

Fly Me To Cuba (I mean Ecuador)! Julian Assange hijacks WikiLeaks

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He is in here

Call me a contrarian, but I don't entirely like the way that critics of Julian Assange have seized on his move from a manor house in Norfolk to the Ecuadorian embassy in Knightsbridge.

OK. Let's look at the charges gleefully being made by Julian's enemies in the capitalist mainstream media and their liberal media fellow-travellers.

Ecuador has a poor record on human rights and freedom of expression, but not as bad as, er, Venezuela? Perhaps this [list of breaches of media freedom](#) made by a Western NGO is just part of a CIA-inspired conspiracy.

And everyone knows that Sweden has an appalling judiciary and is a lackey-state of the neo-liberals in Washington. Why on earth should anyone who preaches transparency and accountability have to face accusations of sexual assault just because a bunch of crazed feminists want to defend the US Department of Defense?

How much braver of Assange to dump his bail guarantors in it and head off to a small Latin American country desperate for some publicity.

OK enough of the cynicism. This is weird.

Despite all his radicalism Assange has always insisted that he is not an anarchist, but a radical. Yet here he is forsaking the due process of law. He is also abandoning his supporters. He is running from the fight. He really must feel that his case is scuppered. Perhaps he has fallen victim to the conspiracy fantasies of his supporters.

A couple of thoughts.

Assange has never been very political, in the sense that he does not understand how to manipulate power and to deploy influence to his own advantage. He leaves behind him a trail of people who were once on his side but have lost patience or faith.

It's partly because he doesn't really have a clear sense of what he wants to achieve beyond broad brush rhetoric. Now he's down to a fight for personal survival he has abandoned any pretence to ethical or ideological politics in favour of expedience.

As someone who has written a (rather approving) [book about WikiLeaks](#) (surely heading for heavy discounting?) this disappoints me. The potential of this extraordinary media enterprise is being dissipated in a personal adventure that is going badly wrong. I suspect Assange thinks this is a heroic last stand but to most people it is a dash into a blind alley of historical irrelevance.

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