

# Free Chelsea Manning

former intel analyst # prisoner # trans woman # writer # advocate

MANNING'S STORY OUR WORK PRESS RESOURCES CONTACT

## About Chelsea Manning

Like 260 people like this. Be the first of your friends. Tweet G+1 27 reddit this!

"If you had free reign over classified networks... and you saw incredible things, awful things... things that belonged in the public domain, and not on some server stored in a dark room in Washington DC... what would you do?"

"God knows what happens now. Hopefully worldwide discussion, debates, and reforms... I want people to see the truth... because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public."

-Quotes from an online chat attributed to Chelsea Manning

**The trial of military whistle-blower and democracy advocate Chelsea Manning (known as Bradley Manning until her Aug 22, 2013 announcement) finished on August 21st.** After a prosecution which starkly showcased US government officials' misplaced priorities when it comes to human rights, Army whistleblower PVT Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison. This case sets a dangerous precedent for the first amendment, opening whistle-blowers and those who help them to extreme prosecution. **However, as we enter the appeals process, [Chelsea] Manning's story is far from over.**

The information that Manning gave to the public exposed the unjust detainment of innocent people at Guantanamo Bay, shown us the true human cost of our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and changed journalism forever. There is no evidence that anyone died as a result of the leaked information. **Through WikiLeaks Manning revealed:**



- the **Collateral Murder** video that exposed the killing of unarmed civilians and two Reuters journalists by a US Apache helicopter crew in Iraq
- the **Afghan War Diary** that revealed uninvestigated civilian casualties and contractor abuse
- the **Iraq War Logs** that revealed civilian casualties, and uninvestigated reports of torture
- the **US diplomatic cables** that revealed the role that corporate interests and spying play in international diplomacy

Read more about what was revealed in these documents.

**For her actions, PVT Manning has received the following honors and awards:**

Sam Adams Award (2014) – Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence

Sean Macbride Peace Prize (2013) – International Peace Bureau

In His Footsteps Award (2013) – Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club

Nobel Peace Prize nominee (2014, 2013 & 2012) – Movement of the Icelandic Parliament, Oklahoma Center for Conscience and Peace Research, and former Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire

Person of the Year (2012) – UK Guardian

2013 Peace Prize – US Peace Memorial Foundation

Peacemaker of the Year (2013) – The Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County

Hero of Peace Award (2013) – Eisenhower Chapter of Veterans for Peace

SF Trans March Award (2013) – San Francisco Trans March

SF Pride Grand Marshal Runner-Up (2013) – SF LGBT Pride former Grand Marshals

People's Choice Human Rights Award (2012) – Global Exchange

**More About the Trial**

On July 30, 2013, PVT Manning was found not guilty of the most serious charge against her, that of “Aiding the Enemy.” However, she was convicted of 20 offenses, including 6 under the Espionage Act. On August 21, 2013 she was sentenced by military judge Col. Denise Lind to 35 years in prison -less than the 60 years requested by the government, yet still an unusually harsh sentence for a non-violent crime. **The New York Times Editorial Board published the following in response:**

*“35 years is far too long a sentence by any standard. In more than two weeks of hearings, government lawyers presented vague and largely speculative claims that Private Manning’s leaks had endangered lives and ‘chilled’ diplomatic relations. On the other hand, much of what Private Manning released was of public value”*

**Human Rights Watch general council Dinah PoKempner stated that:**

*“The aggressive prosecution and harsh sentencing of Manning not only contrasts sharply with the total impunity of former senior US officials for torture and related abuses, but also far exceeds the sentences most democratic countries impose for public leaks of sensitive information.”*

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates called the effect of WikiLeaks’ releases on U.S. foreign relations “fairly modest.” Yet to the dismay of many that government decision-makers chose to persecute the whistle-blower rather than prosecute the war criminals who were exposed. Thousands of organizations and individuals are now calling for President Obama to grant Manning clemency. **Immediately following the trial Amnesty International released the following statement:**

*“[Chelsea] Manning should be shown clemency in recognition of his motives for acting as [she] did, the treatment [she] endured in his early pre-trial detention, and the due process shortcomings during [her] trial. The President doesn’t need to wait for this sentence to be appealed to commute it; [she] can and should do so right now”*

**Unlawful Pre-trial Punishment**

Soldiers are promised fair treatment and a speedy trial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). However, PVT Manning was arrested in April of 2010, and waited in pre-trial confinement for over three years before her trial finally began.

Additionally, during the first 10 months of her incarceration she was subjected to solitary confinement at the Quantico, Virginia, Marine Corps brig. During this time, Manning was denied meaningful exercise, social interaction, sunlight, and on a number of occasions was forced to stay completely naked. Pre-trial punishment is clearly illegal under US military law, and these extreme conditions were unique to Manning. In March



2011, chief US State Department spokesperson PJ Crowley called Manning's treatment "**ridiculous and counterproductive and stupid.**" Following his immediate resignation, he has stated that the prosecution's heavy-handed persecution of Manning has undermined the government's credibility.

Manning's treatment sparked a probe by the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez. Mr. Mendez stated that he has been "frustrated by the prevarication of the US government with regard to my attempts to visit Mr. Manning." After having his requests to visit Manning repeatedly blocked, and after completing a fourteen month investigation, Mr. Mendez issued a statement saying that Manning's treatment has been "**cruel and inhuman.**"

It only took one week in April 2011 to have over a half million people sign a **petition** calling on President Obama to end Manning's isolation, stating that her treatment served as "a chilling deterrent to other potential whistleblowers committed to public integrity." Additionally, over **300 top legal scholars** declared her treatment a violation of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, as well as a violation of the Fifth Amendment's guarantee against punishment without trial. Among the signatories was professor Laurence Tribe, a Harvard professor who taught President Obama. Professor Tribe was, until recently, a senior advisor to the US Justice Department.

Partially in response to public outcry, on April 21, 2011, PVT Manning was moved from Quantico to Fort Leavenworth, KS, where she was immediately judged to be a low-risk prisoner and her conditions of confinement greatly improved. Military Judge Denise Lind later ruled that the conditions at Quantico had indeed constituted "Unlawful Pretrial Punishment," but only granted Manning 112 days credit, effectively negligible in the face of her 35 year final sentence.

### Going Forward

Manning's **supporters** continue to demand her release. Among the supporters is the famous whistle-blower, **Daniel Ellsberg**, who leaked the Pentagon Papers in 1971. Recognizing the valor required to tell the truth, Ellsberg calls PVT Chelsea Manning a hero and a patriot. You can see more significant organizations and people who have voiced support for Manning **here** and **here**. Immediately following the end of the trial, the Chelsea Manning Support Network along with Amnesty International launched a **petition to President Obama and the White House** demanding clemency for PVT Manning, and set up a "**Pardon PVT Manning**" campaign website where supporters can submit photos holding signs of support.

We hope that you will join us as well. **See what you can do** to support justice in this historic time.

### Here are some recommended articles with more information:

- **What did WikiLeaks reveal?**
- **Chelsea Manning's statement to the court.**
- **Army SPC Ethan McCord on Media Coverage of Chelsea Manning**
- **Homecoming for U.S. troops attributed to WikiLeaked cable**
- **Military official's unlawful influence mimics Commander-in-Chief**

Read the **Wikipedia article on Chelsea Manning**.

\* Download the full charge sheet: **charge sheet**