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**MEDIA RELEASE: The David McBride Story**

**"If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth."***Julian Assange*

On 14 May 2024, Afghan Files whistleblower David McBride was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison. Friday, 8 November 2024 will mark his 175th day in prison. On that night, a fundraiser for David McBride will be held at the TLC building at 16 Peel Street South Brisbane.

Although the Brereton Report concluded that there was credible evidence that Australian troops killed 39 Afghan civilians, none of the soldiers responsible has been jailed. Instead, it is a whistleblower who has been imprisoned.

The November 8 meeting, The Persecution of Truth 2, will feature Griffith University Professor A.J. Brown (Chair of Transparency International Australia) and the President of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, Michael Cope. They will discuss the McBride case and Justice Wilson’s review of Queensland’s whistleblower law, *The Public Disclosure Act, 2010*.

The event will feature the first appearance in Brisbane since Julian’s release of his father, John Shipton.

In June, Julian Assange was freed after fourteen years of persecution, the last five in Britain’s notorious Belmarsh prison, even though he was never convicted of any crime, for exposing US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. To gain his release, he was forced to plead guilty to one charge to avoid dying in prison.

Professor A. J. Brown said:

"Julian Assange's welcome and long overdue return shows how much most Australians recognise the value of transparency, accountability and whistleblowing as a means of ensuring justice is done.  As a nation, we now have a great opportunity to apply those same positive lessons to a serious overhaul of Australia's own whistleblower protection laws, especially to make sure that the kind of injustice that has been done to David McBride, and is still threatened against other public interest whistleblowers such as Richard Boyle, cannot be done and wherever possible, is reversed and compensated for - or our whistleblower protection regimes will never be credible and simply will not do their job of encouraging others to speak up."

Freed from the burden of his epic cam­paign to free his son, John Shipton has been enjoying reunion with his family, and able to pursue other interests. Still vitally concerned with world issues, John Shipton has just returned from his trip to Russia to observe the 2024 BRICS confer­ence. He will discuss BRICS, the return of Julian Assange, and join in the defence of his now-imprisoned comrade-in-struggle, David McBride.

With Assange freed at last, the Assange Campaign in Brisbane has achieved its aims, but we are continuing to campaign for whistleblowers and whistleblower protection under a new name, Truth Not War. The freedom of David McBride, who was a powerful champion for Assange, is our current project.

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