

# America's Dark Day. "Compelling Julian Assange to Plead Guilty to a Crime He Did Not Commit". Scott Ritter

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Global Research, June 26, 2024

[Scott Ritter Extra](#) 25 June 2024

Region: [Europe, USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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***By allowing the US government to compel Julian Assange to plead guilty to a crime he did not commit, America has condemned itself to be a land where telling the truth is a crime.***

"The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of the government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell."

Justice Hugo Black, The New York Times versus The United States, 1971

Julian Assange is soon scheduled to appear before a US Court on the island of Saipan, where he is expected to plead guilty to a single violation of the Espionage Act, namely conspiring to obtain and disclose national defense information.

**Assange is guilty of no crime. It is the United States government which operates in violation of the law and, by suppressing Julian Assange's duty as a publisher to expose deception on part of the government about war crimes committed by American servicemembers in Iraq and other lies and deceptions perpetrated by the State Department and Department of Defense, in gross disregard for the First**

## Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

By subjecting Julian Assange to five years of imprisonment under horrific conditions in a British maximum-security prison, where he was held under solitary confinement 23 hours a day, the US government broke the spirit and will of a man whose cause had come to personify the fundamental issue of free speech.

The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, **Juan E. Mendez**, has declared that

“[s]olitary confinement, [as a punishment] cannot be justified for any reason, precisely because it imposes severe mental pain and suffering beyond any reasonable retribution for criminal behavior and thus constitutes an act defined [as]...torture.”

Every American, whether they operate as a journalist or simply a citizen who believes in the fundamental right of free speech and a free press, must understand the significance of what Assange’s plea deal means—it is a frontal assault on free speech, effectively overturning the landmark Supreme Court decision in *The New York Times versus The United States* that spawned Hugo Black’s words in defense of this basic American freedom.

Let there be no doubt: **Julian Assange is free, but free speech and the notion of a free press is dead in America today**, killed by our collective passivity in the face of the brutalization of Julian Assange by the US government for the “crime” of exposing their crimes for all the world to see.

The truth no longer sets us free.

Rather, shining light on the inconvenient truth has become a crime.

America is a far worse place today than it was before our government compelled this plea agreement from Julian Assange.

This is a dark day in the history of our country.

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