

Julian in the Dock. “A Secret Trial”

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Julian Assange's extradition hearing has had very little media coverage. Even The Guardian and The New York Times barely mentioned it, though these newspapers made a fortune publishing Assange-provided cables. Unless you had been looking for it, you wouldn't even know that on February 24 to 27, the first stage of Assange's extradition hearing was being adjudicated in the secretive Woolwich Crown Court embedded within the huge Belmarsh Prison nicknamed "British Gitmo".

*Luckily for us, Ambassador **Craig Murray**, the indomitable truth fighter, went there, waited in line for hours in the rain, underwent searches and discomfort, and wrote an [extensive report](#) (12,000 words) on this travesty of justice that went under the name of a 'trial'. His reports leave nothing out, from the threatening atmosphere to the sinister legal arguments. He captured the menace and the abuse bordering with public torture, and delivered it to the world, something that none of the journalists on the payroll of the mass media had been allowed to do. Here are some insights from his report in my free rendering augmented with other sources.*

The Court is designed with no other purpose than to exclude the public, on an island accessible only through navigating a maze of dual carriageways, the entire location and architecture of the building is predicated on preventing public access. It is in truth just **the sentencing wing of Belmarsh prison.**

The judge, the Magistrate (or District Judge) **Vanessa Baraitser** is a modern version of the [Hanging Judge George Jeffreys](#), a female Judge Dredd. She is the chief villain by all descriptions of the trial, not just tolerating but exceeding the demands of the prosecution. The lawyers acting for the prosecution did request some niceties if only for the trial to appear fair. Baraitser had no such pretensions. She went straight for the jugular. If she could, she would hang Assange right away.

Judge Dredd is surrounded by mystery: she has left no trace upon the Internet. A newly born child has more Internet presence than this middle-aged woman. I doubt such a blank slate could be achieved nowadays without the active assistance of the Secret Services.

Ambassador Murray writes:

"Ms Baraitser is not fond of photography – she appears to be the only public figure in Western Europe with no photo on the internet. Indeed the average proprietor of a rural car wash has left more evidence of their existence and life history on the Internet than Vanessa Baraitser. Which is no crime on her part, but I suspect the expunging is not achieved without considerable effort. Somebody suggested to me she might be a hologram, but I think not. Holograms have more empathy."

John Pilger saw Baraitser in action during the previous round of Assange hearings in October 2019. He wrote: "I have sat in many courtrooms and seen judges abuse their positions. This judge, Vanessa Baraitser shocked all of us who were there. Her face was a progression of sneers and imperious indifference; she addressed Julian with cruel arrogance. When Assange spoke, Baraitser contrived boredom; when the prosecuting barrister spoke, she was attentive. When Julian's barrister described the CIA spying on him, she didn't yawn, but her disinterest was as expressive. Her knee in the groin was to announce that the next court hearing would be at remote Woolwich, which adjoins Belmarsh Prison and has few seats for the public. This will ensure isolation and be as close to a secret trial as it's possible to get."

It turned out to be practically a secret trial. There were MSM journalists, but "not a single one of the most important facts and arguments today has been reported anywhere in the mainstream media."

On the first day, **James Lewis** QC for the prosecution tried to drive a wedge between Assange and the media. He claimed that in no way are mainstream outlets like *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* threatened by this trial, because Assange was not charged with publishing the cables but only with publishing the names of informants, cultivating Manning and assisting him to attempt computer hacking. The mainstream outlets are not guilty of any crimes, having only published sanitised cables.

But Judge Baraitser didn't accept this vegetarian approach. She thirsted for blood. She referred to the Official Secrets Act 1989, which declares that merely obtaining and publishing any government secret is an offence. Surely, Baraitser suggested, that meant that newspapers publishing the Manning leaks would be guilty of a serious offence?

Lewis agreed with the judge and admitted that indeed, the mainstream journalists also are guilty, fully denying what he said in his opening statement. In the end, none of this role-play mattered since none of the media reported on this exchange, as it wasn't inserted into the daily press release. The MSM journalists used only these prepared texts, so convenient for copying and pasting into their own reports.

The main argument of the defence was that **the motive for the prosecution was entirely political, and that political offences were specifically excluded under the UK/US extradition treaty**. For a normal human judge, that would suffice to dismiss the case. But Baraitser had a trick up her sleeve. Although the US/UK Extradition Treaty forbade political extraditions, this was only the Treaty, and this is not an international court, she said. That exemption does not appear in the UK Extradition Act. Therefore political extradition is not illegal in the UK, as the Treaty has no legal force on her Court. With such a judge, who needs the prosecution?

The defence quickly demolished the judge's devious rationalisations by pointing out that every extradition must satisfy two standards: (1) that of the UK Extradition Act, and (2) the specific Extradition Treaty with the country in question. Both are necessary; no man can be extradited to a specific country without consulting the specific treaty. The UK Extradition Act sets the ground rules. It is the relevant extradition treaty that sets out the conditions by which a prisoner might be extradited to a specific country. The Act allowed for a political extradition, and if the specific extradition treaty allowed it, the prisoner could be extradited. But this specific, namely US/UK extradition treaty does not permit political extraditions.

Ergo, Assange could not be extradited by law.

Indeed a sixth-grade student could follow this simple logic. However, the dastardly Ms Baraitser kept repeating her claim that the Act does not forbid political extradition. We do not know what black spots hidden in the murky past of Judge Baraitser required that her history be blotted out by MI5's dark adepts, but I harbour a suspicion that this Jewish lady has had some field practice in the Jewish state, where judges invariably find the accused goy liable and guilty, and every torture is tolerated or even encouraged.

Her main thrust seemed to be in disheartening Julian Assange to the point of inciting suicide. He certainly seemed to be dispirited. The distinguished psychiatrist Professor Michael Kopelman provided a psychiatric assessment of Assange to the court:

"Mr Assange shows virtually all the risk factors which researchers from Oxford have described **in prisoners who either suicide or make lethal attempts**. ... I am as confident as a psychiatrist can ever be that, if extradition to the United States were to become imminent, Mr Assange would find a way of suiciding."

These words are especially poignant today, as it was [reported](#) that Manning attempted to commit suicide being locked up since last May at a detention centre in Alexandria, Va for steadfast refusal to bring evidence against Assange. The US/UK Deep State is a vengeful vicious beast that wants to punish Assange and Manning for revealing its nasty secrets. It is only the "whistle-blowers" who accused Trump and exonerated the Thief of Ukraine Biden that are protected.

In order to push Assange deeper into black despair, **Baraitser enforced the regime of strict isolation on the prisoner**. Assange had been kept in a bulletproof glass cage, unable to hear or to exchange notes with his lawyers. "I believe - wrote Craig Murray, - that the Hannibal Lecter style confinement of Assange, this intellectual computer geek, is a deliberate attempt to drive Julian to suicide."

Julian is cruelly mistreated. When his Spanish lawyer left court to return home, on the way out he naturally stopped to shake hands with his client, proffering his fingers through the narrow slit in the glass cage. Assange half stood to take his lawyer's hand. The two security guards in the cage with Assange immediately sprang up, putting hands on Julian and forcing him to sit down, preventing the handshake.

On the first day of trial, Julian had twice been stripped naked and searched, eleven times been handcuffed, and five times been locked up in different holding cells. The lawyer for the defence, Fitzgerald, asked the judge to interfere and save Julian from this rough mistreatment.

The Baraitser stared down Fitzgerald and stated, in a voice laced with disdain, that he had raised such matters before and she had always replied that she had no jurisdiction over the prison estate. *You might make a recommendation*, suggested Fitzgerald, *they usually listen to judge's remarks*. Even the prosecution counsel James Lewis stood up to say the prosecution would also like Assange to have a fair hearing, and that he could confirm that what the defence were suggesting was normal practice. But bloodthirsty Baraitser flatly refused.

Edward Fitzgerald made a formal application for Julian to be allowed to sit beside his lawyers in the court. Julian was “a gentle, intellectual man” and not a terrorist. Baraitser replied that releasing Assange from the dock into the body of the court would mean he was released from custody. That is obviously nonsense. Again, the prosecution counsel James Lewis intervened on the side of the defence, for Baraitser’s notion of law would not work anywhere outside Israeli courts in the occupied West Bank. Lewis said that prisoners, even the most dangerous of terrorists, gave evidence from the witness box in the body of the court next to the lawyers and magistrate. In the High Court prisoners frequently sat with their lawyers in extradition hearings, in extreme cases of violent criminals handcuffed to a security officer.

Baraitser replied that Assange might pose a danger to the public. It was a question of health and safety. Health and safety, forsooth! Such cynicism may be unprecedented in British justice, and it should reserve a special place in hell for Ms Baraitser.

Why should she keep Assange in that box, unable to hear proceedings or instruct his lawyers, when even counsel for the US Government does not object to Assange openly sitting in the court? He is brought handcuffed and under heavy escort to and from his solitary cell to the armoured dock via an underground tunnel. In these circumstances, what possible need is there for him to be repeatedly strip- and cavity-searched? Why is he not permitted to shake hands or touch his lawyers through the slit in the armoured glass box?

It is a torture session, not a hearing. And the hearing, or rather the torture will continue in May, – if Julian is still alive.

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