

Do workers have a right to know the truth? Free Chelsea Manning now!

written by Prisoners Solidarity Committee
March 15, 2019



Chelsea Manning before her grand jury appearance on March 8.

U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton in Alexandria, Va., expressed the government's

contempt for every woman, every trans person and every worker when he sent heroic military whistleblower Chelsea Manning [back to jail](#) on International Women's Day.

Manning spent seven years in a military prison under the Obama administration for sharing evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq with the news site Wikileaks. She defied a grand jury subpoena meant to force her to testify in a case that U.S. prosecutors are building against Wikileaks founder and editor Julian Assange.

In a prepared statement given at the grand jury hearing on March 8, [Manning said](#): "I will not comply with this, or any other grand jury. Imprisoning me for my refusal to answer questions only subjects me to additional punishment for my repeatedly stated ethical objections to the grand-jury system.

"The grand jury's questions pertained to disclosures from nine years ago, and took place six years after an in-depth computer forensics case, in which I testified for almost a full day about these events. I stand by my previous public testimony.

"I will not participate in a secret process that I morally object to, particularly one that has been historically used to entrap and persecute activists for protected political speech."

Judge Hilton, a Reagan appointee, immediately found Manning in contempt and ordered her imprisoned "until she purges" — i.e., agrees to testify — or for the life of the grand jury, which could be up to 18 months.

The judge and prosecutors brushed aside serious concerns for Manning's health and safety raised by her defense attorneys. They asked that Manning, who recently underwent surgery, be confined to her home, where she could receive appropriate, trans-affirmative medical care. Judge Hilton claimed U.S. marshals can handle her medical care in the Alexandria jail.

Democratic President Barack Obama forced Manning to serve seven years of a 35-year military prison sentence before finally bowing to protests and granting her clemency at the end of his second term. Incoming Republican [President Donald Trump tweeted](#) that she was an “Ungrateful TRAITOR” who “should never have been released from prison.”

During her long imprisonment, Manning was tortured with solitary confinement and other forms of extreme isolation. She was also denied appropriate health care.

Manning’s attorney, Moira Meltzer-Cohen, said they will appeal the judge’s ruling.



Supporters rally outside jail March 9.
Photo: Mark Hand / DC Media Group

No right to the truth?

The punitive imprisonment of Chelsea Manning is not only an attack on her as a whistleblower, an anti-war veteran and a trans woman. It is an attack on all working-class people in this country, including prisoners.

The message sent by Judge Hilton, federal prosecutors and the whole bipartisan capitalist political establishment is: Workers have no right to know the truth about the crimes the government is committing in their name against their fellow workers and oppressed people around the globe.

Manning is being punished for rejecting this long agreed-upon strategy of keeping workers and their communities in the dark as a means of tamping down any protest against the very profitable war machine or any expression of solidarity with our class siblings abroad.

Fortunately, expressions of support for political prisoner Chelsea Manning were quick in coming.

Roger Waters, the songwriter and musician who has recently distinguished himself with his outspoken support for Bolivarian Venezuela, [took to social media](#) on behalf of “great heroic whistleblower Chelsea Manning.” “We support you completely and we’ll work unreservedly to get you released from this insane incarceration that the US government is imposed on you and I’m for you.”

National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who was forced to flee the country after exposing government cyber-spying practices, [saluted Manning’s courage](#) and said, “She must be released.”

Code Pink founder [Medea Benjamin declared](#) that Manning is once again being penalized for her work as a whistleblower in 2010, when she was trying to inform people “about the abuses of our government in the invasion of Iraq.”

Pentagon Papers whistleblower [Daniel Ellsberg](#), who helped expose U.S. war crimes in Vietnam, said: “Chelsea Manning is again acting heroically in the name of press freedom, and it’s a travesty that she has been sent back to jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury. An investigation into WikiLeaks for publishing is a grave threat to all journalists’ rights, and Chelsea is doing us all a service for fighting it.

“She has already been tortured, spent years in jail and has suffered more than enough. She should be released immediately.”

Break the isolation!

On March 9, the day after Manning was again imprisoned, [anti-war activists rallied](#) outside the jail. When supporters asked to visit her, they were turned away by the Alexandria sheriff’s deputies, raising concerns that Manning will again be subject to punishment by isolation.

Protester David Barrows said he was worried about the impact of the judge’s order on Manning’s health. “Chelsea Manning has been a longtime victim of torture,” he said. “Victims of torture have a lot of trauma to deal with. It never fully goes away.”

For updates and information on upcoming actions in support of Manning, follow [Chelsea Resists](#) on Twitter. You can also donate to her [legal defense fund](#).

Supporters can help break the isolation campaign by writing to her:

Chelsea Elizabeth Manning
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Road
Alexandria, VA 22314

The jail has many restrictions on mail for prisoners. You can write letters with pen or colored pencils on paper, and send newspapers. Money orders or cashier’s checks

may also be sent for canteen purposes. Be sure to put the person's name and your name and address on the money order or cashier's check.

And get involved with the [Prisoners Solidarity Committee!](#)

How to Write to Chelsea

Address

Chelsea Elizabeth Manning
A0181426
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314

Prisons impose repressive, arbitrary regulations on what prisoners may receive from the outside world and Truesdale Detention Center is no different. Follow the guide below when sending mail:

Do

- ✓ Address your letter exactly as shown above
- ✓ Send letters on white paper
- ✓ Use the mail service to send letters
- ✓ Include color drawings in your letters
- ✓ Sparingly send 4x6 photos, as she may only keep 10 at a time

Do Not

- ✗ Send cards, packages, postcards, photocopies or cash
- ✗ Decorate the outside of the envelope
- ✗ Send books or magazines

Chelsea
resists

