



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on September 5, 2012

Bradley Manning Demonstrations Planned for September 6

On Thursday, September 6, [supporters of Bradley Manning are planning to hold several nonviolent demonstrations](#) around the country. The protests are timed to occur at the same time President Obama delivers his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

This isn't the first time those advocating for the release of the Army private have clashed with President Obama. In August, [Manning activists "occupied" the Obama campaign headquarters](#) in Oakland and Los Angeles in California, as well [as the office in Portland, Oregon](#).



Protesters reportedly targeted the Obama campaign offices in response to a comment made by the President in 2011 wherein he said that [Manning "broke the law."](#) This statement has been interpreted by Manning activists as a declaration of Manning's guilt before a trial on the merits of the charges has been held.

Some of those participating in the Oakland and Portland demonstrations were arrested, although the event went largely unreported.

"We are planning to replicate [those occupations] on a bigger scale in dozens of cities across the U.S. on September 6, the final day of the DNC, when Obama will be making his acceptance speech," says Nathan Fuller, [spokesman for the Bradley Manning Support Network](#). "If he said anything on the matter, it'd be better than his silence since declaring Bradley Manning guilty."

According to one story publicizing the upcoming events, Manning's supporters demand that "the president ensure that no one else should endure the kind of barbarous treatment Manning suffered at the base in Quantico." On July 27, the defense counsel representing Army PFC Bradley Manning filed [a motion to dismiss](#) "owing to the unlawful pretrial punishment to which PFC Manning was subjected while at Marine Corps Base, Quantico [Virginia]." [Another motion was filed requesting a continuance](#) of the proceedings owing to the slow production by the government of reams of documents that are "obviously material to the preparation of the defense."

David Coombs is Manning's civilian lawyer and in [a recent blog post](#) he declared that the contents of the Article 13 motion (the motion to dismiss) would "shock the conscience of the court." Coombs' confidence was well founded as the tale related by him in the motion is disturbing and shines an unfavorable light on high-ranking American military officials.

One such revelation concerns a three-star Army general who allegedly ordered the brutal treatment of Manning while he was detained at the brig in Quantico. Coombs claims that emails he has obtained demonstrate that two separate brig commanders carried out the general's orders in "clear violation of



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Article 13 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

In relevant part, [Article 13 reads](#):

No person, while being held for trial, may be subjected to punishment or penalty other than arrest or confinement upon the charges pending against him, nor shall the arrest or confinement imposed upon him be any more rigorous than the circumstances required to insure his presence, but he may be subjected to minor punishment during that period for infractions of discipline.

As portrayed by Coombs, the treatment to which PFC Manning was subjected clearly violates the prohibition against confinement “any more rigorous than the circumstances required....”

Throughout his imprisonment, PFC Manning was held in a 6 x 8 cell in what is known as MAX Custody, a condition Coombs describes as “the functional equivalent of solitary confinement.” Manning was kept in this state for more than 23 hours a day, being allowed only 20 minutes respite a day during which he was to exercise. Such activity was nearly impossible, however, as his hands and feet remained shackled during this time.

Additionally, as part of his MAX Custody and Prevention of Injury (POI) classification, Manning was forbidden from lying down on his rack during the day and he could not lean against the wall. He was ordered to sit upright on the rack without back support all day. And, during the hours of 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., Manning was required to stay awake.

When confronted about the inhuman conditions under which Manning was being detained, military officials maintained that he was being treated in this manner as means of preventing injury. This despite repeated psychiatric evaluations declaring such treatment unnecessary. In fact, the psychiatrists who evaluated Manning repeatedly informed Quantico Brig officials that PFC Manning’s POI status was unwarranted as the accused posed no risk of harming himself and that in fact the prolonged POI status was causing PFC Manning psychological harm. As Coombs reports, “The psychiatrists’ recommendations were outright ignored by Quantico officials.”

In what is described as “the biggest leak of classified information in U.S. history,” Manning is accused of passing over 700,000 documents and video clips to WikiLeaks, the widely known website devoted to exposing government corruption throughout the world.

Manning’s defense team avers that their client was “troubled” and that he was not competent to have been allowed access to classified information.

Private Manning, 24, from Crescent, Oklahoma, has been detained since he was arrested on May 29, 2010 while on deployment with the 10th Mountain Division in Iraq. While on duty near Baghdad, Manning had access to the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) and the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System. SIPRNET is the network used by the U.S. government to transmit classified information.

Manning’s arrest came as the result of information provided to the FBI by a computer hacker named Adrian Lamo. Lamo told agents that during an online chat in May 2010, Manning claimed to have downloaded classified information from SIPRNet and sent it to WikiLeaks.

According to published reports, the material Manning is accused of unlawfully appropriating includes a large cache of U.S. diplomatic cables (approximately 250,000), as well as videos of an American airstrike on Baghdad conducted in July 2007 and a similar attack in May 2009 on a site near Granai, Afghanistan (an event sometimes known as the Granai Massacre).



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In his defense, Manning's lawyers argued that Manning was not the only one in his unit with access to the computers from which the information in controversy was obtained. As [reported by the Associated Press](#):

They say he was in emotional turmoil, partly because he was a gay soldier while U.S. armed forces still barred gays from serving openly. The defense also claims Manning's apparent disregard for security rules during stateside training and his increasingly violent outbursts after deployment were red flags that should have prevented him from having access to classified material.

The prosecutors countered with printed copies of excerpts of Internet chats found on Manning's personal computer. According to the Army, these transcripts prove Manning's unlawful collaboration with the founder and editor of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange.

[At a hearing on August 30](#), the judge in the case, Army Colonel Denise Lind, issued a revised court martial schedule. According to the new calendar the hearing on Manning's motion to dismiss the case based on his unlawful treatment at Quantico will be begin on November 27.

The trial schedule has been frequently changed by Judge Lind and on August 30 she announced the court martial was reset for February 4-March 15, 2013.

Assuming the trial begins as planned, PFC Manning will have been imprisoned for nearly 1,000 days without a trial.

Regardless of one's opinion of Manning or his alleged actions, due process is a bedrock principle of individual liberty that must be upheld and defended by all those dedicated to the preservation of our Constitution.

Photo: CodePink activists hold signs in support of U.S. Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, the alleged leaker of documents to WikiLeaks, who is currently jailed, during a demonstration outside FBI headquarters in Washington, Jan. 17, 2011: AP Images



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