



Manning Acquitted of Aiding the Enemy, Found Guilty on Other Charges

The military judge in the court martial of Bradley Manning (shown) found the Army PFC who sent hundreds of thousands of classified documents to WikiLeaks [not guilty of the most serious charge against him](#), aiding the enemy. A conviction on that charge would have left Manning, 25, facing a possible life sentence without possibility of parole. He was found guilty on several other charges, however, and likely faces many more years behind bars, following his detention in a military prison since his arrest in July 2010. His sentencing hearing is scheduled to begin Wednesday.



The judge, Col. Denise Lind, on July 30 found Manning guilty of five counts of theft, five counts of espionage, a computer fraud charge and other infractions. The defendant had requested that a judge, not a jury, determine the verdict. He faces a potential maximum sentence of 128 years for those charges.

Manning pleaded guilty in February to misuse of classified information and could face up to 20 years in prison for that offense alone. The Army PFC was an intelligence analyst stationed in Iraq, where he used his knowledge of computer operations to gain access to secret government documents. The materials he turned over to WikiLeaks included footage of a 2007 U.S. Army helicopter attack in Iraq that killed at least nine civilians, including a Reuters newsman. The video was put on YouTube and went viral, creating outrage over the killings and adding fuel to opposition to the U.S. role in Iraq. Other documents released are said to have included information about U.S. combat operations and treatment of prisoners.

Manning faced 21 charges related to his turning over of some 700,000 documents to WikiLeaks, a website dedicated to exposing government secrets. He acknowledged his unauthorized disclosure of classified material, but said he didn't believe the information would harm troops in Afghanistan and Iraq or threaten national security.

His two-month long trial ended last week, as military prosecutor Major Ashden Fein charged in his closing statement that Manning is a traitor who joined the Army for the purpose of stealing government documents, having them published, and then enjoying fame and adulation as a whistleblower. Manning's lawyer, David Combs, argued that the defendant was a soldier troubled by what he saw his government doing in Iraq.

The verdict and sentence will be reviewed by the commander of the Military District of Washington.

Photo of PFC Bradley Manning: AP Images



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