

Manning Faces Sentencing for WikiLeaks Disclosures

DAVID DISHNEAU, Associated Press PAULINE JELINEK, Associated Press



Fort Meade, MD (AP) — More than three years after his arrest in Iraq, Army Pfc. Bradley Manning is set to learn the price he'll pay for leaking an unprecedented volume of classified information to a once-obscure, anti-secrecy website.

Manning's sentencing Wednesday in a military courtroom at Fort Meade, near Baltimore, caps a 12-week trial and a much longer legal battle over the former intelligence analyst's intentions when he reached out to WikiLeaks.

Prosecutors portray Manning, now 25, as "the determined insider," an anarchist hacker and traitor who started working within weeks of his 2009 deployment to provide WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange with exactly what they wanted. The government has urged the military judge, Army Col. Denise Lind, to sentence him to 60 years in prison for crimes that include six Espionage Act violations, five theft counts and computer fraud.

Manning and his defense team maintain he was an idealistic soldier with a pure motive — to expose brutal truths about America's military and diplomatic corps. They say the gay soldier's gender-identity crisis in the "don't ask, don't tell" military reached a crescendo that caused him to act out, mistakenly believing that by pouring secret government documents and video onto the Internet, he could change the way the world viewed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — and, perhaps, all wars.

"I believed I was going to help people, not hurt people," Manning said in a courtroom apology last week.

The leaked material included video of a U.S. helicopter attack that killed at least two civilians — a Reuters news photographer and his driver. The 700,000 leaked documents endangered the lives of U.S. intelligence sources and prompted several

Manning Faces Sentencing for WikiLeaks Disclosures

Published on Wireless Design & Development (<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com>)

ambassadors to be recalled, reassigned or expelled, prosecutors showed.

Defense attorney David Coombs has suggested a sentence no longer than the expiration date of the classified information Manning leaked: 25 years.

Manning acknowledged wrongdoing in February and offered to serve up to 20 years in prison for lesser versions of the charged offenses. But prosecutors led by Maj. Ashden Fein sought to hold him accountable for serious crimes, and largely succeeded. Lind convicted Manning July 30 on 20 of the 22 charges. However, prosecutors were unable to prove that Manning aided the enemy, a crime punishable by life in prison.

Still, he faces up to 90 years for the convictions. And prosecutors were adamant in asking Lind to ensure that Manning spend most of his remaining years locked up.

On Wednesday morning, a small group of Manning supporters — fewer than 10 — gathered with "Free Bradley Manning" posters outside the main gate of Fort Meade. One of the group's leaders, Jeff Paterson, said he realistically hoped for a sentence of about 10 years.

"Obviously, we believe Bradley Manning has served plenty of time in prison," he said. Paterson added that "today is simply the beginning of a new campaign to do everything we can for Bradley," including supporting him through appeals.

Military prisoners can earn up to 120 days a year off their sentence for good behavior and job performance, but must serve at least one-third of any prison sentence before they can become eligible for parole.

Manning will get credit for about 3 1/2 years of pretrial confinement, including 112 days for being illegally punished by harsh conditions at the Quantico, Va., Marine Corps brig.

He was held at Quantico for nine months, from July 2010 to April 2011, when he was moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Throughout his time at Quantico, he was designated a "maximum custody" detainee and considered at risk of either suicide or harming himself or others. His lawyers asserted he was locked up alone for at least 23 hours a day, forced to sleep naked for several nights and required to stand naked at attention one morning.

Under military law, the verdict and sentence must be reviewed — and may be reduced — by the commander of the Military District of Washington, currently Maj. Gen. Jeffery S. Buchanan. Besides the court-martial record, Manning's defense team can submit other pieces of information in a bid for leniency.

If Buchanan approves a sentence that includes a bad-conduct discharge, a dishonorable discharge or confinement for a year or more, the case will be automatically reviewed by the Army Court of Criminal Appeals.

Further appeals can be made to the military's highest court, the U.S. Court of

Manning Faces Sentencing for WikiLeaks Disclosures

Published on Wireless Design & Development (<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com>)

Appeals for the Armed Forces, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Amnesty International and the Bradley Manning Support Network have announced an online petition asking President Barack Obama to pardon Manning.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/29/2015 - 4:31pm):

<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com/news/2013/08/manning-faces-sentencing-wikileaks-disclosures>