released?

Assange: Anything that prevented us from our ability to publish. So not just for a second, but preventing us significantly from being able to publish.

Kroft: Your imprisonment, for example.

Assange: If a number of people were imprisoned or assassinated, then we would feel that we could not go on and other people would have to take over our work, and we would release those keys.

Kroft: One bank, Bank of America, had its stock go down three to five percent based on a rumor, maybe it's a rumor, maybe you know more about it, that you had the contents of a five gigabyte hard drive belonging to one of its executives. Do you have a five gigabyte hard drive?

Assange: I won't make any comment in relation to that upcoming publication.

Kroft: You're certainly not denying it.

Assange: You know, there'll be a process of elimination if we denied some and admitted others.

Kroft: So it might not be Bank of America and you're just gonna let them squirm until you get ready to...

Assange: I think it's great. We have all these banks squirming, thinking maybe it's them.

Kroft: You seem to enjoy stirring things up.

Assange: When you see abusive organizations suffer the consequences as a result of their abuse, and you see victims elevated, it's, yes, that's a very pleasurable activity to be involved in.

Kroft: I mean you see yourself as a check on the power of the United States and other big countries in the world. And in the process of doing that, you have now become powerful yourself. Who is the check on you?

Assange: It is our sources who choose to provide us with information or not, depending on how they see our actions. It is our donors who choose to give us money or not. This organization cannot survive for even a few months without the ongoing support of the public.

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by rmoore17 January 31, 2011 4:05 PM EST

It would be interesting to hear what he knew about the banks and their doings.

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by kimbaleo January 31, 2011 3:40 PM EST

As many posters, I am deeply disappointed with last night's interview.

It reminded me more of 'push polls' I have received, "Many people think..." is not fact based reporting. The supposed consensus expressed more accurately describes the way Assange has been portrayed in the press. Judging from this comment chain, many Americans have more nuanced views.

Meanwhile, the larger question of whether we have the courage to live up to our ideals remained unexamined. The issues he forces us to confront go to the core of who we are as individuals and as a country. Do we really believe in a free press and a fully informed electorate? Does our government? Would we have the courage to speak up?

Assange seemed to be trying to get to those issues, but his responses were too heavily edited and disjointed to allow for that interesting conversation to take place. The take-away was that he is an odd and abrupt personality. Perhaps he is, but the challenges he poses are worthy of thoughtful discussion.

I expect more from 60 minutes.

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by xerbbb January 31, 2011 3:28 PM EST

Is this an editorial or an interview? Inthebyte is spot on -- this is a hatchet job. "Some have argued that..." Oh come on! And then Kroft goes on for two paragraphs on defamatory stuff that "some" have argued. Well, come on sir. Act like a real journalist. Who are the "some", what is their stake or bias? Or are the "some" you refer to really just your masters?

This is why I never watch network news any more, and rarely check out sites like this. Just nonsense and a waste of time...

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:06 PM EST

Shame, shame double shame on 60 Minutes & CBS for allowing such cynical and bias opinions of their staff! I always thought 60 Minutes was above that and was true to their convictions of non partisan .... not according to what I saw last night! Shame on me I guess - click your out CBS!

WTGo Julian - keep big brother and big business watching their behinds...as obviously big business CBS sure as heck isn't following a good example.

One question I'd ask Julian - is why NOT name the banks or the info on which banks they have hidden, if in fact they are for "the people"...come on Julian tell us all how badly we're all getting screwed or do we need Bill Maher to interview you? ..... 2nd thought...That'd be great

Reply to this comment



by CitizenMikeM January 31, 2011 3:23 PM EST

When Assange originally released these documents, I took the side of our Government as did much of the Public. Since then, I look at what he did as nothing more and nothing less than free speech. If



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it caused embarrassment to some of our diplomats--perhaps they had it coming. Talk about someone behind their backs and eventually it will get back to them. My parents taught me that when I was little. We seem to applaud the 1st Amendment until we're told that it is not in our best interests. Let me be the judge of whether or not it is in my best interest. I applaud Assnage for what he did--it helps to keep our moral compass pointing the right direction.



by drffc January 31, 2011 2:24 PM EST

WikiLeaks did not break into any server.

The information (not devices) Wikileaks has was given to it by whistleblowers working from within the various governments/organizations Wikileaks has published information about.

Nothing was sold.

It was given by persons working within them whose consciences were so outraged by what they were being told to do by their government/organization, and those of others, that they found Wikileaks as their outlet to let the rest of the world know of the criminal activities their government/organization were engaged in, oftentimes in direct contrast to what those governments/organizations were stating publically.

If you object to Wikileaks then you also object to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg who published the so-called Pentagon Papers. If you object to that, then you would prefer America to still be engaged in the Vietnam war for Ellsberg's heroic effort was a turning point in America's commitment to that illegal activity and removed a criminal President from office.

The Vietnam War was a struggle for the rights and freedom from French colonialism of the 19th century by the Vietnamese against the French.

But further, it was a continuation of the THOUSAND year struggle of the vietnamese for their freedom from Chinese domination.

America used Vietnam for profit, blowing up millions of civilians.

Ho Chi Minh fought WITH the Allies in WWII against AGAINST the Japanese, who were the latest in the chain of enslavers to that time in December 1941, to invade and occupy their country.

At the end of WWII Ho Chi Minh and his people believed they were finally on the right side of the coin having outed the Japanese WITH the Allies and so had finally won their independence.

Not so.

The French wanted their colony back and so, as thanks for helping the Allies win the war in the Pacific against the Japanese, with US financing, weapons and etc, the French began the first half of the Vietnam war.

(If you believe that the French were in their right to want their colony back, then you also believe England should reclaim the United States)

In 1954 after having their butts handed to them by the forces of Ho Chi Minh at Dien Bien Phu, the French left Vietnam. But the US still wouldn't have it and the rest is history.

This history is what Ellsberg let the American people know about, in addition to the outright lies and fabrications created by Johnson and McNamara to gain the hearts & minds of Americans in August 1964 after the so-called Gulf of Tonkin "incident" when the spy & sabotage ship USS Maddox was "fired" upon by the North Vietnamese (right after we had blown up one of their radar/radio towers a day or so before. This in the peaceful days before the war. James Stockdale was flying a jet around the Maddox and knew and stated years later that the Maddox was firing at ... nothing).

If you don't like the truth, you prefer lies.

"The truth shall set you free," as Dr. Martin Luther King quoted.

Wikileaks publishes the truth and should be applauded by all for its courage to do so.

The military-industrial-intelligence complexes of the world --whom Eisenhower warned us to guard against-- must be checked. They've made enough money from the blood of innocents. To whatever extent it can,

Wikileaks is providing mankind that service.

Nothing was sold to Wikileaks.

Wikileaks bought nothing.

Any information it is in possession of was freely given by the whistleblower, and both of them are heroes.

Furthermore, one of the women accusing Assange is herself a CIA agent. Does it get anymore obvious??  
(see: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/assange-rape-accuser-cia-ties/>)

This is the old "kill the message by killing the messenger" routine practiced by the ancients thousands of years ago. They couldn't kill the message then, and it can't be stopped now.

A democracy can only survive through transparency and accountability to its citizenry.

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by mactheknife January 31, 2011 1:59 PM EST

From the onset, the bias was evident: Steve Kroft can only be described as a grumpy old man in this interview. He did not serve journalism as he clearly showed some kind of anger or annoyance with the subject of his interview. Maybe it was jetlag.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:10 PM EST

Totally agree! Don't give Steve any room for excuses lol



by baronightwolf January 31, 2011 1:54 PM EST

Julian Assange is such a sad, impotent individual. It's no wonder he has so much contempt for humanity in general and authority -- any authority -- in particular. He was probably still a virgin when he sexually assaulted whoever it was. And therefore it is no wonder that he is so cavalier and self-absorbed in regard to whatever harm Wikileaks accomplishes. So many hackers are people who can't cope with their own social isolation and abuse by their contemporaries. Many of them are sexually and socially dysfunctional, and very often have a history of being bullied and being forced into a lifetime of involuntary celibacy. Ergo: it's no wonder Assange is under the delusion of his own self-importance and feels that he and only he knows what is right for the world. But although the poor bloke is potentially dangerous, he doesn't really deserve being imprisoned for life in a criminal holding-facility. Rather, he needs to be sentenced to life in the strong ward of a mental-health institution and aggressively medicated with Mellaril, Xanax, and other appropriate anti-psychotic medications. Oh, and getting him "conjugal visits" with Nevada-certified prostitutes from time to time would also be highly recommended. And something tells me that most of the rest of the Wikileaks crew can benefit from similar psychiatric treatment.

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 2:25 PM EST

Thank you for your professional psychiatric analysis of Mr. Assange and his sexual orientation, etc. I wonder if you would also care to analyze Mr. Kroft? You're so insightful, but the issue here is not killing the messenger, it is the right to deliver the message.



by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:12 PM EST

@ Inthebyte - that's a big BINGO! Well done clap clap!! where's the like button round here anyway??



by jnyren-2009 January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

Beginning with no opinion, I concluded after listening twice that Assange is honest and worthy of being taken seriously, but his questioner is anything but !!!

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by Inthebyte January 31, 2011 1:50 PM EST

This was an obvious hatchet job. Don't just blame Kroft, he's just another corporate media sychophant doing what he is told, so he can collect his huge salary. He gets his orders from above. I thought Assange handled and exposed him and the hypocrisy of corporate "journalism" with ease. I caught on to Kroft, his associates, and how 60 Minutes operates years ago. The really important political stuff is handled with smoke and mirrors. The editing, and the questions not asked speak volumes. I don't watch it much anymore, just happened to surf it on and saw it was Assange. I'll take an ounce of truth and freedom for a pound of "security" any day.

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by aliceinwonderland2011 January 31, 2011 3:14 PM EST

Booyeah! Amen to that!!



by GreenGestalt January 31, 2011 1:40 PM EST

Look how the governments, from the Country that used to be the USA to the Globalist Bankers, want both control and surveillance. They want to know what we are doing to the point that soon we won't even have "Loose Change" to spend without it being registered somewhere. So they can influence and outright control us.

They want all this knowledge, but they want it only for themselves.

Then they become offended when he releases leaked documents about what they do, such as "Lions of Islam" who bend over and spread for Israel and the USA and help to stab a back in the real defenders of Islam in exchange for having a lavish lifestyle.

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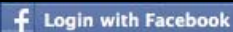
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