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## Wikileaks-Founder Julian Assange still in prison.

# What's next?

| Interview with John Shipton by Dirk Pohlmann.

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Born 1959, studied journalism, philosophy and law, acquired a commercial pilot licence, was managing director of CargoLifter World GmbH and trained as a project manager. As a scriptwriter and film director he produced more than 20 documentaries for arte, ZDF, and ARD, also broadcasted on TV in more than 20 countries, such as USA, Great Britain, Canada, Russia and Australia. He writes for several blogs and publishes on the video channel „Das 3. Jahrtausend“/ „The 3rd Millennium“ with more than 50,000 subscribers. His book „Die Ökokatastrophe“ was published 2019, his upcoming book about the murder of Deutsche Bank chef Alfred Herrhausen „Im Auftrag der Eliten“ will be published in April 2021.



*Dirk Pohlmann: Welcome to another 3. Jahrtausend interview, this time with Mr. John Shipton, father of Julian Assange, the journalist and the political prisoner of the so-called free Western world.*

*Mr. Shipton, could you give us a short summary of the situation in Great Britain right now? What has happened? What is going to happen now?*

John Shipton: The judge, Vanessa Baraitser, ruled against the extradition on health grounds and said that, it's no good, that Julian would more than likely die in jail in the United States, either from his own hand or from the oppressive circumstances. Thereafter, Julian's lawyers applied for bail and the bail was refused, even though Julian's circumstances in what is called the Guantanamo of Britain, a maximum security jail that is rife with Covid-19 and, as a consequence of that, in lockdown with prisoners in their cells for twenty-three hours a day. So, ha-

ving ruled that the circumstances of extradition would be dire, then the judge ruled against bail, even though the circumstances of Julian's current holding in jail are dire.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Can you communicate with your son?*

John Shipton: I'm in New York at the moment, so the overseas telephone calls are difficult. However, when we're in the U.K., Julian can ring for 10 minutes, and after that, the phone is cut off. So he regularly speaks with his fiancée, Stella Morris, and their two children.

*Dirk Pohlmann: I read a piece from Stella Morris in a Swiss newspaper that they let her wait. They have two hours or so and they let her wait for one hour and then they just have one hour to talk. Is this giving him the runaround and treating him badly going on all the time?*

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John Shipton: Yes. All of the circumstances of Julian's incarceration, they abridge the human rights legislation from the Council of Europe, which is embraced in the national legislation of England. They abridge that. So under the human rights legislation of Europe, the circumstances of Julian's incarceration, are considered torture. And so we proceed along those lines. We have the testimony of Nils Melzer, the rapporteur on torture, and the testimony of two expert witnesses and the testimonies in the court case in September, in the hearing in September. So we proceed along those lines that it is torturous for Julian's continued incarceration in Belmarsh maximum security prison, 23 hours a day in a cell in a jail rife with Covid-19.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Vanessa Baraitser endorsed all allegations. Her only point not to extradite was the health of Julian Assange and what he would have to endure in an American prison. What do you think is the reasoning behind this strange decision? What are the options that offer that for the British court?*

John Shipton: It is curious that the court, in what we consider to be a show trial, continues to support the allegations of the United States Department of Justice in its prosecution of Julian. There is a history in the extradition courts of not extraditing to the United States of people who would be endangered in the United States. So there is Lauri Love, whose extradition was refused on circumstances of health, similar circumstances to Julian, and Gary McKinnon, again, an extradition that was refused under the circumstances of health. So it seems that that is the only avenue that the extradition court, the Westminster court, finds palatable to refuse an extradition order.

*Dirk Pohlmann: What do you think, is that to solve the point for the USA if they say, he gets into another prison, not one of these maximum security prisons where he would just be in solitary confinement and have one hour or 30 minutes a day to move into a space where he can walk around with no other people and so on, if that is changed, do you think this*

*is the way to put the extradition forward for Great Britain that they say, this has been solved?*

John Shipton: Yes, they'll no doubt offer a soft bed for Julian in the United States in order to achieve the extradition. This was done in the ECHR, the European Court of Human Rights. The European Court of Human Rights sought guarantees that the prisoner concerned, if extradited to the United States, would not be held in a maximum security or supermax, as they call it. But the United States said yes. However, when the prisoner was extradited to the United States, the agreement was disavowed and the prisoner went into a supermax and Sam's special administrative measures.

*Dirk Pohlmann: How is Julian right now, what is his psychological situation and his physical condition?*

John Shipton: He's in, you know, deleterious health after 10 years, as you would expect, as the testimony of the doctors wrote in Nils Melzer's report. However, Julians psychology is boiled, is improved by the decision not to extradite.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Do you consider it possible that the new US administration will drop the prosecution and set your son free?*

John Shipton: Yes, well, the promise of the Biden administration is that it will revitalize diplomatic arrangements with other states. The entirety of Europe doesn't want this extradition to go ahead. In particular, Germany finds it abhorrent. And Germany is the most powerful nation in Europe. So this is of heft, of strength to insist that the United States negotiates with its partners in Europe to ensure that this extradition doesn't go ahead. Also, it will achieve a circumstance where people can, again, have some sort of faith in the United States that it will obey or agree to diplomatic negotiations, either state to state, bilateral or multilateral through the United Nations.

*Dirk Pohlmann: What are the legal steps that lie ahead now? When is a high court*

*decision expected? And is the legal path then over?*

John Shipton: Each court case, as we have all seen, exposes more and more of the falsity and scandal and criminality which surrounds Julian over the last 10 years. In particular the ongoing investigation in Spain, of the UC Global spying, and the stealing of Julian's court papers and computers and phones by the CIA. That's an ongoing revelation. Any further court case will just expose more and more scandals. So I presume that the United States will think better of this, not wanting their reputation to be further sullied and tainted with exposure in a court case. I am told that the high court may have the hearing in May this year. That's what I'm told, that the high court calendar is open enough to have the hearing by May.

*Dirk Pohlmann: We had the interview with the Armenian president, Ilham Aliyev, and the BBC, which was extremely interesting. We'll put a link to that, where he referred to your son as an example of free speech? What is he in prison for? We have the Mexican president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who offered asylum to your son, which was immediately taken as a reason why they could not send him out of bail, because there would be people giving him embassy asylum once again. And it seems in a way that the case of your son is a wrecking ball, you mentioned that, for the credibility of Western democracies. Like Sacharov was for the Soviet Union what Václav Havel was for the Czech regime.*

*So, is support for this case increasing right now? I mean, support for you, for your side?*

John Shipton: Yes, the support in Europe is extraordinary. The Council of Europe have made a declaration. The Parliamentary Assembly of Europe have made a supporting declaration. The chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Europe has made a supporting declaration. The chair of the Bundestag Human Rights Committee has made a supporting declaration. The Swiss Federation has made a supporting declaration.

The Spanish government stands willing, if Julian is free, to consider asylum. So as you can see, right across Europe, the support is very strong. With statements like what you mentioned in the interview with the president of... What's his name?

*Dirk Pohlmann: President Aliyev.*

John Shipton: Yes. This echoes around the world and is used as further evidence of the weakness of judicial administration in the United Kingdom. I feel sure that the United Kingdom doesn't want a reputation equivalent of Sweden's in the administration of law and justice, whereas we've seen Sweden, which used to be held as a model, and now its administration of justice is questioned throughout Europe. Countries, for example, Germany, Finland and Norway are concerned about the way Sweden administers its justice. Well, one would think that the United Kingdom doesn't want a similar circumstance, particularly, as the city of London writes a trillion dollars per annum in loan contracts, which sometimes have to be adjudicated. And having a reputation of a tainted judiciary in the adjudication of contracts worth billions of dollars is not at all helpful.

*Dirk Pohlmann: The case of your son is a fundamental case of freedom of the press and democracy. The question is, why do the governments of the United States and Great Britain act this way? Why is your son so dangerous to them?*

John Shipton: It's 10 years ago now, and it's sort of like a different epoch. Time seems to have speeded up and carried us along into another epoch entirely. So it's really curious as to why this prosecution and persecution continues. However, Julian is seen as the source of the exposure of war crimes, with the cables, the intelligent analysis and exposure of the behavior of diplomats from the United States and citizens in governments around the world. So this is uncomfortable. Particularly, for example, Dilma Rousseff's telephone being bugged, or Angela Merkel's personal telephone being bugged by the United States. Those are very uncomfortable revelations. So I assume, under tho-

se circumstances, they wish to destroy Julian as an example to anybody else who's tempted to go along the path that Julian followed. You may see, here yesterday, a online social network service, Parler, was completely destroyed. Parler was censorship-free. So I assume that that impetus to control information has become a prime concern of the administration in the United States. And the facilitation of that by huge tech companies seems to be successful.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Yeah, we from the 3. Jahrtausend, 3rd Millenium, were recently asked to be among the first to sign a letter to get Amnesty International going. They have by far not done enough for your son. They have been speaking up for political prisoners all over the world, but not in the case of your son. Or do you think they have done enough? That's more a rhetorical question, of course.*

John Shipton: No, that's fine. It is a rhetorical question, but Amnesty International Australia have been helpful. And that has been like throwing a stone in the water, moved across the world, and stimulated other branches of Amnesty International to do something. They have not done enough. And it's really simple for them to declare Julian a prisoner of conscience, which he is, a political prisoner, a prisoner of conscience. And moving them to that circumstance, I believe there's a lot of energy in the United Kingdom to do that now.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Do you have any idea why they have been so reluctant over the years? They are just starting now. I mean, even the German journalists union said they first will have to look at Sweden regarding rape and all this kind of show trial allegations that were put forward. Why is there so much reluctance on the Western watchdog side?*

John Shipton: Well, I don't know. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are a bit like the International Criminal Court. You know, it doesn't focus on anybody in the West. The International Criminal Court seems to have a reputation over persecuting or prosecuting Africans

only. These Western institutions of justice seem to have weakened. After 1945, the great movement of peoples throughout the world, in a epoch-making decision of magnificence, constructed the United Nations, also inserting into the United Nations the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Shortly after 1958 came the Conventions of Asylum, ratified in 1973. And then after that came the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. All of these magnificent constructions have been progressively pulled apart over the last 20 years. This is really a distressing scandal.

And rebuilding, for example, the United Nations Human Rights High Commission in Geneva, is very, very important. And all of the states of Europe must - actually, I don't like the word 'must', because, you know, it's uncomfortable - but must rebuild the strength of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and assist to give strength to the United Nations, which brings civilized discourse between nations so that they can explore their interests and make arrangements outside of warfare and proxy wars to engage their interests in diplomatic ways, rather than brutal collapse into barbarity, which has happened over the last 20 years.

*Dirk Pohlmann: I recently listened to our radio station here from the area of Berlin, Brandenburg, and they stated that the American allegations were that Julian Assange hacked the CIA and he helped Snowden and others to hack that. Maybe you can tell me, because this was on the news and I think it's completely wrong, but maybe you can answer that.*

John Shipton: Well, you know, the institutional discomfort that Edward Snowden caused and the institutional discomfort the Julian caused, rather than reform themselves, rather than change their outlook, and rather than give some privacy to ordinary people in the United States, they think their integrity is going to be repaired by persecuting Edward Snowden and Julian. Well, it's not the case. You know, the collapse of moral authority in the West has continued unabated. And now, it's really difficult to get

populations to support government policy because the populations don't know what is true and what to believe, because the common news services of mass media carriers have just taken government statements or statements of interested parties at face value and propagated them to the public.

As a consequence, for example, the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the creation of the United Nations and the Council of Europe by those nations, those very nations that are now disavowing their responsibility to their own creations, these are, you know, epoch making difficulties for the West. And hearteningly, optimistically, positively, Germany seems to be leading in the case of Julian and others, leading the moral reevaluation and reenergizing of those particular human rights instruments. It's very heartening.

*Dirk Pohlmann: I think from the legal point and from the political theory point, there's no other way than to say that the case of Julian Assange is proof if people*

*want a democracy or not, if the governments want a democracy or not, because what he did was to improve the situation of controlling the governments by the media. And that's obviously also what they don't want. But to get to a lighter side, what would be the first thing that you are doing going to do when you hear your son is free, which we all hope for?*

John Shipton: Well, you know, because Julian will need a year or so in convalescents, and to remake his relationship with his young children, my obligation will be to go around, to Berlin, for example, and Paris and then to Melbourne, and thank all of those who have spent their energies and intelligence, and thank those people. That will be my obligations, to thank them on Julian's behalf. The first thing I do will, of course, just go and say to Julian, Well, welcome home. That's all.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Will he go to Australia if he is free?*

John Shipton: I think the opportunity to return to Australia may be slightly constrained by the Australian government, so far not saying that they won't allow Julian to be really reextradited to the United States. So, so far, they haven't said that they won't allow the extradition. So the travel to Australia will be constrained. Maybe it will be you know - Geneva have offered a humanitarian visa, and there's some energy in Germany to offer asylum. So maybe Julian will be staying in Europe.

*Dirk Pohlmann: Thank you, Mr. Shipton, for the interview, and we have this story in every issue that we have, we have a short part on what's going on with your son. And we hope to see you for the big party at the Brandenburg Gate, the symbol of freedom, when Julian is free. Thank you and goodbye.*

John Shipton: Thank you.