

Julian Assange Is Finally Free!

The WikiLeaks publisher left Belmarsh Prison on Monday morning and departed the U.K. headed to Australia, WikiLeaks said.

By [Joe Lauria](#)

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Julian Assange has agreed to a plea deal with the United States. He left Belmarsh on Monday and is headed to Australia, WikiLeaks said.

"He was granted bail by the High Court in London and was released at Stansted airport during the afternoon, where he boarded a plane and departed the UK," WikiLeaks said in a tweet early Tuesday morning London time.

Stella Assange, [tweeted](#): "Julian is free!!!! Words cannot express our immense gratitude to YOU- yes YOU, who have all mobilised for years and years to make this come true. THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU."

Assange was released as a result of a plea deal with the United States, the BBC reported. The British national broadcaster said:

"According to CBS, the BBC's US partner, Assange will spend no time in US custody and will receive credit for the time spent incarcerated in the UK.

Assange will return to Australia, according to a letter from the justice department.

The deal - which will see him plead guilty to one charge - is expected to be finalised in a court in the Northern Mariana Islands on Wednesday, 26 June."

The New York Times [reported](#) that Assange agreed to the one count of the Espionage Act — "conspiracy to disseminate national defense information" — in exchange for a five year sentence, which the U.S. agreed had already been served on remand in Belmarsh.

WikiLeaks released this video of Assange walking onto the plane on his way out of London, where he was imprisoned for five years.

Julian Assange boards flight at London Stansted Airport at 5PM (BST) Monday June 24th. This is for everyone who worked for his freedom: thank you. [#FreedJulianAssange pic.twitter.com/Pqp5pBAhSQ](https://twitter.com/Pqp5pBAhSQ)

— WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [June 25, 2024](#)

The Sydney Morning Herald [reported](#): “A court filing outlines a single criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defence documents.”

The newspaper said Assange pleaded “guilty to an Espionage Act charge of conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified national defence information, the Justice Department said in a letter filed in court.”

Bruce Afran, a U.S. constitutional lawyer, told ***Consortium News*** that a plea deal does not create a legal precedent. Therefore Assange’s deal would not jeopardize journalists in the future of being prosecuted for accepting and publishing classified information from a source because of Assange’s agreeing to such a charge.

The Mariana Islands are a U.S. territory where Assange will complete the deal in a U.S. federal court on Tuesday.

“Technically, he is coming to the U.S., [on the Mariana Islands] but not to the district where he was indicted,” Afran said. “And he could be taken into custody, but we assume the U.S. will act in good faith.”



Assange walking free at Stansted Airport in London. (*WikiLeaks* video via X)



Assange discusses plea deal with his lawyer Gareth Pierce. (*WikiLeaks* via X)

Aitor Martinez, a lawyer for Assange, released the charges that Assange apparently pled guilty to. He wrote: “Julian Assange has agreed a deal with the DoJ so he is finally FREE.” The document Martinez attached to his tweet reads:

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, |) | Case No. CR - 24 - 00014 |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | Count One: |
| vs. |) | Title 18, U.S.C. § 793(g), Conspiracy To |
| |) | Obtain and Disclose National Defense |
| JULIAN PAUL ASSANGE, |) | Information |
| |) | |
| Defendant. |) | |
| |) | |
| |) | |
| |) | |

FILED
Clerk
District Court

CRIMINAL INFORMATION

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHARGES THAT:

JUN 25 2024

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

for the Northern Mariana Islands
By JP
(Deputy Clerk)

THE DEFENDANT AND CO-CONSPIRATOR

1. The defendant, JULIAN PAUL ASSANGE (“ASSANGE”), was not a United States citizen, did not possess a U.S. security clearance, and did not have authorization to possess, access, or control documents, writings, or notes relating to the national defense of the United States, including United States government classified information.

2. Chelsea Manning (“Manning”) was a United States Army intelligence analyst who held a TOP SECRET U.S. security clearance who was deployed to Forward Operating Base Hammer in Iraq.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

3. Pursuant to Executive Order 12958 signed on April 17, 1995, as amended by Executive Order 13292 on March 25, 2003, and Executive Order 13526 on December 29, 2009, national security information was classified as “TOP SECRET,” “SECRET,” or

defendant, JULIAN PAUL ASSANGE, who will be first brought to the District of the Northern Mariana Islands, knowingly and unlawfully conspired with Chelsea Manning to commit the following offenses against the United States:

- a. To receive and obtain documents, writings, and notes connected with the national defense, including such materials classified up to the SECRET level, for the purpose of obtaining information respecting the national defense, and knowing and with reason to believe at the time such materials were received and obtained, they had been and would be taken, obtained, and disposed of by a person contrary to the provisions of Chapter 37 of Title 18 of the United States Code, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 793(c);
 - b. To willfully communicate documents relating to the national defense, including documents classified up to the SECRET level, from persons having lawful possession of or access to such documents, to persons not entitled to receive them, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 793(d); and
 - c. To willfully communicate documents relating to the national defense from persons in unauthorized possession of such documents to persons not entitled to receive them, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 793(e).
7. In furtherance of the conspiracy, and to accomplish its objects, ASSANGE and Manning committed lawful and unlawful overt acts.

(All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 793(g))

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Joe Lauria is editor-in-chief of Consortium News and a former U.N. correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, and other newspapers, including The Montreal Gazette, the London Daily Mail and The Star of Johannesburg. He was an investigative reporter for

the Sunday Times of London, a financial reporter for Bloomberg News and began his professional work as a 19-year old stringer for The New York Times. He is the author of two books, A Political Odyssey, with Sen. Mike Gravel, foreword by Daniel Ellsberg; and How I Lost By Hillary Clinton, foreword by Julian Assange.

Featured image: Assange. boards plane at Stansted Airport in London a free man after striking a deal with the U.S. government. (WikiLeaks video via X)

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