



The Leaky Hourglass

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The Leaky Hourglass: Confessions of a Leak Facilitator

By Peter Higgins

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This is a work of fiction.

Table of Contents

- [1. Fair Play in Death](#)
- [2. The Beginning](#)
- [3. I am a Conduit](#)
- [4. White Hair](#)
- [5. Puppies with Machine Guns](#)
- [6. The Leaking Business](#)
- [7. Organization of One](#)
- [8. The Life of Neo](#)
- [9. The Productive Fifth](#)
- [10. Unauthorized Biography](#)
- [11. The Cold Brick of Jail](#)
- [12. Cyber Vikings](#)
- [13. Berlin](#)
- [14. Censorship](#)
- [15. Review of the Legal Stuff](#)
- [16. The Thing in Sweden](#)
- [17. The Day My World Changed](#)
- [18. The Current State of Play](#)
- [19. Addressing World Leaders](#)
- [20. No More to Say](#)

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Prologue

I don't know how this will end so for the sake of history I will state my story as it happened so that history might judge me for what really happened, and not based on the propaganda of my critics.

Hubris was what brought me to where I am now in the Ecuadorian embassy. Some might say it was my immature idealism that blinded me from the reality of real-world nation-state power politics, and my ignorance of how entities behave when protecting that power. I failed to take into account how far an organization will go to ensure their power remains undiminished from any troublesome truths that might hinder efficient production of maintaining that power, or inhibit the achievement of quotas within a pertinent timeframe. Fueled with lofty thoughts and occasional wafts of marijuana in my ivory tower, from my imagination I programmed the submission platform: a trumpet with a mouthpiece that remained anonymous, and unstained by the burdens of identity so that only the words and not the person might be seen. The idea, as simple as it was, lured those who were exposed to hidden truths and gave them protection to speak out in altruistic bursts so the world could know the truth of events for the benefit of rectifying these wrongs. This new type of anonymous whistleblower exposes the half-truths and propaganda spin that misrepresents reality.

I sit here in the embassy with my freedom seriously infringed, a lukewarm existence that is like imprisonment. But I am safe. I trust my friends in the Ecuadorian government and am thankful for their pledge to me. They know I want the world to become a place where anyone can communicate unhindered across the information superhighway. The end goal is to have a transparent forum to access primary documents dealing with the most important issues of our day. I saw it as a sort of citizen government where we all could be earnest in how we create policy designed to help us all. My aim is to harness direct access to the raw materials of history being written. My hope is to help speed up the process of finding solutions so we all might be able to come closer to a more objective view of the events defining our generation.

This vision however was flawed from the beginning, but I only realize that now. And that flaw was mine.

1

Fair Play in Death

London, UK 2012

A Ghost Memoir

The summer of 2010 was full of fast days and work-filled nights. I spent my time polishing and perfecting the submission platform, making sure the interface was intuitive enough so that anyone could navigate as to how to send raw data packets to the website. I generated awareness

through chatrooms like 4Chan. A safe online oasis can exist. On 4Chan it was always the same: smart computer nocturnals exchanging opinions about the latest events. Taking a side against evil was always the beginning point: that point of orientation that takes down and overcomes evil. Was the United States too easy a target simply because they actively sought to protect their international interests? Were they not acting rationally as a nation state by ensuring the flow of capital as taxable revenue in order to foster a stronger global security force? Playing world policeman is a logistical labyrinth requiring secure channels of communication, and in such a labyrinth the sheer volume of communications between parties were bound to have areas that were not secure, and some who thought what they saw were past the bounds of legality. Would they expose the criminal activity of those in office? Noble, righteous packets of communications far outweigh the criminal. So when there is evidence of serious criminality that reveals government boldfaced lies, how can this not be brought to light?

And can these activities be justified by wearing the national security hat?

But the essential question is: Are we living in a better world now that so many leaks have been published and read by the international online reading body? Have these new truths not shocked and exposed governments around the world and stirred revolution and movements for change? Were some of these exposures just like revealing festering wounds that needed sunlight and air? With more great minds now aware of the real operations of the global engine, there should be more contributions of ideas pooled and dissected for the betterment of that engine, making it possible for a hyper-evolution point in world history. A hyper leap.

Indeed this fifth estate will be remembered as the open-source information exchange era. It was a time when we all had wholesale, un-redacted primary sources available for those who know how to find them.

When thinking of how the leaks are an impetus for more transparency for all bodies, whether governments or corporate bodies, if you break the law then should they not be held accountable? Does this not curtail leaks by scaring these bodies from committing more illegal acts? Yet it is us – the average middle-class Joe - who are left at a disadvantage because the playing field is skewed in favor of the big fish. Granted any nation state has every right to improve its station through mutually favorable agreements that operate within the law, but when some agreements fall outside the law and hurt the average taxpayer or the environment and the perpetrators are left alone because of lack of transparency of reporting agencies, it is bad karma in our collective vibe and upsets the grace for which we all strive.

Wrongs and policies that intrude into our personal lives are issues that all citizens have a right to know, and so it should be brought to our attention.

Why is there theft of personal data without just cause?

Why do some international bodies operate with so much guile?

What about integrity and fair play and good sportsmanship?

Yet in this depersonalized world of online anonymity, drones and soldiers who grew up on video games shoot real people expertly looking at a screen hundreds or thousands of miles away. A target when eliminated is one less bad guy and generates more points so you could get to the next

level. And a video clip can be a game-changer as evidence of wrongdoing. A helicopter gunship can inflict damage on a cluster of people on the street below holding cameras.

These errors in judgment should be investigated, and they should be regarded as bad form by the soldiers themselves. Fair play in battle is as old as our species. Even animals have a mercy level. There is a fair play even in death. But from what we have learned from the leaks, this traditional etiquette appears to have waned.

Or been sidestepped.

2

The Beginning

For the record and to make it clear: I had a great childhood, carefree and full of adventure. Slandering tongues and loose pens have created a myth of my difficult upbringing but they couldn't be further from the truth.

My first years were full of freedom to pursue my exploring curiosity. Australia was open and free and overflowing with abundance. Wherever we lived there were rivers or forests or the ocean to explore, and always a new school to conquer. Starting at a new school is tough, but after the first few moves I soon got the hang of it but it was at the cost of my demeanor of indifference. It made others work harder to earn my respect. I saw so much life in such a short amount of time and at such a young age that I soon developed a shell to protect myself from the bullies and the cynics I encountered at each school. Emotionally I grew older. Whether it was mild indifference or nonchalance, I still carry that with me.

It's to safeguard my sanity.

I must say that I did miss not having a brother during those early years, but then most who don't have a brother would have the same feeling. When you're young and adventuring you need a wingman.

I was usually able to find a wingman.

But after a while I explored on my own, going far and wearing out my shoes before I outgrew them. I had scrapes and bruises from my childhood from the jungles and creeks of the 1970s Australian coast. I came to respect the land as having the trump card over man, and because of this needs to be protected. This is the foundation of my belief: that Mother Nature must be protected from corporate force and government incompetence at all cost. How could Japan let Fukushima happen? How could the government be so arrogant to build a nuclear power plant so close to the coast where there have been earthquakes for centuries? This case isn't a case of accountability; it's a case of insane irresponsibility that will result in the killing of millions over the course of decades. Cancerous chemicals pumped into the Pacific took only two years to have a significant impact on the health of the fish stock along the west coast of North America.

If I were a surfer from California or a fisherman on Vancouver Island, I'd be really pissed.

I get too emotional to discuss the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. All that oil was pushed down underwater where it killed an entire ecosystem, which is now officially called a dead zone. The long-term effects of destruction from corporate incompetence casts a shadow over the health of the region. Over the next few decades the fallout of this dead zone will be felt throughout the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

These events are so monstrous to the world population that fines or imprisonment are not applicable. It is a form of slow self-murder through self-made poison. The irony is that these same corporate executives and government leaders are not only poisoning their countrymen but also their own families, which makes these modern catastrophes some sort of über-crime - a vast murder of millions.

With more technology and mechanical innovations, mankind's mistakes thunder disproportionately from similar mistakes in the past. A spilt shipload of turpentine in the sea two hundred years ago had a minor impact compared to that of the Exaldez oil spill of 1996 in Canada's Arctic. Something so large in such an ecologically sensitive area pales in comparison to spilt turpentine of previous centuries, and it also pales in comparison to the devastation of Fukushima in the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. In fact I believe Fukushima is so tragic that it is referred to in the Bible when it describes the seas turning red with death.

The environmental ramifications are biblical in proportion.

And still, as I write this memoir, this confession, countless millions of liters of radioactive waste still seeps into the Pacific Ocean. The irresponsible and criminal missteps of mankind are killing life on the planet. We programmers and online researchers, us mortal men, must have a say to prevent this from happening again. As a global populace we all deserve to know what's happening beyond the camera lens the prevent future Fukishimas.

But back then, during my childhood, the Great Barrier Reef was still alive and full of vibrant colors. The Australian waters were like living in another world. The world still had its innocence, a time when Australian streets were safe and the tap water was safe to drink. There was no fracking and no flooding and no soil erosion and no oil spills. These manmade missteps had not yet happened. Nature did not yet have laws protecting her so corporate and government greed had more elbow room. But there remains something called immoral behavior. The pursuit of profits is a healthy thing and necessary to survive and flourish but it can also fuel irrational and destructive behavior.

Perhaps manifesting some deeply ingrained instinct for survival, or an inclination to gamble, some people have it in them to go beyond the realm of decorum. In these moments one of two things can happen: either there are no serious long-term side effects, or there are. If there is long-term destruction to nature's fabric then their names should go on a list, and this list is of those who are responsible for polluting the global ecosystem. To a murderous degree.

The profiteers must be accountable for sullyng their neighbor's drinking water.

As a kid I remember thinking at the time that there were no serious discussions about the underlying causes of these major environmental incidents. Crashing supertankers and nuclear meltdowns. It made me feel helpless. And angry.

It was only a news report and then it disappeared from mainstream news programs. The newspapers stopped printing articles that updated the quantity of destruction to our environment. I didn't at the time know about lobby groups and the power of corporate money silencing transparency. All I knew was that the deafening lack of sound whispered of conspiracy and collusion of some sort. There was a whiff of injustice from cutting off accessibility to information and thereby silencing any constructive input for rescue or clean-up. I wanted to fly to northern Canada and save the oil-soaked birds I saw on the news, but now with the operational submission platform on the website so accessible and the information we receive through it, we have a more immediate interaction with those who have the power to solve the problem.

My generation grew up with the Internet so we all learned to contribute without the self-consciousness of face or voice. Only the content of your words make up who you are. The internet can be a 24-hour costume party with countless hidden channels full of other masked people.

The beginning of computers for me was like others my age: it began with the Commodore 64. How could it not? The cumbersome machine was cool looking in those days. It was a cool color and looked sleek compared to IBM's PET. But there was no interface as we know it today, only commands. No mouse. But for me that was intriguing because it demanded that the user learn a new language to operate it, which seemed like a fair trade to me. The first thing I ever did was execute the print feature. BASIC was easy because the commands were the exact words you were doing: PRINT, GOTO, and END. Brilliant. I didn't realize it at the time that by being taught the basics of binary computer language I would evolve to become part of the first crop of programmers, and some of us hackers. As BASIC morphed into the new languages like C+ and C++, we would all dive into a world defined by a sleeker language and more powerful functionality.

Very soon it became clear to me that simplicity of programming was an art.

What I liked the most was how such a small number of words and symbols could generate such a large effect. Playing around with the endless loop trick had its novelty long past normal because the potential of the idea fascinated me. And it was the root of how I was able to create the untraceability of whistleblowers. To make a leak untraceable, I simply created 13 endless loops interwoven with each other that could not be broken. The route of transportation for the submitted message is flooded with millions and millions of other dummy messages so that the real intended message from the whistleblower to us is impossible to find. Too much cyber clutter.

This online confusion was created from a BASIC endless loop. Thank you BASIC. Thank you Commodore 64.

But most of us who started at the beginning were obsessed with the power of the UNIX red book. There is no long introduction or lengthy explanations, only the barebones language of the operating language of the early Internet. Just like commands in BASIC could instruct your computer's operating system, UNIX gave the user the commands to talk to other websites parked on that ever-growing common superhighway in cyberspace.

Back then the number of websites was very small. For its first ten years the Internet didn't really work - anything before USB was more or less incompatible when interacting with another

network or hardware. And there was no bandwidth. It was a very frustrating time for all of us who knew how it operated because we also knew how it should operate. The Internet as we know it today was still a good 20 years off in the future. The Internet bubble that burst in 1997 was because the idea and potential of the personal computer didn't meet up with the realities and abilities of the hardware and the software. Choking bandwidth and a lack of global compatibility that we know today.

It was all typing back then in the eighties. To me the mouse still feels new. And I still marvel at the thinking that created the mouse interface. Brilliant. Xerox innovators thinking outside the box. And then strategically employed by Bill Gates and Paul Allen that defined Microsoft Windows' interface. That was when computers became truly international. The mouse is colorblind and illiterate but an expert in intuitive pictography and innate symbolism. Its creators mastered the language of symbols to convey meaning. (My favorite is the "undo" button). How cool is that little backwards-pointing arrow? Who suggested it be rounded and denote going back in time? Some hippie living in northern California?

This was the early computer science I came from. Knowing this ethos gives an investigator insight into my thinking today. I'm convinced the rigors and rules of computer language gave my wild childhood some much-needed structure - a new cyber reality that was always reliable and unchanging. It soon represented a world that was quantifiable and just, pure and untainted by hysteria. And it was accountable for errors. If a command was incorrect, it wouldn't work. Therefore things needed to be precise. And in that precision is where I threw myself.

I spent hours in nuance and creativity that happened within this Tron World of early make-believe. We all knew more and more people would discover this esoteric world with each passing day.

It was a world I repeatedly returned to throughout my unsettled youth, remaining the one constant and only unchanging and reliable loyal friend in the face of hardship and suffering.

And then the *Mendax* court case arrived. After that my wife left me and took my son. Everything before these two events was my time of innocence. I hadn't gauged how real life could descend into confusion and strife, nor was I aware of how good the early days were until they were gone.

3

I am a Conduit

I don't want to get involved in finger pointing or name-dropping so I will keep it general. But this is not to say I will sacrifice any truth. What I can do is only tell you how it was. It is up to you to accept this record of confession as a primary source unredacted and untampered with any external force. The hand of propaganda has not sullied these words. Let there be no Council of Nicaea convened when discussing my story. I will not be the product of a virgin birth or try to sell you on the trinity. What I am is a visionary. What I'm not is a politician. I am a philosopher who got the idea right but who lacked patience, foresight and finesse to redact some primary source material, namely the Afghan war logs. It can be argued that my rash publication of these files did result in the harm of numerous operatives. And for that I am at fault. And I grieve.

Mendax was a cool name, even for those who didn't know what it meant. I met some pretty smart dudes during the early years, before the mass of modern acronyms had been invented, when typing was still respected as a skill that should be done with style.

It was the murders in Kenya that made me mad, and never really left me. That anger carried decisions to publish unredacted documents that has led directly to the peril I face today. At the time I didn't think we were getting through enough. I was still confident with my submission platform but wanted more leaks, more people to act and put themselves on the line. In this I might have been too overzealous, but I operated with justified zeal that was required to achieve maximum impact. Perhaps some caution at this point would have served me better. The books by Solzheizen and the essays by philosophers I had read spurred me deeper into the fire the closer I got to the flame.

In a way I became the monkey who triggers the latch and gets his mini-dose of cocaine over and over.

I had come so far and didn't want to be pushed off my newly acquired online soapbox.

Philosophically it was the idea of redacting that I refuted. I missed the practical side of it. In practice the effects of publishing unredacted documents were destructive to unsung heroes and operatives within international bureaucracy. There was tremendous collateral damage. Many would have remained unnamed until I published them. But this was done in fervor of protest against the coup that was happening by my German co-worker and his accomplice in Berlin. I realize only now in hindsight that their steady, grounded heads had ultimately entrenched against this reckless and foolish act of whistleblower publication.

I hadn't yet come to see where I stood on the world platform.

I hadn't had time to see where I was in the midst of the hurricane.

Nor could I see I was about to wreck it all by making an emotional decision rather than a cool, detached objectivity, especially with such sensitive data. I had flown too close to the sun. The German saw I was about to scorch my Promethean feathers against the fire burning in front of us all. But I couldn't see it, or perhaps I did see it but I wanted to get closer to the sun and the life-giving force, one more mile closer to that great ball of energy that warms the universal marrow.

Almost immediately the publication brought me misery. My freedom of movement was shrouded by shadowy agents following me to pubs and cafés where I had operated under the radar for years. But now landing in airports became a harrowing affair. I was ill-prepared for the sophisticated techniques of the world's best surveillance teams. And then I inadvertently employed my naiveté to inflame the ramifications of the firestorm I had created. Soon my legs would shake under my denims when I knew I was being watched, my skinny wrists commanding keystrokes at my laptop a constant reminder of how inadequate I was to take on such a beast of power in real life. Some powder in my food or a spiked drink could leave me vulnerable to exploitation.

And this is close to what transpired only weeks after the publication of the unredacted war logs.

They became the Pentagon Papers of my generation. I didn't see that coming. Nor did I see I was about to lose the goodwill and Robin Hood persona from my supporters. Almost overnight I was attacked by the world press. At the time I internally blamed my German co-worker for my

irrational zeal, but I know accept that it was my fault. The self-administered pressure to adhere to my principles at all costs was fierce. I chose to be loyal to the ideal of untampered primary source publication, and in doing so I refused to compromise as a publisher. Especially of information of the sensitive nature.

I wish my German co-worker had been more diplomatic and loyal to my ideals. If so maybe this whole thing could have been avoided.

And this is what keeps me up at night: the contrast of how things were in 2010 and how things could have been so different if I hadn't made some choices. I had yet to appreciate how threatening my submission platform would become to those who hold power. At the time I assured myself that I only provided the lectern from where to display hidden truths. The whistleblower breaks the law and I don't know who it is. I told myself I am a journalist who publishes using the available technologies. I am not responsible for the material. I facilitate. I am a conduit. Nothing more. Don't blame me. I am invisible.

4

White Hair

Like so many other people, I fell in love during my later years of high school. Brenda was my first love. I still love her despite the serious scar tissue of our break up and the subsequent custody battles for our son. It was traumatic. My online world has always followed strict, clearly defined rules but the application my rules to life fell short more often than not. I thought my wife would stick by my side no matter what. Trust and loyalty are the most valued traits for me in any relationship. My ex-wife left me just as I was being charged with hacking offenses, of which I'm sure is still well known across the web. Mendax, despite being noble in his outlaw deeds, was charged with enough criminal activity to be sentenced to 20 years.

One of my co-hackers turned state's evidence against me so I bore the brunt.

It is true that I was convicted of 24 counts of computer crimes but instead of fighting it I pled guilty because I was told it was the wisest thing to do at the time. But I still harbor resentment for how the prosecutors painted the picture of what I did. It still stands as a paradigm-shift moment in my life because I felt the sting of just oppression. I had never been exposed to the bitter side of human nature. In fact I didn't see it as part of human nature at all. I thought it was something that was taught – a learned behavior that stood out from man's natural state of ingrained happiness.

I can honestly say now that it is because of my experience of my hacking trial and the court appearances arguing for custody of my son, that I chose to fight against tyranny.

This tyranny of the spirit.

One could argue that without these experiences I never would have become so involved with cryptography or anything to do with the rubber-hose technology, and leaks of any kind.

How my life would have been different!

One side of me is proud of what I have achieved. Yes it is true I exposed weak spots in firewalls of corporations and telecommunication hubs and government agencies but had not destroyed any files or otherwise wrecked anything of importance. I spent two years waiting for my court case, thinking of how the argument might go, and helpless at being vulnerable to the temperament of the judge. The judge's interpretation. It all caused daily uproar in my mind and made me very nervous. And it was during this time that my hair started to turn white.

I internalized the emotional turbulence to such a degree that it manifest in the color of my hair.

When I met my biological father around this time I made a point of checking out his hair only to see that my white hair was not genetic. I'm pretty sure it was my emotional state that had caused my hair to turn white. I had done it to myself. My aesthetic disfigurement was my own doing. But like so much of life, I did all that worrying and things worked out. Sort of. I paid a fine and didn't have to spend any time in prison. Staying out of the joint was my primary goal because that scared me to the bone. I love my freedom too much - freedom of information and freedom to live. They are the fundamental rights of humankind.

Because time is the most important thing a man can spend.

One must have unrestricted freedom to act to maximize their productive time. Quite simple really. Real Mendax stuff...

So the end result of my childhood hacking and my first love was a broken heart.

Just because some misfortune befalls a man doesn't justify a reaction that causes worse destruction than the first cause.

Herein lies why I am so passionate about accountability. Who was the engineer who made the decision to build Fukushima nuclear plant on the water's edge in a well-known tidal wave zone? Expose the first wrong to eliminate the possible wrong produced from the first cause. We need a management system that uses transparent logic. If it hurts those who do the first wrong and helps the countless innocents who bear the brunt of ill-gotten effects, then it's good. Environmental health is a primary right to all citizens of the world.

5

Puppies with Machine Guns

I was troubled for years after my divorce. Being prevented from raising my son on a day-to-day basis just because my ex-wife was bitter was very difficult for me. It chewed me up every morning when I got out of bed. Constantly reminded I was of this void so I made a conscious decision to study mathematics at university as a way to get my mind off of the pain. It was a good decision because my naturally curious mind found an outlet that allowed my mind to jump forward and my battered heart to heal.

I threw myself into the farthest corners of math and then programming language, finding comfort in its quantifiable certitudes. I found solace in numbers and knew I could apply algorithms into the code I continued to write for my own projects. But I never did graduate because there was no

need to get sidetracked with the final few credits. So I took work as a programmer in Melbourne, trying to earn enough to pay the alimony, to the person who had destroyed my life.

It felt good creating cyber-code. I could build systems that ran programs that produced end results. I had a knack for it. When I learned HTML I built a website in an hour. But writing HTML code was always awkward because it was an inefficient language and needed to evolve into a more user-friendly format. But for the languages after BASIC like C+ and C++ that simplicity would disappear despite becoming a mammoth global code understood by all. Following in the shoes of USB compatibility, it was inevitable that this shift in programming language would eventually come.

But this created its problems too, especially security. With a universal code more hackers can undermine your firewall and hack into your private intranet, thus corporate espionage became a more pressing issue, especially government-to-government communication. Guys like John McAfee knew the cyberscape was morphing so he sold his security software and spent the rest of his life being a playboy and adventurer. He knew it would be another decade before his code would become redundant. He made his money while the sun was still shining. He had the innate faculty to know it was the right time.

I lack this faculty.

I say this because the timing of publishing those unredacted files could not have been worse timing. We still had all those unsearchable files on the website I could have worked on. Now, with so much time on my hands, I look back on these decisions I made with more perspective. It is a dangerous pastime because idleness is the devil's workshop, but it is not the devil I'm running from. It is the cold splash of truth that hooks its claws into my skin and doesn't let me go. If there are incongruities with truth, anxiety weighs down shoulders and causes insomnia.

But when I get insomnia I stay up all night exploring the Web.

It's an interesting place if you know how to navigate where to go.

But I do fear for the future of our search freedom of what the World Wide Web has to offer.

I spent lots of time on encryption during university mainly because I was fully aware of its wide applicability. By understanding the porous nature of the Internet as an information-sharing interconnected system I knew encryption was the logical evolution in computer language. And über-language if you will. By protecting data from prying eyes, a new landscape came into focus: one of cyberforts and walled-in data honeycombs in an electronic kingdom where the populace is made up of data pockets. The data pocket named "Collateral Murder" has its meaning from norms of war and the Geneva Code, and it was perpetrated by youngsters with guns playing video games with real bullets. The world watched a Reuters' journalist mowed down while helping the wounded. What was revealed was how so few could wreak such havoc on so many and so quickly.

Puppies with machine guns are dangerous for all. Johnny Depp was right about that.

The Leaking Business

It takes a lot to manage a whistleblowing website. The submissions, passwords and constantly evolving the interface, takes time. And disposing of SPAM long before email filters and junk mail. SPAM was like a weed that slowed down Internet traffic. Nasty stuff. Pays well. Never did it. Looked at it as bad form.

One might point out that if I'm for restrictions on SPAM then isn't that a slippery slope towards censorship on the Internet? No. Even in the most laissez-faire environments there is still the need for firemen and hospitals. Just as in life, there should be some restrictions in exchange for the right to live in cyberspace unmolested. Cyberspace is a worldwide library and all peoples should have access to information that will further aid in their personal development and foster cooperation on behalf of humankind. It is the connecting thread that unites awareness and shared knowledge.

For those with sensitive data, it's best to stop all electronic recording of classified events. Keep it offline.

It is the only safe way to conduct special operations and ensure the peace in the world.

Old school.

The Internet is Main Street and everyone has an equal opportunity to locate on a great piece of real estate downtown. Traffic is there for those who offer an in-demand data pocket. Is that data pocket a book? A YouTube video clip? Or some random email sent when angry? A report of a clandestine meeting between government and corporation that undercuts the laws of supply and demand? Some classified documents from the Pentagon? What about all the sought-after Scientology booklets that costs millions to purchase? And maybe you would be interested to read about how the NSA watches everyone who has an online presence? Is this justifiable in light of how it serves to protect the citizenry?

From what? Terrorism?

To be honest, the website was designed for leaks like those from Edward Snowden. Those files show how government bodies spy globally via all the tools of electronic media. A master harvester of data in an effort to prevent danger to the people, the United States government leads the way in the employment of electronic snooping and hacking as a weapon. Like peeking at an opponent's hand in poker, it gives you a one up on your options. Played well with reliable information, you can gain more.

Knowing Doc Holliday's hand is the only way you could beat him at Texas Hold'em.

He was the king.

He was Doc Holliday.

Edward Snowden played it well. His stroke of luck in Moscow saved him from danger living in Cuba so close to his hostile homeland. Panama too is too close, but Brazil would do for Snowden as well as Russia. In my case, after the prosecutor dropped the case against me in Stockholm, I

should have left the United Kingdom for Iceland or Ecuador. I remember waking up during that week and thinking for the first time that they could re-open the case because of comments I made after the first ruling. Before being questioned initially, I had said I didn't know the two women involved in the accusations and then the case was dropped. That day I was asked by a journalist afterwards about the ruling and for some reason I came clean and said I did know the two women named in the suit. At the time I immediately regretted what I said and only faintly realized at the moment that I had given the prosecution the ammo they needed to reopen the case against me. During the next few nights I couldn't sleep because I was fear they might come after me with new questions.

Five days later, on the following Monday I think, my lawyer called me to say the charges were back on and that I had to go to Sweden to answer their questions.

During that week I should've flown somewhere safe.

I will assume that the reader of this confession knows something about my situation and how I ended up where I am today. So I'm not amiss to admit I could have risked flying to Sweden to answer their questions during those first few weeks before the US government had a case against me.

If I had just flew there during that first week and answered their questions with vague but true answers then where would I be today? It still bothers me that I didn't take a flight to Stockholm with my lawyer and answer the questions frankly and with council present.

That might have resulted in the withdrawal of charges from the female accusers. The question of whether the United States had enough evidence of operatives who had been killed as a direct result of the leaks, was still in play. In other words I might have had an opportunity to answer the questions and then leave Sweden for a country with no extradition treaty with the United States, like Ecuador or Iceland. I know of a few countries that would be great to live and manage the website.

Even now, in 2015, this is what I strive for. This is why I hope.

John McAfee had it right in Belize until the local strong arm of the law pinched him a little too hard for bribes. Rebelling like he did probably saved his life. How many rich men throughout history have been murdered for their money? Too many to count.

Suffice to say if there was a moment during the whole Swedish mess, that's still a mess, then that might have been the moment.

"Yes, okay. I will come to Sweden to answer questions." But even then I knew the States would somehow get their hands on me. They were royally angry and embarrassed because things were already starting to go awry for them. The Arab Spring was beginning to unfold, which was - as anyone who was there and aware - a direct result of the revelations posted on the website.

I like the idea of living in Quito where it is protected by walls of mountains lines by volcanoes. I envision living in a gated compound, modest but secure, where my guard dogs could sniff out any intruder. I foresee me living in peace managing the website, eating well and having select friends, free of concern of being kidnapped and taken to America. Full cyber hook up and equipment with my motorbike outside where it could take four hours to reach the beaches on the Pacific Ocean where no one would know me. That's what I want now: to be anonymous in life.

No more global spotlight.

No more fame.

No more speeches.

No more playing the leaking game that has robbed me of these last three years at the embassy. London still wears at me because if I ever do sneak out of here Scotland Yard will be the first to arrest me for jumping bail. They'd rule me offside and lock me up for six months. Or longer. Only then would I be handed over to the Swedes with their hyper sensitive laws against sexual assault.

And then once let go there I'd be sent to jail in the United States and never get out alive.

In Sweden I would be questioned about the allegations and, if convicted on two of the charges, be given a five-year sentence. I serve three and a half years in Swedish prison and then when "free" I'd be escorted to the Americans where they present me with a grand jury indictment asking for the death penalty for over 100 counts of life endangerment by treason. The Espionage Act will be used to lock me up for the rest of my life.

The charges and the trial don't matter. I would never be free again. And there could be some suffering too. The military would take swipes at me for putting their warrior brothers at risk. I would be the computer geek pencil neck using a keyboard as a weapon, and they would be seasoned soldiers armed with real machine guns heavy with loaded ammo with thick wrists and muscled forearms.

So there is only one course of action for me right now: To have faith that my current course of asylum is upheld and the charges are stayed while escorted out of the United Kingdom to my new adopted country of Ecuador, the home base of the Spanish Empire in the New World. Freedom and anonymity aplenty.

7

An Organization of One

I used to tell people there were hundreds of volunteers but really all you need is one person to ensure a site's vital functionality. But as things developed and grew in importance I did require more hands at the keyboards. I like my website's design but I did also like the simplicity of Google and the effectiveness towards action on an uncluttered interface. It was fun at the beginning but then with more data came the need for a searchable database. Categorizing and classifying the documents was a huge undertaking so with the extra hands and with diligence it was completed.

This might be one thing I'm truly proud of.

There is an entire body of historical records organized on an electronic platform that can be accessed easily and intuitively. In this way I contributed to the historical canon without actually touching the documents. Like good service at a restaurant, I'm a waiter serving up data pockets wearing white gloves.

I never wanted to tamper with the data. In my hacking court case (the WANK hack: Worms Against Nuclear Killers), there was the breach of security but nothing destructive about it. It scared system administrators as it should have done, but otherwise did no damage. It was an infiltration into the system and spelled W-A-N-K on the screen, and simulated files being deleted. But what was so surprising at the time was that this hack had been carried out by a few young hackers from Down Under. It showed the international spoke of the Internet and that no matter where you are within the Internet, there is a common language spoken.

And if one knew this language one could exercise this international spoke.

Not wanting to destroy data was what set me apart from other leak facilitators. My fear of being accused of being partial, and my fidelity to the ideal of impartiality, prevented me from compromising on the question of redacting documents that potentially could expose an innocent worker to danger. Is it not their fault for keeping their data so unsecured and open to theft?

Or is it simply the same as it has always been except now the newspaper publisher is online and the paper is electronic?

But this is also what led to my downfall (if you want to call it that). Staunchly sticking to my belief in no tampering with primary sources, it has put me in danger. The true definition of primary source is *au naturale* – exactly as it is when the author hands it off to the library or university or newspaper. No one has the right to put his or her grubby hands on another person's creation.

It's an offside in my book.

So in this vein of thinking came the idea of running an information submission organization. Well, that was easy. Create a few characters in the plot with their own email addresses and keep them lively with sufficient pluck and ploy. It was fun to be honest. I enjoyed being more than one person at a time. Multiple sources of communication with outsiders gave the impression it was an organization with an army of supporters.

I don't know how it would have worked out with me and Germany though. I was always more comfortable in Iceland than I was anywhere else, except for Ecuador. I loved Quito. Right in the middle of the world and so high up in the Andes Mountains, it was a surreal place that had a very good vibe for me. Germany for me still had ghosts of the war swirling in the ethers. Heavy ghosts, dried blood in the soil and all that. Ecuador had imperfect roads and imperfect motorcycles in a perfect land of mountains and flatlands and beaches.

I never knew my life and well-being would depend on Ecuador.

To tell the truth I never did make a final decision on where I would go. I never clearly outlined my emergency plan B before it was too late. I should have taken the first flight out of the UK after the charges were dropped but I wavered.

I had a misplaced trust in the integrity of the British legal system.

If I had had a clearly defined plan B – like for example Edward Snowden – then I could have reached for a pre-packed bag with passport and cash and clean socks and fly to South America. The charges would have still come but I would be free to travel to any country without an extradition treaty with Sweden or the United States.

Running the website could be done from any corner of the globe with an Internet connection. Despite thinking of it constantly I never made a final choice on the matter. The need to clearly define where I would plant myself still remained elusive. I pondered Iceland as a good place to set up shop but things took a sour turn when one of my aides turned on me.

It was this lack of clearly-defined-next-step that led me to step inside the Ecuadorian embassy.

In a way I dodged a bullet after the final appeal was dismissed, but in practice it is a dull life here, void of variety. For the first few years I could say I enjoyed the solace and the down time to start the party in Australia and write the books, and to mine the data and build a searchable database for the site. But now, with the lack of sunlight and the loosening of my teeth and creaking bones and weakened heart, I might end up walking out of here horribly crippled.

But how ironic that I no longer want the mantle and its trappings. I will be anonymous, as should all those who believe in transparency of data.

Let us not forget those days when a new level of knowledge was handed over to the reading public after publishing the war logs. I doubt the world needs the movement as much as it did in 2010. A watershed was reached and the tipping point hit. It was a monumental moment in history that resulted in revolution and regime change throughout the world, a continental shift in the global state. Creaks and battles and new ideas were brought into the mix to create new governments, and renewed agencies of justice to right the wrongs of the past.

During the Arab Spring there was a change in the geo-political power structure.

And perhaps the sharing of information engineered by the anonymous submission platform enabled some of this revolution to happen.

8

The Life of Neo

I identified with the character Neo in *The Matrix*. He freed people from the shackles of ignorance by showing them the truth so that the individual could have a choice. Without choice was it truly a democracy? Is society democratic and just when ones voice and free will is suffocated by monitoring agencies acquiring personal information without your permission? No, it is closer to a form of militant fascism. Your freedom to voice your true opinions and your free will are held ransom by the threat of persecution but those in power.

Dissenting voices are drowned out by the masses.

Censorship is the result of rigorous propaganda by the existing power structure, something that is difficult to erase or change.

Only those who have learned to think independently and have the courage to doubt pose a threat to the power structure.

Transparency into governments and powerful corporations guilty of crimes against the environment is avoided to maintain the corrupt status quo, keeping the populace in the dark like mushroom mammals.

In reference to Neo in *The Matrix*, his inquisitive nature and curiosity of man's place in the world led him down a path of investigation. Choosing the blue pill was never really an option for him. Neo needed the choice but he knew he could only pursue the path of the red pill even if it meant death.

He was driven to travel that road.

I, too, am like that.

I was driven to travel that road of inquisitive investigation.

Conspiracy theories dominated chatrooms with ideas as outrageous as they are clever for their creativity. Picking out the real chunks of accurate data is one of the products that comes from the anvil of free speech.

When Neo chose to know what the Matrix was, he began to see the world in a new way. After ingesting the red pill he could only see the truth. If he were alive today he would have seen that the World Trade Towers was an inside job, and that there were no weapons of mass destruction when NATO invaded Iraq in 2001. It was a different world than the one painted by the media landscape. He could see misinformation on a massive scale.

Leaked documents submitted to my website unveiled real truths that were ugly and reeked of human guile.

Since I am a self-confessed idealist I've fought with the question of making recommendations of some of the more interesting files to be read first. Otherwise the searcher of truth is starting in the middle of a large pile of hay with no directions to the needle.

The question of recommended links still have yet to be resolved in my mind.

Is it the editor-in-chief's choice?

Could that not show partiality by the items selected?

What files would others choose?

To what degree of importance is each file assigned?

How does this change with each person?

Following *The Matrix* metaphors, like Neo I find myself pinned down by Agent Smith. I have been manhandled into a corner through a comedy of errors, but it's not funny. The infringement on my freedom is real.

When Neo chose to engage in the real world away from his computer that's when the clean lines of good and evil blur. A gray squalor. I, too, have gone from a comfortable life of freedom to being confined in a restricted room smaller than 200 square feet.

And then there's the constant threat of food poisoning. The truth is I have so little control of the food I eat. For me this is a chronic worry.

And the scariest.

I know poisoning as the method of choice for so many murders. So many deaths are reported as a heart attack, but what prompted it? An untraceable injection? Tampered food? No trail, no prints. Done. Heart attack. Case closed. Hey, sometimes it happens. Eliminated without a trace.

Why use a sword?

Why draw blood?

Minimal footprint.

A benign, impartial website that uploads the truth.

Pure transparency.

No advertising.

No lobby groups.

No corporate sponsorship.

Just a site where the truth is shown.

Only contributors make the noise. If a contributor wants to brag about it on a monitored chatroom then you are asking to get caught. What can I do?

Yeah, oh, thank you for your submission. Take care. No, I didn't know the guy. He merely used our service vis-à-vis the submission platform.

How am I guilty of a crime?

Each contributor to the site must have his own reasons for leaking sensitive documentation. I remember feeling fear for the first time because some of the files were so sensitive in nature. I'm sure students of international relations one day will be reading these war logs and communications as real glimpses into *real politik* in the early 21st century. Primary source. *A priori*.

Some things should never be written down.

Some things are better uttered aloud than typing a record.

It is true that some files from our archive will become museum exhibits for the citizenry but sometimes the exhibits are a bit too raw. For example a helicopter gunship killing innocent journalists on the ground peppered by blatant cowboy gung-ho cheering holding the trigger far away from the splats of blood. A new form of warfare full of drones and remote control bomb-dropping is documented. These same videogame players are on the offensive with dragonfly-sized drones carrying enough sting with a poisoned dart could take down an adversary with precision.

Science fiction is having its own era, finally in the stage of becoming, where computers and the electronic interface will become the uniting force for mankind in war.

Where will this lead us?

When I play it out in my mind it always ends the same. Those who choose to know the truth and read leaked documents will be the ones who will form the foundation for the new regime in the wake of the west's destruction from economic ruin and overzealous fascist methods.

When thinking this way, I wonder if the leaks have crippled the greatest power world history has ever seen. I wonder if a fracture of trust occurred between the image of American integrity and the civilized countries of the world.

Canada is its most loyal ally, most of all. The UK, in prophecy, will be loyal to the end. A new caliphate will emerge across the Mediterranean where Christian power once flourished. If some countries became less threatened and thus less reliant on the United States they might be more inclined to engage in trade with their neighbors creating new trade routes.

Local populations flourish and new military powers grow.

Leaked classified documents informing people what is happening via social media has ushered in a new era.

Maybe the new era will become a world where local militias bind together to fight for food and justice in a post-apocalyptic age.

But at all costs we must protect the freedom of Internet communication. Without it and with printed newspapers a thing of the past, we lose access to truth.

Truth will always be the catalyst to evolution of societies.

Without Internet access to the real world, a new level of isolation will occur, when local groups will bind together to become self-sufficient like those characters from Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* living in *Galt's Gulch*. Independent communities will form creating micro-countries resorting to grassroots law and essential community services, bound by truths shared without Big Brother.

But Big Brother has its claws curled in deep.

On a personal note, I always liked to see myself as the philosopher in *Atlas Shrugged*. I identified more with him than anyone else in all the novels I have read so far. And of course I was Howard Roark too during the reading of her greatest book *The Fountainhead*. The builder.

He built it and they arrived.

He put his vision into reality.

Howard Roark became who he was.

Have I?

Is this as far as my contribution goes?

Are there more data pockets out there relevant to writing history?

And like Neo, perhaps my role had been defined long before I was born?

Will my life be remembered for providing leaks that led to a revolution of thinking, culminating with Snowden?

The cat was out of the bag.

The smoking gun was at hand. Teetering jitters murmured from the American corner in the wreckage that followed.

I believe this readjustment in power relations was needed to maintain a more realistic playing field.

9

The Productive Fifth

I'm always asked about my core beliefs. Some have suggested I write a manifesto to explain why I view the world as I do. The truth is that my manifesto has already been written, in bits and pieces here and there, in an essay, in a chatroom, in an email to a friend and in the journals I kept for years. I wrote down my ideas and equations during my search for meaning. During this time I was happy to travel and see the latest innovations at tradeshow and conferences in the hacking community, doing the circuit for a few years. It was a pool of ideas, inventions of such brilliance that I am humbled to admit I could never describe some of the prototypes that roamed around at these events. The best and the brightest were attracted to computer technology.

It didn't take long to meet the salesmen who peddled the latest innovations from Taiwan and Japan, and the latest software from America and Germany. It was during these fast times that I was able to work longer because I had ideas and tools from the conference circuit.

I fed off the vibe that resulted in breakthroughs for the submission platform and the logistical flow and architecture of the website as a whole.

During this ascending computer zeitgeist, I discovered an even more potent energy drink and spent countless sleepless nights in front of my laptop building my website and submission platform. Looking back at it now, the productivity factor was astounding. I knew that I was damaging my eardrums with the music volume so high but when I was in the zone I could spend hours typing without thinking once of the time.

And that was how I built the bricks and mortar foundation of a smooth running website.

I spent long nights in Berlin typing in an empty apartment with only the flickering lights of postwar Berlin outside, with the church dome somehow always visible through the window. Only those who have binged on hard work when creating something from nothing can appreciate and comprehend the immense euphoria that comes from the completion of such a project.

It's like no other feeling.

You know that after each day your work is another brick in the building of the temple.

Self-belief is the fuel that ensures the momentum is not shattered by outside forces.

Diligence builds effective buildings.

Thank you Howard Roark for inspiring me during my productive years. And that is what good literature does: inspires men towards greatness.

10

Unauthorized Biography

My time with the biographer O’Huiginn was fun until near the end when it had become tedious. It became mired in pushy publishers rushing a project that didn’t need to be rushed. There were other more pressing problems in play at the time. I thought it might turn out quite well but then the publishers chose to use the incomplete first draft and run with it to cash in on the high demand. A proper book that had nuance from care and polish. That was what I wanted rather than a superficial outline of a life based on deciphered facts from conversations over the years.

Recording is an effective way to get the words right but a dangerous way to take things out of context when editing the text.

I must say that I like O’Huiginn’s writing style and his use of words. He writes clearly and with intelligence. I was convinced from the start that he was an educated man with an eye for detail. With this I entrusted him to uncensored campfire banter and tangential recollections of times past, which usually involved some good-hearted beer exaggeration on my part.

Remembering some of the things I shared with him I became very aware of some exaggeration and hyperbole I had used. I was anxious about these comments being taken out of context. We spoke a lot of writing a manifesto but we both knew that that would become more of an academic work.

And that couldn’t have taken place in such a social place, with guests always there both working and socializing. Those were fun days in the English countryside despite the growing unease I felt about what was brewing in Sweden.

And then when my lawyers found out about the grand jury indictment happening in Virginia, I knew that my life had irrevocably change.

The fallout from the Swedish charges has been far and wide. And still today I recoil from facing the painful costs of my decision to seek refuge in the embassy here in London.

But the times I spent in the large kitchen of my friend’s country home were full of hope from a firm belief in our purpose of transparency. It was a good purpose, one that could facilitate events that lead to revolution. I return to memories from that period of my life often, more than I thought I would. I was a nervous guy for years so it wasn’t until I began speaking about the website at these conferences in 2010 that I felt my hard work was being rewarded with recognition. It was the same template I had been using for years except now on a much larger scale. My newfound popularity was from the Internet becoming an autobahn for shared data pockets.

And that was the time of recognition, right before I ended up stuck in the embassy.

But those days in the country were still flavored with optimism. A camaraderie was born with the biographer O’Huiginn. I did tell stories from my childhood, like the time we lived on Magnetic Island and my life was transformed into a Tom Sawyer adventure, building rafts and constructing forts in the woods. A great childhood. But I don’t have roots like most people. There isn’t a family home where I can leave my stuff when I leave for Nairobi or Reykjavik. So my time living at a large English manor in the fields of the Cotswolds it felt like we had morphed into a family united by one purpose. We all thrived because what we were doing was important and mattered.

Each keystroke a micro-step closer to what it has become today.

What I wanted to talk to O’Huiginn about most was what I sensed was going to happen. With secrets uncovered, with the vast majority of the guilty with only a cold slap on the face, people now had tangible talking points.

And from these robust discussions change was born.

It felt like the ground under our feet was moving, like a fissure had surfaced in the evolving geo-political mantle.

O’Huiginn wanted to talk about me and I was reticent to a certain degree, feeling at times powerless and exposed from giving him personal information and trusting his capacity to understand where each piece fit within the web of my character. We agreed that for the second draft I would go through the first draft and add my piece about the transparency movement.

I remember feeling more and more uneasy about it because it was during this time when men with crew cuts started to follow me. I was unaware that I was being studied so that I could be framed. I sensed something different, so talking about my past for an in-depth biography seemed rather secondary.

The worst thing about being followed is the paranoia. Soon I couldn’t help think anyone could be watching me. For someone who preferred to remain behind the scenes and incognito, I became scared and nervous. I believed talking to the press about the data on the site was important but I always knew that this would be a short-lived period before I could return to my life sequestered in a safe room with my Internet connection.

But being hunted like an animal changed everything in my life.

I’m sure that my co-workers who knew me before the war logs were published saw a change in me.

This change was part of the reason why I published the un-redacted files.

I was pissed off at the intrusion and their hostility. They looked at me as the enemy but I was merely a journalist who published items sent via the submission platform.

I didn’t know Manning.

I didn’t know Snowden.

They found the site on their own and the rest is, as far as I was concerned, history.

Was I wrong to think I was such a benign player?

Perhaps I was wrong. Maybe I misjudged the reality of the situation.

How could I think I was uninvolved when I was the one who created the website and its submission platform?

And did my submission platform, with its promise of anonymity, actually encourage illegal activity?

I'm still too proud (and stubborn) to admit I might have made a mistake to seek asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy. I still believe this can all end well, but after over three years of living in this converted ladies washroom, the novelty of having a secure writer's den has definitely worn off.

And when my long list of administrative tasks were completed from working so hard in my embassy room, time has suddenly started to move slower. My legs are weaker from lack of exercise, my energy levels are lower from stagnant blood flow, and even the color of my eyes are darker from the lack of sunlight.

For a young Tom Sawyer and globetrotting computer hacker, being holed up this long has become harsh.

I hadn't resented the time spent here in my room but now, recently with the change of power in the government, something has changed. And because of it, the creeping stir of resentment is in me each day. The resentment boils from a newfound sense that time is being stolen from me.

It is a theft of my free will.

Redacting was a job that required time and labor so we spent our time making sure the whole thing didn't collapse.

Of course it was all bad timing. Now would be a good time for a biography but I am weary. I fear the information I provide will be twisted by those who detest me. So for those who want to know, there is a record.

You just need to find it.

The facts are out there.

O'Huiginn got those all right, but he didn't get what was in my head.

So that's what I'm doing this small piece. A record of my thoughts on my life and how things played out.

And hope for a just resolution of my situation.

Ever since my brush with the law when I was a hacker using the handle Mendax, I feel terror when I face the law. I jumped ship to be here in the embassy rather than potentially being forced

into a cell. My thinking was that if I had to spend time in a cell while these charges were dropped, I might as well have Internet access. My mindset can be described as: If I'm serving time then this is a pretty good cell, a sort of prison for VIPs. I knew the inside of a jail cell for eight days in the UK when the Swedish charges were re-introduced for round two. The cold finite tactility of brick covered with the slime of years of dirty hands was an experience I know I will never forget.

Sometimes at night this image of incarceration takes over my mind and I get so worked up I can't sleep.

It puts the fear in me.

My way of taking my mind elsewhere, far away from the cold bricks of a cell, I read only primary sources. That's my pastime: reading the archive. In its entirety. It takes my mind off the slimy bricks and the finality of the wall.

With Internet access and my mock fireplace, I still manage my website despite the watching eyes that hover. It is my destiny to have spying eyes lingering over my shoulder for the rest of my years.

Even in Ecuador I will need to stay under guard with a secure perimeter until I'm sufficiently incognito. With a firm security perimeter in place I'm sure I can lie low for a while in deep valleys of Ecuador difficult to see from spy satellites. In time I'll merge into the fabric and become native.

It is my primary hope.

And for this to happen the International Court of Justice needs to make a ruling on my case.

With my health in decline, there is some urgency for this case to have resolution. Let there be a ruling! Let me answer the questions with a lawyer present. Why? Drop the charges so I can move to Quito where I can be a productive citizen. In the meantime I suffer here in this dusty corner where the right to asylum cannot reach me. It is true that these laws that apply to my situation have been changed to prevent this situation from arising again but when it was passed it wasn't allowed to be retroactive.

So to the International Court of Justice I plead: Please have mercy.

Understand the backstory.

See the exceptional forces in play.

Find in our humanity a solution to my predicament.

Let us come to an agreement.

I have to confess that this situation of being holed up here in the embassy has taken a toll on my health. I'd like to be stoic about it all and take it on the chin but I do have periods of black despair.

Sometimes I dwell on the opportunity cost of my predicament, which at times makes me very sad.

What I could be doing out there! I miss my family. I miss that whiff of freedom operating within the law because no laws had been broken. Good, clean, noble living, with a touch of asceticism. But everything changed when those un-redacted files were uploaded in the summer of 2010. It was just weeks after that the Man special-op'd me in Sweden by bribing those two women to follow through with their exaggerated accusations.

This entire thing has been manufactured by the US special intelligent branch, and this is what frustrates me the most.

But really the worst thing is that I miss my son. Not being part of his life because of this absurd situation upsets me to no end. I try not to think about it. So I sit here and watch the flowchart of political and historical events unfold in front of me.

Might I have safe passage to the airport where I can land in my new adopted country?

Why is international law not being followed?

Why are my basic human rights being overlooked?

When will I get my freedom?

The grand jury indictment in Virginia against me scares me to no end. To me that's the monster.

It's the British 'wall of grime' but on a whole new scale.

I'm simply not built for prison. I wouldn't last at all. I would be taken alive. Thinking of the cold brick makes me shiver. It's not one of my strengths. Guys in prison are tough. I'm not that kind of tough. I'm tough in other ways.

You don't need to be a brain surgeon to see that my fear of cold brick cells contributed to my decision to take refuge in the embassy. In one way it was a no-brainer. I knew I would never get out of Sweden again, except to the cold, smelly cells in America. They would arrest me for putting American lives in danger and for aiding terrorists. Whether there are grounds for the charges or not is a separate question, what matters is that my freedom has been usurped in the meantime.

So I'm essentially imprisoned until all the appeals are finished.

This might take ten years, so obviously the system is flawed. We need to use my case as an example of what needs to be changed. There needs to be clear legislation so this will never happen to anyone else.

Is publishing anonymously online illegal?

Are there laws against publishing classified documents online where there are none for newspapers?

Are there applicable ethical laws?

Or is there just good and bad form? Good etiquette and poor etiquette? If so then e-publishers of sensitive data like me are merely guilty of poor etiquette?

Furthermore, can we please discuss the content of the documents and right the wrongs for the future benefit of society and not spend time focusing on the side dish?

Can we stop spending so much time on me?

Am I not a scapegoat?

Let us come up with better solutions for the things we can improve upon.

Let us spend our time constructively rather than finger pointing and name-calling.

Let us all use the forum of transparency I have created.

Let us create a worldwide university online where all students go to learn, so we can keep the cold brick of the prison cell away from it all.

Let us not lose sight of the nobility of the movement, and take a moment to see what we have achieved.

12

Cyber Vikings

I am asked often what my end goal is. Where do I want to get to? I like that question because I have a very clear answer to it: I want to reach a world where the interaction of information is seamless and fast functioning as an efficient laptop delivery system. Am I confident we will get there? Some days I am convinced we will reach that goal having come so far over the last 25 years of the Internet's history. If we can travel as far as we already have, then our system for information delivery to all users can become more efficient and crisp.

But other days I get tense because I can see Big Brother censoring Internet content. Will there be an august body of Internet censorship dictating what we can read emanating from the Alps in Switzerland? To let censorship rest in the hands of the few is a deathblow to the current golden age of the Internet.

Once we have an international body that censors, the slippery slope begins.

Lobby groups turn into cyber bullies and a new arena for politicking is born.

Then a new Internet era of censorship begins in earnest.

Technology keeps growing and improving so our vision of instant communications is becoming more of a reality. We were the generation to have suffered through chronic incompatibilities by Microsoft and Apple who battled against each other for market share rather than for the welfare of the end user. How many years had to pass before they both started making their machines compatible? Wasted years and cause for endless frustration for early computer users. That was our cost to get in on the ground floor with the UNIX red book and the hacker's code of fair play.

And thank God I stuck with it. Computers are my world and my home. Those who spend millions on homes seem ill placed to me. Why not build a mansion online where it will live on forever? Yes, it's more difficult but it lasts longer.

This is the new Camelot.

In the early days hacking was easy. There were no firewalls for a long while, and then even when you could put a firewall in place most websites didn't bother protecting their intranets. There were about two or three years in the late nineties when significant amounts of data were uploaded but there were no protective systems keeping away poachers. Those of us who hacked back then knew it was a gold rush. We knew these were the golden days of the Internet. It was still years before the creation of Homeland Security, and years before the NSA or any other intelligence agency in the world really had effective policies protecting data in cyberspace.

That time between Internet training wheels and full functionality was when I did most of my hacking. It's too dangerous today - too many tracks and cookies and traceable commands. I'm proud to have participated in the UNIX red book revolution and seen the Internet through its infancy.

It was a beautiful thing to partake in its evolution.

Being a cyber-Viking back then required restraint because everything was exposed to the hacker's command keys. It was a new form of power for the workingman. A young kid from Estonia could hack into Canada's energy grid and turn it off if he wanted.

But what would be the use?

Destruction.

Loss.

Danger.

Thus *Mendax*: the noble liar; the breaker of laws who chose their own path. Mendax was an inquisitive force preferring to look rather than to wreck. It became the motto for many hackers. Why walk on to someone's backyard and rip up their shrubberies?

They're nice shrubberies.

No reason to tamper.

No upside.

Leave it alone.

What about leaving a message to let those who manage the system know that they had been trespassed? The message then becomes: Smarten up! Tighten it all up. Put in the time to see how the hack happened and correct it. We're helping you bolster your security.

And sorry, I couldn't help myself. I left that picture of the smiling dog because that's how I felt when I was in your system exploring your personal financial files. I had no idea you carried so much debt. The information is useless to me.

I don't care about the information.

I care about the hack.

What I also care about is information that reveals wrongdoing so that those responsible can be accountable. What I am not interested in is a person's personal data. That raw information should

not be available to anyone who seeks it. But that being said, my belief is that it's better to live with nothing to hide rather than burdened by a thousand skeletons in the closet.

Let it go and live free in this new world of surveillance and electronic spying.

My website wasn't designed to expose people's personal data. It was designed to showcase those who are guilty of crimes against its citizenry and crimes against the environment. This is why I couldn't let go of my idea of the untraceable submission platform. I was driven to make it a reality. Some parts of the code were more difficult than others, but the site did show the world how a website can change the world.

That's something of note.

That's something I'm proud of.

The world is a better place now that some secrets were spilled.

13

Berlin

When the hurricane hit in the summer fall of 2010, we thought we were prepared with our hardware infrastructure but with the unprecedented numbers of visitors coming to the site we encountered difficulties. It was due to my co-workers in Berlin that we managed to get through that high-traffic period after the war logs were uploaded. Those whom I worked with did know computer hardware. With multiple servers it was very difficult for them to take us down. Our arsenal of power was enough to withstand even an attack from the United States or China or Russia. With the simple architecture of the site and the secure submission platform, we knew we were running a tight ship with very little chance of breaking down. Constructing mirror sites proved to be the best way to avoid a shutdown of the website.

The removal of content became a virtual impossibility from any of our associated sites.

Working in Berlin was a pleasure. Everything was state-of-the-art and my German co-workers were hard-working and adhered to a high standard. I had never had such an interactive back-and-forth until I started to spend more time in Germany's capital. In all Europe, Berlin is the most tolerant place to live. I like Holland too but Berlin was the beating heart of the operation. There were so many talented people living there so working on the submission platform soon began to take shape. Once we put it online we could all sit back and think:

Let's see what fish swim into our pond.

Let the dropped net do the work.

And let the software endless loop obscure the real message from anyone trying to find what message was sent from where.

Who sent what?

That's not mine!

Plausibility.

The submission platform was secure. It was one of the proudest moments of my career.

The professionalism at the newspaper was a site to witness. Adamant to redact, they insisted no lives must be endangered when the files were published. The Germans were so thorough that they insisted that not only the names in the documents be redacted but also context.

The slippery slope had begun and it made me sick.

I screamed at them that the entire project was about “untouched primary sources” and that document tampering of any kind wasn’t allowed. They worked hard on the documents and removed names. As it turned out not redacting the documents was where I made my most serious error.

Why didn’t I redact the files?

This is really the crux of it all.

Some of what caused this decision was from living in Berlin with those guys running the hardware. They had power over that hardware, and then exercised that power by removing content from the website without my permission. That really ticked me off, so to assert my alpha status in the group I threatened to publish without redacting. Maybe I was tired and overworked and wasn’t thinking clearly, or maybe I wanted to make a point by adhering to the letter to our mission statement. We would not taint the files we uploaded. I had not read through the thousands of endless documents I was about to publish. I hadn’t read the names that would be online for anyone to see on the hundreds of our mirror sites. Even the state department didn’t know what files had been stolen until they appeared online. Immediately they mobilized a communications army to remove agents from the field in the immediate aftermath of the publication, and by doing this they saved lives and hardship.

So we can be thankful for that.

I thought of making Germany my home but the Germans set a pretty high bar. Quite a few hackers have chosen Berlin as their home base. It’s easy to understand why. All the important items are cheap, like wine and rent and food. And there’s world-class electronic infrastructure. Deutsche Telecom is the BMW of the telecommunications world. But despite these advantages I was still aware that Germany was part of NATO and had deep ties with the government most adversely affected by the revelation of the data pockets uploaded to my website. I preferred a country that was outside the reach of its tentacles.

I sought freedom and security.

Censorship

Can a governing body prevent the publication of content deemed offensive? That is essentially the question in play when discussing online censorship. With so many new websites being created every day, how can anyone police the bad sites?

And who makes the decision of what is good and what is bad? What is true and what is false?

Will the Internet become a true reflection of laissez-faire economics whereby any website shall appear if there is a demand or interest? If engaged in criminal activity, it should be policed according to existing laws. But this should be the only intrusion on an otherwise pristine and untouched haven for the sharing of information and data pockets. Within the Internet world there should be a spot - an oasis - for primary sources, free from opinion or partiality, a purely objective sphere of data where one can read the documents but cannot alter them in any way. That is the full conveyance of information sharing.

Who am I to say what another can or cannot read? Why can anyone tell another not to read something?

Who makes that judgment?

In an ideal world there should be nothing to hide. And in this ideal world infringements of freedom lose all traction. Censorship bodies therefore act against freedom of choice and in doing so make qualitative decisions about the morality of the subject at hand. I accept that firewalls are needed to protect data, but I do not accept being told what to read. The early Internet had no censorship so it was an ideal world. And it was from this world I came from and operated in.

And in such an environment rational peoples operate fully within the law publishing unredacted primary sources.

Without the charges coming from Sweden, my life would be much different. The powers that feel threatened by the data on my website trumped up these charges to censor my movements. In this task they have succeeded. But they have failed to stop me publishing. Safe and connected to the Internet I can continue to publish primary source data pockets received via the submission platform as I live in the embassy despite it being crowded and unsuited to full-time living. Those threatened powers are still vulnerable.

How can they stop me? They can't, unless for some reason I am booted out of the embassy, but this won't happen. And if they can grab me then they could charge me using the espionage act. I am safe here in the Ecuadorean embassy in London. With my skillset, I'm convinced that I cannot get mixed up in the American legal system because, quite frankly: once snagged, forever had.

A terrible thing about breaking bail was the money that had to be sacrificed by my supporters. That hurt a lot and I felt badly for them. But at the time I could only see the safety of Quito once I stood in front of the Ecuadorian embassy. When I played it out in my mind I would be safe for as long as it took for me to fly to Ecuador to begin a new life. I did not foresee years of being

cooped up in a small room in Highgate. I'm sorry to my friends who came to my aid but I felt the safety of diplomatic immunity was better than the cold walls of a cell.

It is true that they have tried to censor me but I am still online actively publishing. Yet to a large degree they have been able to castrate a part of me by removing the option of a bike ride or a swim in the sea.

But I refuse to drop my chin in defeat.

There is still a valid and winnable fight being fought, and still I have supporters in search of more truth to the things that affect us all directly. In a militant mood I might declare that we are an information army poised with deadly keystrokes to take down any force attempting to hamper our functionality. But remember *Mendax* and his noble side. My aim is not malicious. My aim is justice. I am fascinated like so many others to see how far the Snowden leaks will affect the international relations among nation states today.

It is true that the Internet is not a good place for secrets. It might seem pretty obvious now in today's zeitgeist but I don't think everyone was aware of that during the initial years of Web development. Part of our message was this: that the future of communications should be regarded as transparent, and that if there are hidden secrets somewhere within cyberspace it won't take long for them to be exposed.

We have always strived to communicate this through our actions.

Those within the intelligence community knew this moment was coming for years. They knew what I had done with Mendax and what my *rubber hose* program was about, so it was no surprise that websites were developing to act as a table for secrets to be planted for public consumption. So it was no surprise to me that the NSA and CIA admitted that they were aware that a website dedicated to exposing hidden truths was the next phase of whistle blowing.

The leaders of global intelligence networks were too smart to be caught ill prepared, but what is interesting is how they sat and waited until our movement had evolved so there was a figurehead to attack. Some of our people had warned me not to step out from the shadows. Some preferred the organization to function as a headless snake that could remain immune from the harsh criticism. But having taken a leadership role in the public those criticisms would eventually be leveled at me. And as the public face of the transparency movement it didn't help things when I used inflammatory language. Sometimes I read some of things I said at the time and cringe, not due to what I said but at how I said it. It might be too easy to dismiss it as immaturity but that's what I have done.

So it begs the question: Was I still too immature when I stepped voluntarily into this embassy?

I didn't even have a defined exit strategy.

Review of the Legal Stuff

Yes, they changed the law but they specifically did not make it retrospective in my case. Herein lies the current problem. Herein lies where the law must pass judgment. It shows how before my case the existing laws were lacking so why must I be the one who falls through the cracks? Would it not have been just for the new laws to be applied to me? I could spend the rest of my life crippled by lawsuits if I cannot get out of this tangled web.

Sometimes I suffocate from all the lawsuits swirling around my head.

I wish it would stop.

I want to become invisible.

What will the Brits do about me skipping bail? Will the Swedes fine me and then let me go? Will the Brits fine me and let me go? Is all this paranoia all in my imagination because of the image of that cold brick wall?

I often play out a scenario of me walking out of here unannounced, putting myself into the mercy of the British. Would they be impartial and decide I need to pay some fines, and then say 'By the way, Sweden wants you. It would be best if you went.' When I arrive in Stockholm I am immediately questioned at the airport and then released to go wherever I want at the airport where I would buy a ticket to Quito. Upon arrival in Ecuador I would disappear from public life completely. The photograph of me leaving the airport in Quito would be the final photograph to appear in the mainstream press.

And I would live out my days to a ripe old age, unmolested by slander and ignorance and the heavy hand of the international police state.

There must be limits to harassment by governments to protect basic human rights. I am a refugee. My plight is defined by the forces that were in play long before I ever went to Sweden in the summer of 2010. Stifling the flow of information from my website has not been achieved. In an effort to punish me, what has essentially been achieved is a revengeful slight against me: the engineer of the best publishing site of sensitive data in Internet history.

Partial forces manipulating the legal system have pushed me into a corner where there are conflicting laws – one saying I cannot leave the embassy and another one saying I have the right to the country that has granted political asylum because I am a refugee. It is a human right protected by the United Nations. Yet I am here stuck and frustrated and impatient.

How many appeals do I need to make?

How ridiculous and costly will this be?

How much time will pass until all these arguments are said and done?

Is not the end product the burning up of time?

Is not the appeal process simply waiting for court dates to hear statements and to postpone judgment until more witnesses are called forth?

And so it goes for another year until there is an appeal against that decision and then a judgment on more charges that result in an appeal that takes another five years to reach the bench. More and more meetings are followed by more dates, more paperwork and further investigation. My feeling is that nothing will become of it all. It's a make-work project with the only reason for doing it all is to take up my time.

It's legal harassment.

Active litigants.

Costly in money and time.

Nasty business.

And stressful.

It's basically very anti-life. It takes away from the joy of living life.

16

The Thing in Sweden

I never like to talk about what happened in Sweden but I would like to establish the facts as they are. It's better to know what happened rather than speculating in darkness.

The laws in Sweden for sexual misconduct are pretty detailed and complex. If there has been any sort of coercion or otherwise non-consensual behavior with either party, the other can charge you. And it is this law for which the Swedish prosecution is using to request my presence in their country so they can ask me some questions relating to two women with whom I had sexual relations. Based on the information I provide them they will make a decision whether or not to charge me.

The likelihood of being charged is very slim.

If I am charged then I will be a sex offender in a Swedish prison, which seems pretty over-the-top for what actually transpired.

And this is where we end up in this discussion: what exactly happened that night with that woman? And what happened between me and the second woman a few nights later? Was there some foul play? Or is this all an embarrassing misunderstanding? As frustrating and tragic as it is, I find it comic. If I did anything wrong it was choosing to voice my preference for unprotected sex. I always found the act of applying a prophylactic an awkward and moment-destroying step that could be overlooked for the sake of urgency. The woman and I had this discussion but whereas I thought the matter had been settled, one of the girls had not settled her mind. It was this that prompted the two to compare notes, discuss the encounter with some helpful Interpol agents and then discover they had a mutual beef – namely the willful act of unprotected sex.

Did I rip the condom on purpose? I won't answer that. Did I want to impregnate those two Swedes? Perhaps somewhere in the back of my head there was that thought but I didn't go out of my way to make it happen. It was more a case that I let the chips fall where they may. But now it

is the Swedish issue that won't go away. What I should have done is go for an HIV test when they asked me to right after the nights in question, just after the conference in Stockholm.

If this is a crime in Sweden then I guess a crime was committed. But what exactly happened? We had sex and it was obviously unprotected. It is true that it was dark and there were more than one act of coupling and thus the supply of rubber products ran out. Perhaps there needed to be a second discussion at this point but my Swedish host didn't object. I do regret sleeping with the second girl because she was all trouble. She inflamed the situation when she tapped into the first girl's anger and humiliation. The charges came into being after long hours of talking about what had transpired and how by bringing charges against me there could be some degree of retribution enough as a form of payback. I honestly don't think either of them thought the charges would still be in play and become the base cause of my eventual entrapment here in London. I don't blame them and try not to feel anger when I think of them. They are both good people that have been corrupted in their recollections by the Swedish prosecutor. They didn't know they were being used as pawns in a dangerous game.

So the issue then became: how could the United States not take action? Behind the scenes I'm sure representatives spoke to the Swedish prosecutor to persuade the girls that they had a case and that they should pursue it. And that's what happened. This simple action caused me to jump bail and seek safety in a South American embassy as a refuge.

Looking back on the whole thing now, I wish I never opened those doors in Sweden. I should have instead veered towards a more ascetic lifestyle, which is more in tune with my real character. Instead I indulged in some misplaced notion of rock and roll one-night stands with women who were ultimately untrustworthy. I am not a sexual deviant nor have I done anything offensive to warrant any sexual charges. I want it on the record that as a witness to what transpired there was no offense committed, either willfully or inadvertently. My intentions were noble. There was no guile involved. And to be stained with such an ugly label as sex offender" or "rapist" is humiliating and unjust.

The power structure has largely succeeded in staining my reputation as part of their assassination campaign on my character.

When one does get to know me they see a driven worker who lives an active life, happy to eat and drink just what I need to sustain my energy to continue working. I loved to work long hours in cafes drinking coffee and chatting with fellow thinkers online. It was an isolated form of socializing. There was a lot of online back-and-forth but not a lot of real-life interaction. It was the beginning of a virtual existence, which was a natural development from the long hours spent with BASIC programming and my Commodore 64.

Once the charges are dropped will that remove the stigma that has now clung to my name?

Have the slander and propaganda attacks been effective?

Have I lost the empathy of the general public?

Do some think I have some mental problems and that these shortcomings caused these allegations of sexual misbehavior?

Some have suggested that I might be mildly autistic – that I have a whiff of Asperger's Syndrome. I laughed when I first learned of this but upon further contemplation there might be

an element of truth to it. It is true I excel in numbers and programming code, and the just world of operating systems and the clean rules of mathematics. I take refuge and feel safe among algorithms and logarithms, which could suggest mild autism. It is true that I have difficulty reading emotions, or emoting when others might expect me too. I wouldn't say I'm not an emotional person but I could make the case that I have to make an effort to hold eye contact with others and to correctly read facial expressions accurately.

Or maybe this is just me second-guessing myself.

The point is that so much of what dominates my life is within cyberspace. It is the world that makes sense to me. It is safe. Everything else is a mess of incongruities and imprecise solutions that beg more questions and demand even more answers.

In comparison with my online programming life, the real world doesn't inspire my curiosity to the same degree. I can achieve more momentum and growth working out solutions in a logical environment rather than in a world with feelings that change. So with regards to the two Swedish women, it is an example of how I misread their sentiments and was unable to comprehend the ramifications of something I thought was unimportant.

I like to say "they" trumped up the charges to put me in my present predicament whereas the truth is that due to my mild autism, or preference for the clean, rational world of numbers and logic, my actions were out of sync with what would have been acceptable.

And for that I apologize.

It was not intentional malice.

It was a form of innate ignorance.

17

The Day My World Changed

The day The Guardian newspaper published their 14 pages of stories was the day I became known to the reading public around the world overnight. I think back to that day and analyze my thoughts throughout the day to see if I can find a precise moment when I knew my life would never be the same. I hadn't slept the night before because I drank coffee and read files and prepared my press release and what I was going to say to the reporters waiting for me that morning. My head was clear but I remember feeling very uptight because it felt that I had left a backdoor open. I tried to find the door I had forgotten to lock but couldn't find it. It took time before I realized that the problem was not an open door but that I needed help. I needed a legal team behind me advising me on things not to say, and I needed secretaries who would step up to the plate to take care of importance communication and telephone calls that I didn't have time to manage. I also needed a home base of operations where I could have all the information handy, and where I would be safe to conduct business.

None of this did I had in place that day.

In effect I went to the lion's den without any defense strategy or body armor.

After that day a friend of mine said: “So you’re dealing in information? The intelligence agencies will be threatened by you. They will try to take you down.”

Over time he said the chances of being apprehended were increasing.

“They will take you down somehow and they’ll keep you down.”

When I had sought refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy, he came by and said: “You’ve really done it. You must be on every powerful government’s black list. It’s amazing you’re still alive. You’re probably better off in here.” The harsh reality of it is that I am safe in here, and each day that goes by is a blessing.

I had roused the eagle from its perch, and Thor’s hammer still murmured from the whacking down of barriers.

Many people have made a point of telling me they thought I knew what I was doing when I went to the Press Club in Washington DC in April, 2010. Some have said that that was the moment everything changed and the moment it all began. Ironically it was the time it all started to end for me because as soon as the power structure saw the leader of the movement come out of the shadows, there was no way this small man could take on the power structure and win. Many in the audience witnessing the unveiling of secrets and who followed us closely during our first years watched fascinated, fully expecting me to make a mistake and end up in jail.

I made sure I didn’t make any mistakes at all.

Yet they were able to engineer things so that I ended up cornered and neutered, but not silenced.

One of the strange things I got to experience during this time was the eerie feeling that our work was having such an enormous effect on governments around the world. We all witnessed how the power structure started to squirm. With respect to the video footage showing wonton death in Iraq, I simply did not expect the war leaders of the US military to state that the helicopter gunshot was merely following protocol.

It made me nervous to see how they sweat behind their unconvincing words.

That was when I sensed that something was afoot behind the scenes and that they were working on a plan to capture me. I kept my eyes open so when I did have an intimate encounter with my friend in Sweden I remember asking myself if it was all okay. I didn’t worry because I hadn’t erred but then a few days later, when I was lured in by some serious female charm, I became aware that there had been a breach in my own security against any type of intrusion by those now hunting me. I quickly felt exposed and it didn’t take long for Sweden to come after me.

Some might call me paranoid, but after the sexual assault charges emerged from Sweden I became more careful wherever I went. There were some instances where I was sure men were following me from some American agency. At times I feared for my life, and I was well aware at the time that something was going to befall me.

It was just a question of time.

In retrospect I can honestly say that it was hubris that brought me down. I had been told that I would become a target but I still didn’t see it coming at the time. The sexual misconduct charges were an inconvenience from the beginning, and an unwanted distraction from my focus. And

perhaps the things I said and the things I did were not as wise as they could have been at the beginning of all this.

I dismissed it but at the same time I knew it could blossom into something significant and ugly.

Once ones concentration splits, one enters into a dangerous realm of vulnerability. I became hyper-aware of the people around me taking action to destroy me when all I wanted to do was to deal with the information I had been given via the submission platform. My situation soon became confusing and dangerous after Sweden. If I had had my wits about me I would have found a professional bodyguard to take care of my new security worries to free me up to concentrate on the website. The black hats in Washington that wanted me in jail were aware of this fracturing in me and thus sought to exploit it, but since the whole world was watching they had to proceed invisibly.

And I must say they did do a good job.

How they were able to convince the women to pursue the court case is really beyond me.

I remember warning my co-workers about their safety but they never took my warnings seriously. To be fair they were likely right not to fear The Man because they weren't the figureheads of the movement. I was. And it was me the media kept singling out, not the organization. This was because if they had focused on the organization and not me, then they would have to focus on The Guardian and The New York Times too as 'information outlets.'

So the state department focused on me rather than the group.

This was their first move in their efforts to stop the transparency movement.

18

The Current State of Play

Has the movement waned in recent years? Yes. We have essentially been shut down and splintered. However what we showed the world is being copied around the world. People have realized that information is not just data but can be used as a weapon to protect those being trampled upon.

Perhaps the movement led by our website was doomed from the beginning. Lawsuits started hitting us after the war logs were published. We spent most of our time fighting these lawsuits and of course trying to raise money to pay our lawyers.

My legal mess is like a spider web: I can't move because my limbs are caught in the web. But beyond the morass of papers and court dates is the real effect of the published papers. Some have speculated that by sharing this information I weakened America's global stature. There were a lot of countries and cities and companies that were rocked to some degree from the cables. It was as if the information produced an earthquake with tremors that went on for a few weeks.

The system coughed.

From the bright flash of light that echoed through the corridors of the Internet, and these aftershocks brought insight and outrage to millions.

It was a Twitter-generated revolution.

Twitter was the sparkplug that ignited traffic to the website. An avalanche of interested readers could now find untainted raw data to consume. This cyber food fed the cyber hippies who smoked and read and daydreamed all day in their mancaves, each connected to Twitter and Facebook.

I spent my time organizing the new food on a menu. Reading and categorizing each data pocket was a task that has kept me busy for most of my time here in the embassy. Each day I absorb more primary sources now available on the site.

Now I can say that I have read all the material that appears online.

It is a lot of data.

More and more stories of torture and prison abuse were printed in newspapers globally, which only served to undermine American forces wherever they were in the world. There was a new feeling of distrust for the American government, not only by their citizens but by allies across the international spectrum. Where there was once respect and unquestioned acceptance, there was now skepticism. No longer were the stats and data coming from American sources trusted as it had before. It might sound like a small change but it wasn't. The mighty American machine was now fielding questions about its integrity.

Could it perhaps be a monster with dark secrets where not all soldiers were honorable and where military action did not always follow the Geneva code.

19

Addressing World Leaders

If I didn't take this opportunity to appeal to world leaders of today, I would be amiss. After all my court case is still alive and moving forward.

Of all world governmental bodies, I appeal to the United Nations to hear my case and make a ruling on my predicament. My followers and those who believe in the freedom of information are eager for a resolution. I appeal to your august body that represents all that is civil in humankind, please hear my case.

I ask for your assistance with humility to solve my stalemate so I can be free again.

I appeal to all freethinking countries in the world to acknowledge the revolution that is now afoot. Appeal to the new generation of Web-savvy hackers and social media gurus that make up your new voting base. They support my case because I have brought betterment to the world and brightened their future.

Join us in our collective effort for transparency.

Have nothing to hide.

Act nobly and honor goodwill.

Show transparency in your governance so there is no fear of secrets.

Being accountable is good policy.

And good policy wins elections. It's a sustainable platform for continued prosperity.

Without the truth there would be no light.

Honesty is man's most noble virtue, and most universal. If you give your people honesty they will follow you, believe in you and fight for you because they have developed their sixth sense to discern misinformation. People have a nose for the truth. All truth must be embraced because that is what the human race uses as their foundation to communicate and live. It is the universal language within a language.

I ask you world leaders to appeal to those who want truth in their lives.

Please hear my case and rule with impartial justice.

But most of all let's end this legal stalemate.

20

Nothing More To Say

When you have time to whittle it all down there is not that much more to say other than look at what I have done and understand how the story has unfolded. I hope that I can once again recover my freedom and free myself from under this layer of legal netting.

I see it all as a publishing issue, pure and simple. The submission platform is secure. There is no way I can identify the source. I only act as a conduit, benign and impartial. That's its strength and also where it becomes dangerous. It's all fun and games until danger becomes real and fear becomes an ever-present emotion that lingers into the night hours.

It hinders sleep.

I have chosen to remain quiet for some time now mainly because of my legal cases. For a man who values freedom and information and the integrity of good reporting, it is ironic I'm now confined to this airless room on the third floor in an embassy in Highgate. Despite my sad state of affairs, I am still hopeful that I can see it all through and emerge in the warm light of day on the other side.

I keep faith that this moment will come.

February 2, 2015

Ecuadorian embassy

Highgate, London
United Kingdom
Full Moon

###

Thank you for taking the time to read my ghost memoir *The Leaky Hourglass*. You can read *PortalLeaks* as a companion piece to this work.

About the Author

Peter Higgins (1967-) was born in Vancouver but grew up in Toronto, graduating from Queen's University in Kingston in 1990 with a degree in philosophy, and then a master's degree in international relations from the University of Hong Kong in 2004. From 1996 to 2006 he worked as an editor in Taiwan, the Philippines and Hong Kong before he returned to Canada to become a full-time novelist. He currently lives with his border collie named Schopenhauer in Gore Bay on Manitoulin Island in the Great Lakes region of Ontario, Canada.

Other Titles Published by Peter Higgins

Visigoths in Tweed

Road Sailors

The Hellmantle Testament

Prophecy Seekers

Zeitqualia & the Art of Mountainbike Logic

The Viking-Poet Handbook

Pierre Radisson: Unsung Hero of the New World

The Motorcycle Inn

No More Waiting to Die

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