

Before I get into the events of the last week of my involvement in the WikiLeaks Party let me set the context of my involvement.

2009. I was the outgoing president of the recently liquidated Victorian College of the Arts Student Union. The VCA had been absorbed into the University of Melbourne and Sharman "The Chainsaw" Pretty has been appointed Dean to tighten the belt and make the school less of a burden on UoM. We students together with teachers and industry who were standing up to the mighty behemoth were then given some important information. Proof that UoM were planning to rip the guts out of the college and leave it to die in mediocrity. Through some friends of the cause we had been given the VCs secret plans.

"Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music Business Plan 2010 *FINAL*" is the title of the document

"Great!" we said, "Now! Where to put it so everyone can see?"

"Upload website?"

"It's been taken down..."

"Found another!"

"It's down again..."

extensive google search

"What about this WikiLeaks.org thing I just found?"

And there the document still is:

http://www.wikileaks.org/wiki/Victorian_College_of_the_Arts_and_Music_Business_Plan_2010_final_summary,_2009

WikiLeaks, that I now know, a place willing to stand up for all that is right and show the world the truth, whether governments like it or not. It enabled us to always have a safe place to put documents to point to the atrocities in the world.

So began my exploration into this place of transparency.

Not long after I discover the Pirate Party of Australia. Freedom of Information and Culture. Civil and Digital Liberties. Government Transparency. This is something I can get my self behind. But that wasn't moving very fast. It didn't get going for the 2010 elections. In 2011 I get elected Deputy Secretary. The group keeps growing. I clash with Brendan Molloy, then the General Secretary. We get asked to speak at a rally in support of this Julian Assange guy. One of the other guys puts up a good speech. I meet Sam Castro for the first time. I get asked to speak at the next rally, really nervous but I do it.

Pirate Congress 2012. Newcomers with a lot of political experience are there. They put up a motion to get the party moving and registered with the AEC and the members approve. They set about their work in a committee. NC lays down a bunch of bizarre oversight. One of the committee unknowingly trips up and unbeknownst to them NC decides behind an in camera session that they are to be removed. No phone calls or emails, just bang they are gone. So much for transparency. I'm disheartened. That committee member resigns from the party.

I decide to run for local council at the last minute. I try to get endorsed by NC but am mostly met with silence. Oh well, it was last minute, I run as an independent Pirate. I become the highest polling person under the pirate flag in Australia so far with 3.11% in any election, beating the ACT Pirate's 0.04%, 0.05% and 0.05% results from their three electorates. It looks promising for me and the movement, that I did so well without any press and only a very small group of people helping. The platform of transparency in

governance seems to really resonate with people. The backlash against vagueness and non-transparent processes around the East West Link, the state government looking at removing Local Council's and other oversights and giant corporations like McDonalds ramrodding themselves over the top of communities like Tecoma continues to make myself and others think about how we need to change.

Julian Assange announces his political party. That sounds cool. It is suggested that I swap to his banner. Having issues with particular people in the NC, starting to waver from the cause. Pirate Party gets registered with the AEC! Better late than never! Start having a quiet word with Sam Castro about the WikiLeaks Party.

In another uncommunicative NC meeting, again without any phone calls, they sack the Pirate Party Victorian Coordinator and replace them. Final straw.

I resign.

I go full speed ahead with the joining the WLP.

I get invited to a meeting with Greg Barns and others to talk about how we are going to do this. I put my hand up to be the Victorian Volunteer Coordinator. There is a problem though, it's a big job. I can't financially afford to work full time on a campaign. So I ask if there is any possibilities to pay me. There is. I discuss with Sam Castro, Kaz Cochrane and John Shipton about the terms and we find an agreement. I do party work around my other job. Kevin Rudd calls the election a bit earlier than we had been planning. So we scramble to get everything going.

I organise meetings with members and supporters in regional Victoria. We launch the candidates at Fitzroy Town Hall. Myself and the two National Volunteer Coordinators send draft contracts to John Shipton as our pay has been extremely inconstant. We give him a bit of leeway because we want the party to succeed. He promises to pay us what he can when donations start coming in. He never gets back to us about the contracts though. Preferences are starting to be discussed. But really not my problem, I just hear bits and pieces because those working on that are around me in the office.

Gets closer to the day the preferences are due. I am told that Family First has broken ranks from Glenn Druery's little cabal of the right wing Christians, who which the NC have already knocked back, and has offered WLP a "good" deal. Members of the national council now heatedly discuss this over the next week.

Someone in Sydney tells Max Phillips, Marrickville Greens Councillor, something to make him believe that we are going to preference the micro right and he blasts it out on twitter. I stupidly snap at Asher Wolf on twitter about this. Learn my lesson and leave it.

The tension of the preference debates with in the party escalates. Even though I and a bunch of others have no direct input in this debate, work in the office gets slower and slower because we are waiting to hear the final decisions. It will have a profound effect on how we run the rest of the campaign. We go to the Oursay.org event. A majority of the WikiLeaks Party National Council decides not to preference any right wing group above the Greens. Good. I can now get on with my job. We feel we have a very good chance to get Julian elected. I watch Sam, Kaz and Greg fill out the GVTs for Victoria.

Saturday I go to Etihad Stadium and stand out the front with a WLP banner and hand out flyers. It's really cold. We almost run out.

Sunday morning I look at twitter. Asher Wolf, Max Phillips and others are going berserk because we have preferenced the Shooter and Fishers and a bunch of Nazis above the Greens in NSW and the Nationals in WA.

What...

A facebook statement from Sydney goes out but doesn't really explain much. I go into the office but get pretty much nothing done. A bit shattered. We had scheduled a meeting with everyone for monday morning 10am anyway and decide to discuss plans there.

Meeting Monday 19th of August. We start at 11:30amish when everyone gets there. After much yelling and tears we decide on the idea of an independent review. It is agreed that it is the only way to get this all sorted out with any integrity intact. Myself, Sam, Kaz, and the others in the office leave Greg Barns and go to discuss details of the review to present to the NC. There is resistance from some on NC.

Tuesday morning. Review has more traction now. NC have basically agreed it shall happen. Just working on the details. I'm fielding phone calls from volunteers wanting to know what is going on. We have a volunteer meeting that night. 50 odd people are there. Spend most of the time discussing what has happened. People are pretty upset, but say that we should have the review as soon as possible.

Wednesday morning. John Shipton tries to call me, but I'm in the city loop and can't take his call. I get to the office and see Sam, Kaz and Leslie Cannold are at a cafe across the road. Daniel Mathews joins us. Review looks in jeopardy again. Then it's not. Then are waiting for Julian to have a say on the statement. It goes out. Ok again we can get back to work. Leslie is having continued doubts about what is happening. I leave a message with John Shipton that he can call me back any time.

John calls Sean Bedlam, social media captain, and says that he is taking direct control of the campaign and is circumventing the National Council. He then calls me back and says the same thing to me, "You and Sean have to make myself and Gregory and others the point of reference and bypass the National Council because they are a bunch of raving fucking lunatics." Huh? Is he saying that we now need to circumvent the democratic processes of the party?

Resignation statements start being written. The small office we are in starts to smell of sweat and tears. Pete Green, National Volunteer Coordinator, say he has to leave, he doesn't want to be a part of this. He was originally hired by Greg, so we are not sure if he will go straight to him and tell him what is happening. Pete insists that he won't, I believe him, but it is making everyone very nervous. People are insisting we give the NC one last chance to fix this. Sam and Kaz email everyone. No answer. Greg calls Leslie to scold her for sending out a tweet he didn't like earlier this day. They start calling other council members, discussions are had. Time to call London. They message Julian's assistant, it's 7am there, he should be able to answer. Nothing. John Shipton calls Kaz and threatens her with legal action if she opposes him running the internal review. Has he gone mad?

Leslie says she can't wait. She posts her statement.

<http://cannold.com/articles/article/leslie-resignation-statement-of-fact-on-candidacy-re-the-wikileaks-party/>

I help her deal with the press.

People are still pushing for to see if the NC can fix this. Greg is calling and bouncing between how can we fix this now that Leslie is gone and then saying he will "destroy her" after the election. Calling London, Julian's assistant is saying we have to wait. We insist on talking to him now, no answer. Sending emails, no answer... Greg Barns calls to say that he will advise Julian not to speak to us or the National Council.

We press the send button on the various resignation statements.

<http://waca.net.au/resignations-from-the-wikileaks-party-statements/>

<http://danielmathews.info/blog/2013/08/statement-of-resignation-from-wikileaks-party->

[national-council/](#)

I send this email to NC:

“To WikiLeaks Party National Council

Given everything that has happened in the last week, I cannot justify to myself my continued involvement with this organisation.

I came to work for this thinking that the organisation would be new force in Australian Politics. One free from the rampant corruption of democracy that affects the world at the moment.

I am a firm believer in working within the system and outside the system. This was an extremely rare opportunity to take something that resonates outside the system inside.

You have dropped the ball with your petty infighting and control issues which has lead to a corruption of this.

Fuck you for putting me and so many others through this.

Please pay me the the last \$2400 from the last 2 weeks of my employment and remove me as a member of the party.

Regards, David Haidon”

It plays out in the media. We console each other. It instills in me a need to keep going despite these set backs. Now we need to work out the next step.

We will keep fighting for Transparency, Accountability, and Justice.

David Haidon

Former Victorian Volunteer Coordinator of the WikiLeaks Party

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