



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 28, 2021

## Key Witness Against Assange Recants Testimony

The United States' case against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was dealt a serious, if not fatal, blow as one of its key witnesses confessed that practically everything he told Washington about Assange was false.

According to the Icelandic newspaper [Stundin](#), Sigurdur Ingi Thordarson, 28, "who has a documented history with sociopathy and has received several convictions for sexual abuse of minors and wide-ranging financial fraud," led U.S. officials to believe "he was previously a close associate of" Assange. "In fact he had volunteered on a limited basis to raise money for Wikileaks in 2010 but was found to have used that opportunity to embezzle more than \$50,000 from the organization."



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WikiLeaks' investigation of the embezzlement is what led the young man to turn state's witness. Thordarson was already in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) sights after he — apparently on his own initiative — contacted hacker Hector Xavier Monsegur, known as "Sabu," to request hack attacks on Icelandic entities in 2011. Thordarson, claiming to be one of the top people at WikiLeaks, had previously sought out other hackers to go after Icelandic websites, again seemingly without any requests for such activities from anyone in WikiLeaks.

"What Thordarson did not know at the time was that the FBI had arrested Sabu in the beginning of June 2011 and threatened him into becoming an informant and a collaborator for the FBI," reported *Stundin*. "Thus, when Thordarson continued his previous pattern of requesting attacks on Icelandic interests, the FBI knew and saw an opportunity to implicate Julian Assange."

A couple months later, as WikiLeaks investigators began to close in on Thordarson, he offered to act as an informant against Assange for the United States. "The FBI enthusiastically embraced the idea," wrote the paper. However, the agency didn't quite get what it wanted at that time, perhaps because the Obama administration was wary of prosecuting Assange simply for doing what other journalists had done for years, albeit on a much larger scale.

Meanwhile, noted the newspaper, "charges were piling up against Thordarson with the Icelandic authorities for massive fraud, forgeries and theft on the one hand and for sexual violations against underage boys he had tricked or forced into sexual acts on the other." Psychiatrists who evaluated Thordarson during his trial deemed him "a sociopath, incapable of remorse but still criminally culpable for his actions." He was sentenced in 2013 and 2014, though the punishment was relatively lenient because he changed his plea to guilty in court.

By 2019, the Trump administration, notwithstanding [candidate Donald Trump's enthusiasm for WikiLeaks](#), decided to take another crack at Assange and gave Thordarson immunity in return for



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acting as a prosecution witness. “Their argument was that if they could prove [Assange] was a criminal rather than a journalist the charges would stick, and that was where Thordarson’s testimony would be key,” explained *Stundin*.

One of the charges in the latest indictment of Assange — based on Thordarson’s testimony — is that he tried “to hack into the computers of members of parliament and record their conversations,” penned *Stundin*. Thordarson told the paper that, in fact, Assange had never asked him to do either.

Thordarson also alleged in the indictment that he and Assange had attempted to decrypt a file stolen from an Icelandic bank. Thordarson now says the file in question had been leaked (not stolen) from a defunct bank, presumably by a whistleblower inside the bank, and had been shared online by many others, all of whom were trying to decrypt it to understand what had precipitated the 2008 financial crisis.

The indictment further claims that Assange used “unauthorized access given to him by a source” to log into an Icelandic government website. In reality, the login was legally Thordarson’s, and Assange never asked for it, Thordarson now claims.

Had the U.S. government been concerned with justice and not merely with claiming Assange’s scalp, officials would have seen through Thordarson’s claims. “Assange has never been suspected of any wrongdoing in Iceland,” noted *Stundin*. Furthermore, at the time he was allegedly committing these crimes, he was “working with members of parliament in updating Iceland’s freedom of press laws for the 21st century.”

It is, of course, possible that Thordarson was telling the truth a year or two ago and is lying now. But given that, according to *Stundin*, the evidence appears to corroborate his current version of events, National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden was surely correct when he [tweeted](#), “This is the end of the case against Julian Assange.” Or at least, as Glenn Greenwald [tweeted](#) in response, “It should be.”



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