Bradley Manning in his own words
Ft. Meade & solidarity actions June 1st. Trial set for June 3rd

By Nathan Fuller. March 7, 2013
What would you do if you had evidence of war crimes? What would you do if “following orders” meant participating in grave abuses that you opposed? Would you have the courage to risk everything—even your life—to do the right thing?
Most of us wouldn’t, but Army intel analyst PFC Bradley E Manning did.
With a 10,000-word statement that he read aloud last week at a pretrial hearing in Fort Meade, Maryland, Bradley detailed how his conscience led him to expose crimes, abuse, and corruption, by releasing the Iraq and Afghan War Logs, the “Collateral Murder” video, embarrassing State Department cables, Guantanamo Bay files, and more to WikiLeaks. A leaked audio recording and a full transcript are now available online.

His statement, and related plea, are not part of a deal with the government. In fact, military prosecutors attempted to block Bradley from even reading the statement, arguing it was “irrelevant.” The Army has since announced that they are proceeding on all 22 counts—including the egregious “Aiding the Enemy” charge, as well as the Espionage Act-related charges—that could land Bradley in jail for life without parole.
Bradley having accepted responsibility for ten lesser charges means that when the court martial comes on 3 June 2013, the proceedings will focus a little less on the forensics of what happened and more on why it happened, and what effect it had.
It couldn’t be clearer. Bradley did not “aid the enemy,” but aided the public in making better-informed decisions regarding our government’s secret abuses, and the horrors of war.
A historic document in its own right, the statement lays out Bradley’s work as an intelligence analyst, what he saw while working in eastern Baghdad, and how he concluded that the American people needed to know what really happens in our wars abroad.
“I believed and still believe that [the Iraq and Afghan War Logs] are two of the most significant documents of our time,” he declared in court last week.

Bradley went on to describe how he began to see that these documents exposed a horrible mess of a war that Americans couldn’t fully see.
“I felt that we were risking so much for people that seemed unwilling to cooperate with us, leading to frustration and anger on both sides. I began to become depressed with the situation that we found ourselves increasingly mired in year after year...
“...In attempting to conduct counter-terrorism or CT and counter-insurgency

US War objector-in-exile Jules Tindungan

Jules Tindungan is a US War Resister living in Toronto, Ontario. On February 1, the Federal Court of Canada granted Jules a new hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board, effectively postponing possible deportation proceedings.
Jules comes from a military family, and joined the Army in 2005. His grandfather was from the Philippines and served in World War II and was present at the Bataan death march. Jules’ brother is currently deployed in Afghanistan. Numerous uncles and cousins are also current members of the US military.
COIN operations we became obsessed with capturing and killing human targets on lists… ignoring the second and third order effects of accomplishing short-term goals and missions.”

Bradley realized that the American people needed to see these documents.

“I believed that if the general public, especially the American public, had access to the information contained within the [Iraq and Afghan War Logs] this could spark a domestic debate on the role of the military and our foreign policy in general as well as it related to Iraq and Afghanistan.”

In January 2010, while home on leave from Iraq, Bradley attempted to give the cables to major US newspapers, to no avail. He called the Washington Post, but a reporter didn’t take him seriously. Bradley turned to The New York Times. He called The Times’ public editor, left a message, and didn’t get called back.

So he turned to WikiLeaks. On 3 February 2010, in a Barnes and Noble in Rockville, Maryland, Bradley anonymously uploaded the Iraq and Afghan War Logs.

“I felt this sense of relief by [WikiLeaks] having [the information]. I felt I had accomplished something that allowed me to have a clear conscience based upon what I had seen and what I had read about and knew was happening in both Iraq and Afghanistan every day.”

While WikiLeaks reviewed the documents in preparation for later release, Bradley returned to Iraq.

Later that month, he listened to a debate within his intelligence shop over a 12 July 2007 video of a US aerial weapons team gunning down civilians, including two Reuters journalists, in Iraq. At first, he said, the video seemed like any other “war porn” he routinely saw. But when Bradley further investigated the video, now known around the world as “Collateral Murder,” he was appalled.

“The most alarming aspect of the video to me… was the seemingly delightful bloodlust the Aerial Weapons Team seemed to have. They dehumanized the individuals they were engaging and seemed to not value human life, and referred to them as quote-unquote ‘dead bastards,’ and congratulated each other on their ability to kill in large numbers. At one point in the video there is an individual on the ground attempting to crawl to safety. The individual is seriously wounded. Instead of calling for medical attention to the location, one of the aerial weapons team crewmembers verbally asks for the wounded person to pick up a weapon so that he can have a reason to engage. For me, this seemed similar to a child torturing ants with a magnifying glass.”

Furthermore, he learned that Reuters sought a copy of the video under the Freedom of Information Act, but were stonewalled by the US government.

Believing that Reuters needed to see the video, and investigation of it, to better protect their journalists—and that the American people deserved to see it to get an accurate portrayal of the types of incidents our government keeps secret, Bradley decided to release the video files to WikiLeaks.

“I hoped that the public would be as alarmed as me about the conduct of the aerial weapons team crew members. I wanted the American public to know that not everyone in Iraq and Afghanistan were targets that needed to be neutralized, but rather people who were struggling to live in the pressure cooker environment of what we call asymmetric warfare. After the release I was encouraged by the response in the media and general public who observed the aerial weapons team video. As I hoped, others were just as troubled—if not more troubled—than me by what they saw.”

On 2 March 2010, Bradley was ordered to investigate the Iraqi Federal Police’s detention of 15 individuals for distributing “anti-Iraqi literature.” He quickly realized “none of the individuals had previous ties to anti-Iraqi actions or suspected terrorist militia groups.”

In fact, the literature these academics were distributing was “merely
the fire. We had very little experience. We were along the Pakistan border in the mountains. Because we were a reconnaissance unit, we didn’t stick around one base very long. We didn’t develop local relationships. We were moving around constantly. We had zero credibility with the people...

“During 2007, I was on a number of different bases. We lost two people... My buddy, Jose—we got separated. There were thirty or fifty men on bases in the same province, guarding a pass. His platoon got ambushed. A rocket ripped through his truck and exploded between his legs, resulting in the loss of his reproductive organs. He begged a soldier to shoot and kill him.

“Another guy was walking through tall grass. He was shot in the leg. He’s an amputee. He lost a leg. He also got shot in his armor and it bounced around inside and tore up his organs. He was drenched in blood.

“From January to July, we were constantly on the move, securing a district and moving on to another district or province. I was in Pakia, Gardez, and Paktika, and Gaznia provinces...

“I was put with Chainsaw Company in Wilderness Base. It was FOB [Forward Operating Base] Wilderness. It was so isolated and far away from any main cities. That’s where I stayed for the rest of my deployment from August, 2007 to April, 2008. The official designation of our enemy was ACM, ‘Anti-Coalition Militia.’ The enemy that we were facing, often times, came from different groups. Either they were Haqqani Network, legitimate resistance fighters, or remnants from the old Taliban. Most of the old-school Taliban, from the nineties, had gone and fled to Pakistan after the initial invasion. There was indigenous resistance of farmers and local people...

“Some time, late in our deployment, either November or December, 2007, many of us were notified that we were going to be stop-lossed...

“I was already trying to figure out how to change my job—my MOS—and get out of the situation of having to deploy again. I was thinking: They got me suckered into another deployment. There’s no way out of that. But how can I get out of being in a situation again like I was in in Afghanistan, where they had me dropping bombs on people? I had reservations already because of my involvement in the deaths of a couple of civilians. I was wounded in September, 2007. There was a fire fight around September 20th through 27th.
Kimberly Rivera sentencing April 29


Kimberly Rivera currently awaits sentencing on April 29th at Fort Carson, Colorado, for having sought refuge in Canada while objecting to the Iraq War. Prior to being deported from Canada in August, Kimberly shared, “My biggest fear is being separated from my children and having to sit in a prison for politically being against the war in Iraq.” Unfortunately, that now appears likely.

With financial support from the War Resisters Support Network (Canada), Kimberly will be represented by attorney James Branum of Oklahoma. Meanwhile, Courage to Resist has been providing humanitarian and travel assistance to Kimberly’s husband Mario. He lives with extended family in Texas, taking care of their four children: Christian (10-years-old), Rebecca (8), Katie (3), and Gabriel (2).

We’ve been able to assist with nearly $10,000; however, the Riveras will need an additional $3,000 so that they can attend Kimberly’s sentencing.

Mario recently explained, “The donations allowed us to live day to day. Afford groceries, food—the basic necessities of life and some clothing for the kids. The money has helped us have a place to stay—the roof over our heads.

Tunisians, who recently nominated Bradley Manning for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize, learned more about the corruption of their government, helping spur democratic revolt there. After learning from WikiLeaks releases that the US had covered up its summary executions of innocent Iraqi civilians in 2006, the Iraqi government refused to allow President Obama to keep US troops in Iraq beyond the 2011 withdrawal deadline.

Bradley read his statement to supplement his guilty plea to 10 lesser offenses and plea of not guilty to the other 12 more-serious offenses. He made it clear that responsibility was his alone. “No one associated with [WikiLeaks] pressured me into giving more information,” he said. “The decisions that I made to send documents and information to [WikiLeaks] were my own decisions, and I take full responsibility for my actions.”

Join us June 1st at Fort Meade, or organize an event in your own community, to demand freedom for this American, internationalist hero!