

Bradley Manning Tortured at Quantico

Details of Defense Motion

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US Army photograph of Pfc. Bradley Manning

A more than one hundred page defense motion detailing how Pfc. Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of releasing classified information to WikiLeaks, was subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment while held at Quantico Marine Brig has been [made public](#). The motion on “unlawful pretrial punishment” asserts officers at the brig made a decision to hold Manning in the harshest conditions possible, regardless of his psychological health. It concludes, as a result of “flagrant violation” of Manning’s “constitutional rights,” the judge should dismiss all charges with prejudice or, at minimum, grant “meaningful relief in the form of at least 10-for-1 sentencing credit for the 258 days PFC Manning inappropriately spent in the equivalent of solitary confinement.”

According to [the motion](#), in January 2011, a senior officer told multiple brig officials during a meeting that he was to be held in “maximum custody” and under “prevention of injury” (POI) watch indefinitely. The officer claimed that nothing was going to change or happen to Manning on his watch. A Brig psychiatrist did not approve, was upset and said, “Sir, I am concerned because if you’re going to do that, maybe you might want to call it something else, because it’s not based on anything from behavioral health.” The senior officer replied, “We’ll do whatever we want to do. You [the Brig psychiatrists] make your recommendation and I have to make a decision based on everything else.” To which the psychiatrist said, “Then don’t say it’s based on mental health. You can say it’s MAX custody, but just don’t say that we’re somehow involved in this.” The senior officer dismissed this request. Those at the top of the chain of command would use his “mental health” as an excuse to keep him in conditions of solitary confinement.

For nine months, Brig psychiatrists issued recommendations that Manning be downgraded from POI status, which gave the Brig the power to keep him isolated in the prison. They told Brig officials he posed no risk to himself and that the designation was actually causing Manning “psychological harm.” But these concerns and recommendations were entirely disregarded.

Under POI, according to the defense website, Manning was required to eat all of his meals alone and could only eat his meals with a spoon. He was not allowed to speak with any prisoners. He was given a suicide mattress with a built-in pillow. He was given a “tear-proof security blanket” that was “extremely coarse” and led to rashes and carpet burns on Manning’s skin. The blanket was stiff and would not “contour to his body” so it did not keep him warm. He was not allowed any personal items in the cell. He could only have “one book

or one magazine” and when he was not reading the book or magazine would be taken away. It also was taken away each day before he went to sleep. He was not permitted to exercise in his cell. Any attempts to do push-ups or sit-ups would lead to officers ordering him to stop. Every night he went to sleep he had to strip down to his underwear and surrender his clothing to guards.

Manning had to request toilet paper when he needed to go to the bathroom. He would have to wait for guards to get around to providing this to him. No soap was in his cell. Sometimes when he wanted to wash his hands after using the bathroom, he would be able to, but sometimes he would not. No shoes were allowed to be worn. Initially, he was only allowed one hour of “permitted correspondence” a day. Then, after Oct 27, 2010, that changed to 2 hours/day.

Constantly, Manning was monitored. Guards checked on him every five minutes asking, “Are you okay?” Manning had to respond affirmatively each time and guards would take note of each exchange in log books. When guards could not see him clearly at night, like when he had his blanket up over his head or when he was curled up against the wall, the guards would wake Manning up and see if he was “okay.” And all of the lights were never turned off. There was also a fluorescent light in the hall outside of Manning’s cell that was kept on during the night.

These conditions were in addition to the maximum custody conditions imposed, which included being placed in a cell directly in front of the guard post so he could be monitored at all hours of the day, having to wake up at 5 am in the morning, having to stay awake from 5 am to 10 pm every day and not being permitted to lie down or lean his back against the cell wall. He was permitted only 20 minutes of “sunshine call” where he would “be brought to a small concrete yard, about half to a third of the size of a basketball court.” In the yard, he could walk around with “hand and leg shackles” on, while a Brig guard walked at his “immediate side.” The guards gave him athletic shoes that had no laces and would fall off when he tried to walk. Manning chose to wear boots so his shoes would stay on while walking. He would typically walk in “figure-eights” and was not allowed to “sit down or stay stationary” during “sunshine call.”

By December 10, 2010, he earned a longer period of recreation: one hour each day. He could exercise and move around without shackles or a Brig guard at his side. There was “exercise equipment” he could access but he would not normally use it because guards would tell him he could not use certain equipment and much of it was “unplugged or broken down.”

Manning could have non-contact visits on Saturdays and Sundays between noon and 3 pm with “approved visitors.” During visits, he had to wear “hand and leg restraints.” He met his visitors in “a small 4 by 6 foot room that was separated with a glass partition. His visits were monitored by the guards and they were audio recorded by the Brig. The recording equipment was added by Army CID after PFC Manning’s transfer to the Quantico Brig.” Contact visits with attorneys were not allowed. Any time he met with his attorneys, he wore shackles on his hands and feet. He was not permitted “any work duty.” When moved outside his cell, the whole brig would be placed on lockdown, and, while being moved, he was “shackled with metal hand and leg restraints and accompanied by at least two guards.”

In July 2010, after being transported from Kuwait, a duty brig supervisor (DBS) assessed

whether he should be placed in maximum custody conditions. The DBS “reviewed the inmate background summary and completed an initial custody classification determination.” Despite the fact that the supervisor did not find all the characteristics necessary that are normally required to be found in order to place someone in maximum custody, the DBS ignored this entirely and placed him in maximum custody.

The motion features what appears to be a deposition from one of the Brig psychiatrists that recommended Manning’s POI designation be removed. The psychiatrist, whose name is redacted, details how the psychiatrist “knew” the brig was “very concerned about his safety...because there had been a suicide in the brig earlier that year.” The psychiatrist went ahead and “obtained the services of another forensic psychiatrist, who “evaluated the patient and concurred that POI was appropriate. The Brig, as I best recall, waited a couple of weeks to put this recommendation into effect.” But, after this, the suggestion that he be “removed from POI” was made again because he was doing “relatively well,” even if he exhibited “odd behaviors such as dancing around” and “possible sleep walking.”

By the fall, there was one incident. Manning apparently tried to perform a “yoga move in which he contorted his limbs in such a way that staff thought he was trying to hurt himself.” Manning was upset. The psychiatrist recommended he be put back on POI status then rescinded the recommendation. Of course, regardless of what the psychiatrist thought, he was never taken off this status. And, apparently, the Brig rarely listened to this person:

Question B. In your experience, does the Quantico Brig follow your recommendation concerning either Suicide Risk or Prevention of Injury Status?

No. They generally keep patients on precautions longer than I recommend.

Another deposition from a forensic psychiatrist serving in the military appears in the motion. He worked at Quantico and made determinations about the “behavioral health” of prisoners. This psychiatrist said, when asked if being placed on “suicide risk” since July 31, 2010, might be detrimental to Manning’s mental or physical health:

It has long been known that restriction of environmental and social stimulation has a negative effect on mental functioning. Nevertheless, PFC Manning has been able to adapt somewhat and his anxiety disorder is currently in remission, significantly reducing his risk of self harm.

Finally, here’s an exchange that shows just how averse they were to the opinions of “pesky mental health providers,” who worked at the brig:

PFC Manning: Why was I on, why was I on prevention of status for almost 6 months?

****Redacted****: [chuckles to himself] I know this is no secret to you ... I have plenty of documentation. Plenty of documentation based on things that you’ve said, things that you’ve done. Actions - I have to make sure, we have to make sure, that you’re taken care of.

PFC Manning: Yes, MSGT.

****Redacted****: Things that you've said and things that you've done don't steer us on the side of "ok, well, he can just be a normal detainee." They make us stay on the side of caution.

PFC Manning: But what about recommendations by the psychiatrist to remove me off the status?

****Redacted****: Who's here every day? Who's here every day? We are. Who sees you every day? That's all he is, is a recommendation. We have, by law, rules and regulations set forth to make sure from a jail standpoint that Bradley Manning does not hurt himself. Maybe from a psychiatric standpoint, the recommendation he's given - I get it, I got it, understand, OK? But he's not the only decision maker. A mental health specialist is not the only decision that gets made.

It is [over one hundred pages long](#) so this only begins to demonstrate how Brig commanders ensured Manning would be subjected to conditions that amounted to torture throughout his entire detention at Quantico.

Manning's defense lawyer said during the previous July motion hearing [the motion](#) should "shock the conscience of the court." The totality of its content definitely should bother anyone. So far, Judge Army Col. Denise Lind has demonstrated a willingness to hear all the evidence. She ordered the production of a Leavenworth commander that the government opposed and also ordered that suicide prevention materials, such as a mattress, blanket and smock, be present in court when this motion is argued. (This is the smock he was made to wear after he made a sarcastic remark and a Brig officer reminded Manning who was in charge by forcing him to sleep naked.)

Manning is [expected to testify in court](#) on the punishment he endured when the motion is finally argued. It was previously scheduled for the hearing that is to take place during the last week of August at Fort Meade, Maryland. It has been pushed to the first week of October after the prosecution handed Quantico emails over to the defense. The defense filed for [a continuance](#) and decided it would need to request additional witnesses be present. This indicates the hearing in August will focus on getting witnesses approved for the hearing on the "unlawful pretrial punishment" motion in October.

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