

On with MUSIC

DVD REVIEW:

By Dorothy Hernandez

Julian Assange: A Modern Day Hero?

Inside The World of WikiLeaks



Unless you've been living under a rock for the past year, you've probably heard of Julian Assange and his website, WikiLeaks, which publishes documents and information procured by whistleblowers. Assange and the website became notorious last year when the site published the Afghan War documents, a collection of some 75,000 documents cataloging 6 years of US military action in war torn Afghanistan, and sometimes referred to as the Afghan War Diary.

The new documentary, Julian Assange: A Modern Day Hero?—Inside The World of WikiLeaks, is like a 3 hour conversation with the journalist and activist, as it allows him to speak for himself about the morality of the project.

The film is divided into three parts. In the first, the camera follows Assange around, we see him being interviewed by a reporter who asks him whether his website compromises national security.

The reason this documentary is so valuable is that it provides a perspective on

Assange and WikiLeaks that you will most likely not be hearing through the mainstream media anytime soon. And that is quite a service. But the problem with this film is that it doesn't flow, and it makes no attempt to tell any semblance of a story. It begins completely out of the blue, with no introductions or context to guide the viewer into what he or she is about to see. In fact, if you don't know anything about

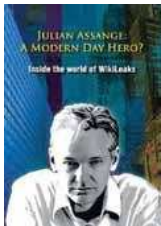
Julian Assange and WikiLeaks before sitting down to this DVD, you may well end up being quite confused. Prior knowledge of the 2010 publishing of the Afghan War Diary is almost a requirement. The film gains some

good momentum toward the end of the first part, but it comes to an abrupt stop. The entire aftermath of the publishing of the Afghan War Diary is completely ignored, as are the consequent allegations brought against Assange, charges he claims are politically motivated and designed to kill WikiLeaks.

An odd thing about the film is that the director listed in the credits is A.N.. Other. When the director/producer of a DVD removes their name from the project or uses a pseudonym, it usually means they're not very proud of the project. Of course in a case like this, the director simply may have feared being charged with aiding a marked man.

The reason the director is a phony may also be that there really was no director, per se. There is, of course, a camera. And it is being operated by some human being. But with the quality of production, editing and sequencing, that human being may certainly have not been a director, meaning the film is just a collection of video clips and footage. And that is most likely the case. The second and third parts of the documentary are two 1-hour long lectures delivered by Assange about the WikiLeaks project and its aims. Both date back to 2008-2009. The content of both lectures is similar and while the delivery is dry, it is insightful.

The same can be said for this DVD as a whole.



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