



The Right to Not Be Lied To: Making the Case for Truth in Politics

Q: “How can you tell if a politician is lying?”

A: “[When his lips are moving.](#)”

The First Amendment assures us of a right to free speech.

It does not, unfortunately, explicitly assure us of a right to not be lied to by our government and its various officials. Any hope of holding government officials accountable for their lies rests with the political process, in the voting booths and through the impeachment process, which themselves have become so ineffective as to offer little real hope of transparency, accountability or reform.

We have been lied to so much, for so long, and on every subject, by government officials of every stripe that political lies have become our norm. It says something about the sorry state of our nation and the low bar we have set for those we elect to represent us.

However, although there are few consequences for government officials who lie to the public, the Deep State continues to wage war on those who challenge its lies, half-truths and obfuscations.

Case in point: Julian Assange.

Although the news of Assange’s plea deal was quickly overshadowed by the drama that is the 2024 presidential election (the WikiLeaks founder pled guilty to a “[single felony count of illegally obtaining and disclosing national security material in exchange for his release from a British prison](#)”), his persecution at the hands of the Deep State was a warning shot over the bow for anyone who dares speak truth to power.

The Deep State has embarked on a ruthless, take-no-prisoners, all-out assault on truth-tellers.

Activists, journalists and whistleblowers alike continue to be terrorized, traumatized, tortured and subjected to the fear-inducing, mind-altering, soul-destroying, smash-your-face-in tactics employed by the superpowers-that-be.

In an age of prosecutions for thought crimes, pre-crime deterrence programs, and government agencies that operate like organized crime syndicates, this is a new kind of tyranny being imposed on those who dare to expose the crimes of the Deep State, whose reach has gone global.

What happened to Assange was intended to send a message to anyone who dares to speak truth to power: don’t even consider it.



John Whitehead



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2024

Some background: Assange, the founder of a website that published secret information, news leaks, and classified media from anonymous sources, was arrested on April 11, 2019, on charges of helping U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning access and leak more than 700,000 classified [military documents that portray the U.S. government and its military as reckless, irresponsible and responsible for thousands of civilian deaths](#).

In true Orwellian fashion, the government would have us believe that it is Assange and Manning who are the real criminals for daring to expose the war machine's seedy underbelly.

This is how the police state deals with those who challenge its chokehold on power.

Make no mistake: the government is waging war on journalists and whistleblowers for disclosing information relating to government misconduct that is within the public's right to know.

Yet we desperately need greater scrutiny and transparency, not less.

Indeed, transparency is one of those things the shadow government fears the most.

Why? Because it might arouse the distracted American populace to actually exercise their rights and resist the tyranny that is inexorably asphyxiating their freedoms.

This need to shed light on government actions—to make the obscure, least transparent reaches of government accessible and accountable—was a common theme for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who famously coined the phrase, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant."

Of course, transparency is futile without a populace that is informed, engaged and prepared to hold the government accountable to abiding by the rule of law.

For this reason, it is vital that [citizens have the right to criticize the government without fear](#).

After all, we're citizens, not subjects. For those who don't fully understand the distinction between the two and why transparency is so vital to a healthy constitutional government, Manning explains it well: "[There is a bright distinction between citizens, who have rights and privileges protected by the state, and subjects, who are under the complete control and authority of the state.](#)"

Manning goes on to suggest that the U.S. "needs legislation to protect the public's right to free speech and a free press, to protect it from the actions of the executive branch and to promote the integrity and transparency of the US government."

Technically, we've already got such legislation on the books: the First Amendment.

The First Amendment gives the citizenry the right to speak freely, protest peacefully, expose government wrongdoing, and criticize the government without fear of arrest, isolation or any of the other punishments that have been meted out to whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden, Assange and Manning.

The challenge is holding the government accountable to obeying the law.

Yet this isn't merely about whether whistleblowers and journalists are part of a protected class under the Constitution. It's a debate over how long "we the people" will remain a protected class under the Constitution.

Following the current downward trajectory, it won't be long before *anyone* who believes in holding the government accountable is labeled an "extremist," is relegated to an underclass that doesn't fit in, must be [watched all the time](#), and is rounded up when the government deems it necessary.



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Eventually, we will all be potential suspects, terrorists and lawbreakers in the eyes of the government.

All of us are in danger.

Partisan politics have no place in this debate: Americans of all stripes would do well to remember that those who question the motives of government provide a necessary counterpoint to those who would blindly follow where politicians choose to lead.

We don't have to agree with every criticism of the government, but we must defend the rights of *all* individuals to speak freely without fear of punishment or threat of banishment.

Never forget: what the architects of the police state want are submissive, compliant, cooperative, obedient, meek citizens who don't talk back, don't challenge government authority, don't speak out against government misconduct, and don't step out of line.

What the First Amendment protects—and a healthy constitutional republic requires—are individuals such as Julian Assange who routinely exercise their right to speak truth to power.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the right to speak out against government wrongdoing is the quintessential freedom.

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