

# Pamela Anderson defends Assange, challenges McCain's daughter on US TV

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World famous actress and model Pamela Anderson made a powerful defence of persecuted WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange on the US talk show program "The View" last Friday.

Anderson's appearance coincided with ongoing warnings that Assange's health is deteriorating in Britain's maximum-security Belmarsh Prison, where he has been incarcerated since April.

It was a rare breach in a blackout of Assange's plight by the corporate media around the world in the lead-up to court proceedings next February aimed at extraditing him from Britain to the US. The WikiLeaks founder faces the prospect of life imprisonment for exposing American war crimes.

Anderson began by answering a question about her visit to Assange at Belmarsh last May. She stated that he was "not so good," adding: "He's lost about 30 pounds since I saw him and he was very thin at that point. He was wearing two pairs of sweatpants, trying to look strong."

Anderson continued: "He is the most resilient person I've met. Everything that has happened to him, he told me was going to happen, so there are no surprises. But it is devastating that people have fallen for this smear campaign, especially in America."

The actress condemned the "propaganda" against Assange, and stated: "I just hope that he doesn't get extradited. I don't think he'll make it." She warned that he would "not be protected" in a US prison and referenced the case of convicted child sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, who died under suspicious circumstances in a US jail last month.

Anderson explained that Assange had "inspired her to be a better activist." She said that he had "obviously ruffled the feathers of some very powerful people, and the powerful people want to keep him quiet."

At this point, Meghan McCain, one of the program's regular panelists, and the daughter of former Republican Senator John McCain, interrupted to declare that Assange was "allegedly kicked out of the Ecuadorian embassy for defecating everywhere." As Anderson noted, this was a false "smear" that was used by the corrupt Ecuadorian government to illegally renege on Assange's political asylum and hand him over to the British and US authorities.

McCain declared that Assange is a "cyber-terrorist," who "hacked information" and "leaked classified documents that put our national security at risk, our military and the lives of spies at risk and diplomats at risk." She was repeating the talking-points of the CIA and the Trump administration, which is seeking to illegalise any publishing activities that expose government lies and the crimes committed by the American military.

Anderson pointedly responded by asking: "How many people have the American government killed, innocently, and how many has WikiLeaks killed?" "The military has put many innocent lives at risk," she stated.

A number of audience members cheered Anderson's blunt statements of fact, which are such a rarity on commercial television. McCain, visibly angry, told them to "calm down."

Anderson, despite McCain's provocative intervention, continued: "We have war crimes and they need to be punished and they haven't. The war crimes that he's exposed, no one's done anything about it, but they put him in jail to shut him up."

One of the other panelists asked Anderson if she was referencing the "Collateral Murder" video, released by WikiLeaks in 2010, which showed American troops in an Apache helicopter gunning down civilians and two

Reuters reporters in Iraq. Anderson said: “Yes, that’s one thing, but there’s so much that he’s exposed, and it’s not just America he’s exposed, he’s exposed Russia and all sorts of countries.”

Anderson rejected another panelist’s assertion that Assange was responsible for the election of Donald Trump, because WikiLeaks published emails exposing the corruption of Hillary Clinton and the Democratic National Committee. “Hillary Clinton is responsible for Trump,” she stated. Anderson said that Assange “wasn’t helping Trump,” but “trying to show the American people true information of what Clinton was doing.”

In response to further hostile questions, from McCain and Democratic Party supporter Whoopi Goldberg, Anderson insisted that “Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden are heroes and Julian Assange is a publisher.” She stated that Assange’s “whole purpose is to stop these senseless wars. War is a business.” Anderson said that people around the world were increasingly hostile to US wars and “meddling.”

The discussion concluded with McCain hysterically shouting that Assange was a “cyber-terrorist.”

Anderson’s comments clearly struck a nerve. McCain is an ardent defender of her father’s legacy, despite the fact that he is implicated in every criminal US-led war of the past four decades.

Her apoplectic reaction underscored the intense hostility of the American political and state apparatus to any objective, sympathetic depiction of Assange, amid the US government’s attempts to railroad him to prison.

Footage of Anderson’s comments has been widely shared on social media. Thousands of comments have been posted on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms, commending Anderson’s calm defence of Assange, and denouncing McCain’s aggressive outburst.

The response underscores why the corporate media has instituted an almost universal blackout on Assange, and particularly those who defend him. They are well aware that if supporters of Assange were able to regularly appear on television and news programs, they would rapidly discredit the smears used to justify his persecution and win support for the fundamental issues of principle involved in the fight for his freedom.

Under conditions of latent mass support for Assange, the political and media establishment is terrified that

any public expression of support for the WikiLeaks founder could galvanise a political movement in his defence.

The urgency of the fight to free Assange was underscored by comments to the Australian *Herald-Sun* newspaper by his brother, Gabriel Barber-Shipton on Saturday.

Barber-Shipton, who visited Assange last month, warned: “He seemed distressed, the way he was talking it sounded like he had started to get desperate. He’s spending 21 hours a day isolated in his cell, he’s not allowed to communicate with other inmates.”

Barber-Shipton stated that the conditions in the medical ward, where Assange is being held, were “difficult.” He continued: “The people in there self-harm, there are schizophrenics, he’s not getting special treatment... He’s given medication, antidepressant medication.”

In comments cited in the same story, Anderson stated: “The Australian government should ask for him to be released, there is no fairness, this is about politicians playing with people’s lives because he has embarrassed them.” She called for a mass international campaign to free Assange.



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