



# WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy

*David Leigh , Luke Harding*

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**WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy** David Leigh , Luke Harding

A team of journalists with unparalleled inside access provides the first full, in-depth account of WikiLeaks, its founder Julian Assange, and the ethical, legal, and political controversies it has both uncovered and provoked.

## WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy Details

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## From Reader Review WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy for online ebook

### Divya Dutt says

Read to find about the man who visioned Wikileaks. Clearly, he was brave to dare to do something of this degree and also a man of white and black as he simply puts away that the leaking of informer's name is no big deal because if they did it they have it coming to them. His motto may well have been- "Publish and be damned" !

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### Matthew says

An interesting look inside WikiLeaks and the main players of that movement. Well worth the few bucks I paid for it.

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### Joy H. says

I watched the movie, "**The Fifth Estate**" via a DVD from our public library. The film was adapted from this book and some others (see below). I was mainly interested in seeing the actor Benedict Cumberbatch who played the part of Julian Assange.

IMDb page: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1837703/?...>

Below is a summary about the movie from my library catalog:

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"Summary: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and his colleague Daniel Domscheit-Berg team up to become underground watchdogs of the very powerful. They create a platform that allows whistleblowers to anonymously leak covert data. But when Assange and Berg gain access to the biggest trove of confidential intelligence documents in U.S. history, they battle each other and a defining question of our time: what are the costs of keeping secrets in a free society, and what are the costs of exposing them? "

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More about the film:

"The Fifth Estate is a 2013 thriller film directed by Bill Condon, about the news-leaking website WikiLeaks. The film stars Benedict Cumberbatch as its editor-in-chief and founder Julian Assange, and Daniel Brühl as its former spokesperson Daniel Domscheit-Berg.

"The film's screenplay was written by Josh Singer based in-part on Domscheit-Berg's book *Inside WikiLeaks: My Time with Julian Assange and the World's Most Dangerous Website* (2011), as well as *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy* (2011) by British journalists David Leigh and Luke Harding.

"**The film's name** is a term used to describe the people who operate in the manner of journalists outside the normal constraints imposed on the mainstream media."

ABOVE INFO IS FROM: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Fift...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fift...)

The books mentioned above:

WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy by David Leigh, Luke Harding

OR A DIFFERENT LINK:

WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy by Luke Harding, David Leigh

Inside WikiLeaks: My Time with Julian Assange at the World's Most Dangerous Website by Daniel Domscheit-Berg

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## **11811 (Eleven) says**

A little dated since its 2011 publication but an otherwise okay read.

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## **Benito says**

This very well written book from the Guardian journalists who worked with WikiLeaks to break the story gives a lot of interesting backstory to the cables, the alleged leaker Bradley Manning (who so far has been the real innocent victim of all this - a disillusioned kid from the bible belt who only joined the Army to please a father who disowned him after he revealed he was gay) and of course Julian Assange (who comes out of this a much more human creature, full of foibles - such as the 'Aussie coarseness' the Brit writers keep assigning him, and the history as a mixed-up hippy kid on the lam much of his childhood from his mother's lover). Assange certainly loses much of the shine from the tin halo assigned to him as the 'Ned Kelly of the internet generation' (as The Sydney Morning Herald famously christened him). Importantly the book gives the full text of the more controversial cables and puts them in context in a way, as it points out repeatedly, that only a large news organisation has the resources and experience to do. I dare say Assange will be unhappy with much of this book, and it will be interesting to see what comes out in his upcoming autobiography (due this April apparently). Of course the story is still very much alive, ending as it does in January 2011 with Assange in his mansion-detention awaiting extradition hearings and WikiLeaks in financial strain after attacks from the US administration via Visa, Mastercard and PayPal, but whatever happens next having read this book will help give me a much fuller understanding of where it fits into the whole picture. I did love that all this began, in some ways, with Assange getting a Commodore 64 as a kid. I had one too, but all I did was write a version of Hangman in BASIC.

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## **Ambar says**

This book written by editor and war correspondent in Guardian leading UK Newspaper. The style of writing bit close to spy novel rather than fact finding with such exciting characters and chronologies. I found it very helpful to explain the rise of Julian Assange from humble hacker into stardom of free information. It looks deeper to the core of democracy and secrecy. Do Government has a right to keep secret? Who has the accountability to public or even to the world?

Julian Assange undoubtedly became two faces, evil and god. He can be seen as traitor or hero depends which side you on. But reading the book will give enormous story of background of his childhood, his lifestyle and his political agenda (or technological agenda I assumed). Including who and who behind the underground Wikileaks and conspirators (media, journalist, financial institution, or personal).

The book launched in advance than Daniel Domscheit Berg, a Wikileaks associates that disgruntled about Assange's leadership. In the end, the leaks changes few faces of the world now, including several leaders and government. Obviously it embarrassed to some, but it will make better public account.

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### **Peter Miller says**

I'm not telling you what I think of this book, because it's a secret. However, it really was a Lady Gaga CD. Allegedly.

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### **Boris Maksimovic says**

Kupio sam ovu knjigu prije godinu dana u Ljubljani za smiješna tri evra, ali tek sada sam našao vremena da je pročitam. Knjigu su napisala dvojica Gardijanovih novinara koji su imali pripremu objavljivanja najvećeg curenja tajnih podataka ikada i kako je bilo koordinisati rad pet redakcija (NY Times, Guardian, El Pais, Le Monde i Der Spiegel) sve što je moguće dalje od američkih tajnih službi. Ukratko, knjiga je strašna. Daje uvid i u Asanžov život prije WikiLeaksa koji je i tada bio i više nego fascinant. Već u prvoj polovini devedesetih slovio je za najsposobnijeg australijskog hakera. Ali prava poslastica je na kraju, neke od depeša koje je WL objavio. Ubjedljivo najluđa je ona američkog ambasadora iz Moskve, jednog jako dobrog stiliste i čovjeka koji baš zna da piše, koji se zadesio na jednoj dagestanskoj svadbi. Kakvo je to ludilo bilo nema ovdje prostora da se napiše, ali dovoljno je reći da traje tri dana, da su svi naoružani i mrtvi-pjani. Ima na YT dosta dagestanskih svadbi pa bacite pogled. Inače, knjiga je ista desетка.

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### **Amador Cardenas says**

WikiLeaks is a very informative story about how the website WikiLeaks came to be a controversial site. His site included various videos and accounts from soldiers in Afghanistan, at the time, these videos being posted on Youtube were making front page news. Everybody found out about the civilian casualties in Afghanistan, its not all about our "Hero's". If you don't already know what WikiLeaks is then this will be an interesting story about the hacker who created it.

Julian Assange the man behind the story is similar to a real life version of DC comics The Joker, Julian doesn't have a motive for why he hacks federal systems of security like National Defense or Banks other than to prove to himself that he can. This left me riveted after hearing how Julian could do all of this while remaining under the radar. The illegal hacking he does may make him a criminal but the reasons he provides to his colleagues prove to everyone that he really has a reasonable ulterior motive that makes us see him as a true law abiding citizen.

This book not only informed us about Julian Assange's upbringing but we were told about WikiLeaks harsh rise to bringing classified information to the public eye. Julian stretched his 1st amendment right as far as possible and endured serious drawbacks because of it. This story was clever, informative, and very entertaining I encourage everybody to pick it up and decide whether Julian's actions were right or wrong.

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## Catherine White says

Wikileaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy is a first hand account into the Wikileaks release of the Afghanistan, Iraq, and diplomatic logs to the public.

Despite the bias of the journalists against Bradley Manning, it is an informed account of the relationship between Bradley Manning and Julian Assange; and The Guardian and Wikileaks.

The writers (who were the journalists in collaboration with Julian Assange) present themselves and The Guardian as moral guardians who educated Julian Assange about media's ethics. While that's probably true, this aspect of the narrative felt like the writers are too eager to delineate their own position, and distance themselves from Assange.

Nevertheless, the writers debunk the spin and propaganda around the sexual assault charges against Julian Assange.

Written by one of Britains' most distinguished investigative journalists, it's a real page turner, full of twists and turns, that held my interest from beginning to end.

If the reader can bypass the writers bias, it's a must read for anyone interested in investigative and citizen journalism, and it's relationship to Whistleblowers.

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## Zachary says

I couldn't put this down. A fascinating expose by London Guardian reporters into Assange's personality and the process of releasing the Afghanistan, Iraq, and diplomatic logs to the public. Goes into great detail about the Swedish rape charges.

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## Ishraq says

***"Often the best source of information about waste, fraud, and abuse in government is an existing government employee committed to public integrity and willing to speak out. Such acts of courage and patriotism, which can sometimes save lives and often save taxpayer dollars, should be encouraged rather than stifled. We need to empower federal employees as watchdogs of wrongdoing and partners in performance. Barack Obama will strengthen whistleblower laws to protect federal workers who expose waste, fraud, and abuse of authority in government. Obama will ensure that federal agencies expedite the process for reviewing whistleblower claims and whistleblowers have full access to courts and due process."***

**These words of Obama sounds ridiculous now after his administration took serious actions against both Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden as Whistle Blowers themselves! A Whistle blower according to Wikipedia *"is a person who exposes misconduct, alleged dishonest or illegal activity occurring in an organization."***

The importance of this book doesn't come only as a book that tells the story of Wikileaks from the inside but from behind the scenes stories of the biggest digital leak in history. To be honest, I'm not a media fan myself and I always been skeptical of media in generals and what they do usually to get a story but for the first time in years I was mind blown by the great efforts and remarkable work the Guardians, New York times and Der Spiegel had done to get the leaked cables about Afghanistan, Iraq and others to the public.

*The Wikileaks video that shows Reuters reporters being killed in Iraq along with those who came to rescue the injured!!*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13qWAD...>

David Leigh starts his book by talking about the motive behind Manning's leaking of the US government documents that in subsequent chapters became more understandable by tracing the growth of Manning till his service in the US military. Hacktivism is the global phenomenon that drove the young US soldier to do what he did. Hacktivism according to Wikipedia (a portmanteau of hack and activism) is the use of computers and computer networks to promote political ends, chiefly free speech, human rights, and informationethics. If you are a techie person as myself, you will be fascinated by the employment of the internet, security, open source, file transfer, encryption techniques that was used to transfer and route data and cable files without being traced back!!

I was mind blown and went into hilarious laughter when I found that Julian Assange gave files passwords to the editors on a restaurant napkin! The work the IT staff along with the journal's editors work was really impressive given limited time and expertise to analyze the document, check their authenticity and provide statistics on the horrible war casualties of the war in both Afghanistan and Iraq along with how these incidents and direct actions were reported by the US soldiers.

Through the pages of this book, you will learn more about Julian Assange, his childhood and early brilliance, Wikileaks, the sexual accusation against him the happened in Sweden with in depth focus on these stories, what people who worked with him think of and you may come with some conclusions that he was a brilliant dude but yet an idiot!! His asylum in Ecuador embassy where he still lives till the moment and how he advised Snowden on how to act after his leaked documents as well who himself now has an asylum in Russia!! *for those who are more interested in Assange, you can check the documentary: We steal secrets, the story of Wikileaks.*

**We steal secrets: the story of Wikileaks**

As a book in general, the book is well-written and smooth. David Leigh for sure is a good journalist who was able to grab your attention and thrill you through the chapters urging you to hub in into the next chapter. I can't imagine how this would felt if it was published as stories in the Guardians, it would strike publishing for sure.

Oscar Wilds says: *Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth!* but these young men didn't need the mask to stand up and tell the truth... when would we be brave enough to stand and own this truth!

**PS: you can check this link on the verdict on Bradley Manning and the implication on the free of speech that his trial invoked.**

## **Investigative journalist on Manning verdict with Jeremy Scahill**

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### **Halik says**

The book gives a good overview of the Wikileaks situation to date. Its more of a blatant attempt by the Guardian to cash in on the Julian Assange drama one feels, rather than an attempt to give a heretofore unseen side of the Wikileaks story.

Most of the book deals with the documented story of Wikileaks, only more analytically and with a level of perspective that has built up over the ensuing months. It also takes a bit of a dim view of Assange himself and one can sense a clear vein of arrogance that constantly seeks to downplay the efforts of Wikileaks and Assange and highlight the work of the Guardian in bringing the whole thing to light. Therefore it is less the story of Wikileaks itself and more the story of 'this Wikileaks business' from the rather self-righteous outlook of The Guardian.

But still, i wouldn't say the book is filled with lies and slander, far from it. The Guardian lives up to its reputation for good journalism and tries to remain objective and open to reason despite its constant monkey-praising-its-own-tail self congratulatory tone.

### **Gaga in the Desert**

The tale starts with the disillusioned Bradley Manning, a computer operator in Iraq, who gets frustrated with the politics of the Iraqi war when it dawns on him that the values the US stands for there are only concerned with integrity so long as they helped further US interests. Simultaneously he realizes that the computer department he works in has very bad security and finds out that he can write classified files by burning them onto his Lady Gaga CD (a bizarre image, a desert dust battered army trailer room with battle hardened soldiers listening to Lady Gaga, but Manning wasn't a fighting man. He was highly idealistic, opinionated and smart, with a mokey childhood and homosexual tendencies).

To get back to the point Manning then tries to figure out a way of doing some 'good' with the data he has found because he has come to realize that large amounts of the information are things that the 'people should know about'. Enter Assange, who Manning hears about because of the former's rapidly growing popularity as a result of the work of Wikileaks in exposing the corrupt activities of African, European and other governments. Manning soon gets in touch through the equivalent of underground comm lines in the internet and the rest is baked cheesecake.

Death tolls, civilian casualties (including children), extra-judicial killings, hit squads etc were all packed away in the bits of data relating to the Afghan and Iraqi conflicts that were finally released through Wikileaks. Whereas the US previously claimed not to have specific figures for the number of dead in the wars, the final figure for Iraq was exposed as being somewhere between 100,000-108,000. Every single one of these deaths were meticulously recorded by soldiers filling out post-battle reports. Many other juicy details were also put out for the public consumption. The most controversial of all released data were the cables that were sent from US embassies around the world back to Washington, finally causing the US to sit

up and take notice, and they were very, very ticked off. Manning was arrested and jailed. he is pending trial and will possibly face long years in prison, if not the death penalty for treason.

### **'Hacktivist'**

Anyway if you've been following the news with half a ear, you already know this. So lets stick to the book itself. We are treated to a brief overview of Assange's vegabond, peripatetic childhood and his subsequent metamorphosis into a young father and unberhacker. It is through his hacking that Assange first comes into contact with the law, from the wrong side, and he does not like what he sees. His subsequent disillusionment with justice and governments is what leads to his conviction that 'all information must be free' and Wikileaks. he essentially becomes a hacker with a cause, a hacktivist.

Now enters the Guardian as an opportunistic Main Stream Media (the MSM is portrayed as highly derided by new media) element swooping in for the jackpot. Its editors strike up deals with Assange, who also brings in Der Spiegel and the New York Times, and set about analyzing, breaking down and narrativizing the think chunks of almost incomprehensible numbers and other data that was pratically 'dumped' by Manning on Assange. This proves to be a complex task and the experienced team of mainstream journalists take months to carefully sift through, contextualize, redact (where needed to protect lives)and break down what would otherwise have been a meaningless pile of numbers, acronyms and random figures.

This task could only have been done by experienced journalists and this is consequently where the Guardian's smugness shines out the most. At one point, elaborating on the glories of MSM journalists, it gushes 'they could be the genuine information professionals, standing out in an otherwise worthless universe of internet froth'. Except of course, they couldn't. 'Cablegate' and the 'biggest journalistic scoop since the the Pentagon Papers and possibly the biggest scoop of all time' would never have been possible without the so called 'internet froth' it so callously refers to.

Moments like that are rare however, and most of the book tries to stick to telling the story as it is. It is only when the authors' (senior Guardian journos both) personal views and observations come frothing to the top that the pith creates a bitter taste in your mouth. Otherwise, Assange is described in rather enigmatic terms. He is a bit of a mystery. But he is also a bit naive, arrogant and hubristic. Highly intelligent and charming, he has a tendency for paranoia and to engage in cloak and dagger behavior.

The book reads like a spy novel and is slightly prone to purplish prose and melodrama here and there. But it was compelling and had me glued until the end. A good journalistic account of the Wikileaks saga so far. It also discusses the allegations of sexual assault leveled at Assange and the ensuing chaos. It ends somewhere before his extradition to Sweden. All in all a good read, but for a more in depth look at the man himself and a behind the scenes look at the inner workings of Wikileaks i daresay we could do worse that wait for Assange's upcoming biography. Rather snortingly described in this book as having 'an ambitions deadline' for April 2011.

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### **Irene Niessen says**

I started reading this book a few years ago and somehow never finished it. The whole Snowden affair made me want to pick it up again and I do not regret it. To start with, it is a nice piece of juicy journalism. More importantly, it shows us there is no such thing as a public secret. For me it is not so much the content of what is revealed by whistleblowers like Snowden and Assange that supprises me. It is the extent to what governments go through in order to keep it quiet. And it is so unnecessary too. For example, The New York

Times published an article as early as 2005, in which it revealed the illegal eavesdropping activities of the NSA. Having been educated in International Relations the revelations of Manning and Snowden are not news to me and do not reveal really surprising stuff. But as the book rightly points out, these documents are proof of the afore mentioned "public secrets" and give historians like me a nice close look in the world of diplomacy.

The book also reveals how similar the US approach is toward Snowden and Assange. Both have been drastically isolated by US diplomacy and have virtually become stateless, sought after suspects. Let's not start about Bradley Manning and the degrading treatment he receives from government and military alike. These men paid a very high price, the ultimate and universal faith of whistleblowers, even in the supposedly free democratic Western world. It sure makes one realize that becoming a whistleblower is not a very wise thing to do, however brave and ideologically correct the goals may be.

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## Xing Chen says

Sharp, systematic, chronological narrative that focuses on the effects of WikiLeaks' whistleblowing activities, from a global political perspective. Much space devoted to succinct descriptions of the leaked documents and their impact on international relations and government policy. Written from a relatively detached "outsider's" point of view and based on verifiable information, with little of the sensationalized personality profiling and gratuitous speculation that afflicts many biographies- likely a happy consequence of the fact that both authors are professional journalists.

The objective and matter-of-fact treatment particularly befits the sections relating to alleged sexual crimes- rather than moralizing over sordid details, or playing up the charges and the evidence behind them, it brings the ambiguity and culture-specificity of sexual overtures and relations into focus, demonstrating how easily miscommunication and divergent perspectives and expectations create a minefield out of the rarely-openly-discussed topic of casual sex.

A small amount of repetition in turns of phrase and quotes- could have benefitted from tighter editing- but overall quite coherent and consistent in style and content, especially considering that authorship was shared between Leigh and Harding.

Found this a much more mature, disciplined piece of writing than *This Machine Kills Secrets* (the latter was less carefully edited, and focused on digital security, hacker culture, and personality clashes within WikiLeaks and its collaborators- hence occupying a different niche, with little overlap beyond the initial chapters).

For the record, I abhor descriptions of Manning as 'naïve'- she had the courage, foresight, principles, and inner clarity, to bring about concrete change at great personal expense- it is those who distort her intentions and deprecate her contributions, or who believe that they can suppress such spirits- these are the naïve ones.

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