



# Free Chelsea Manning

former intel analyst # prisoner # trans woman # writer # advocate

Chelsea Manning Support Network      www.chelseamanning.org  
c/o Courage to Resist, 484 Lake Park Ave #41, Oakland CA 94610

## Yes, I'll get gender surgery. But I may still be punished for my suicide attempt

By Chelsea Manning, published in *the Guardian*. September 20, 2016

**It's absurd that the military has finally agreed to treatment while preparing to discipline me for the desperation I felt earlier this year.**

Last week I was given the "good news" that the Department of Defense will grant my request to see a surgeon for treatment related to my gender dysphoria. Although I don't have anything in writing, I was shown a memorandum with my name on it that confirmed the military is moving forward with my request. Everything that they have presented to me leads me to believe that they are going to provide the care that has been recommended by my doctor. I have requested this for nearly a year. That same week, I was also given "bad news": I may be punished for a suicide attempt in July.

For the past week, I have been busy preparing for my disciplinary board. This administrative board has the power to sentence me for indefinite solitary confinement. Preparing to defend yourself for a disciplinary board is time consuming. It takes time to research, collect evidence, and organize a defense. The process is rather stressful. I am facing this alone. I am not allowed to have a lawyer or anyone else with me.

Last week I was escorted to view the evidence before the board. There are now nearly 100 pages. I do not have easy access. I do not have a copy. I could only see it for an hour. Looking through the evidence and taking notes in a hurried manner was very stressful.

In the evidence, I saw a photograph of myself shortly after my suicide attempt. Seeing this photograph has haunted me for the past week. It has disturbed me. It sends a chill down my spine. This hurt me more than any physical injury or hardship I have lived through. This process has forced me to relive one of the worst moments of my entire life.

I saw the face of a woman who had given up. I saw the face of woman who, for years, has politely asked, formally requested, and desperately begged for help.

I am not alone in my struggle. Suicide pervades the trans community. The risk among our trans siblings with no or inadequate treatment is staggering. In comparison with the general population, the risk is a full order of magnitude higher. While a specific suicide rate among trans prisoners is not available, it is estimated to be significantly higher than among the community outside.

I lack the words to describe how concerned my family and friends are about this board. I lack the words to express how deeply pained I am about this board and the fact that the government is pursuing my punishment so aggressively. How am I supposed to explain this to my family? How am I going to explain this to future generations when they look back and ask how I could have been punished for my own desperation? I have absolutely no idea. I have no idea how to explain it at all.

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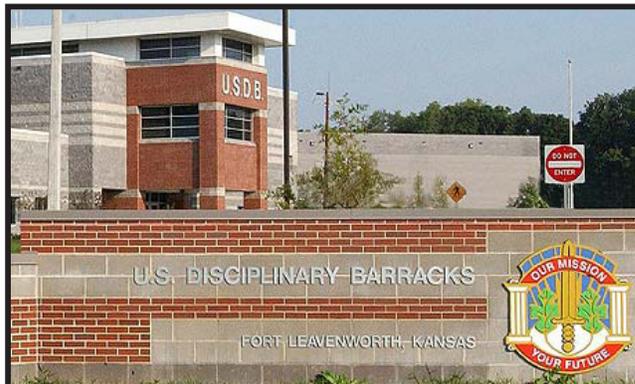
To contribute 100% to Chelsea's legal fees for her upcoming appeal, please make your check payable to "IOLTA/Manning"—these are not tax-deductible—and mail to:

Courage to Resist  
484 Lake Park Ave #41  
Oakland CA 94610, USA

# Breaking News: Chelsea ends hunger strike after Army relents on healthcare, gets solitary for suicide attempt

LEAVENWORTH, KS (Sept. 23, 2016)—A prison disciplinary board has decided to punish imprisoned transparency advocate Chelsea Manning with 14 days of solitary confinement (with 7 days suspended) for charges directly related to her suicide attempt in July, and possession of an unmarked book in her cell. The decision is the latest example of the U.S. government's campaign of harassment and mistreatment of Chelsea, who has been incarcerated in all male military facilities for 6 years.

Chelsea Manning shared the following with supporters this morning via phone:



"My three member disciplinary board took place today. I presented evidence and was allowed to question witnesses through the board president. The hearing lasted four hours. There was a break for lunch. I waited nervously for the board to vote. I received the decision after 30 minutes. I was acquitted of the "Resisting The Force Cell Move Team" charge. I was found guilty of the "Conduct Which Threatens" charge. This charge was for the suicide attempt. I was found guilty of the "Prohibited Property" charge, which was for an unmarked copy of *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy*, by Gabriella Coleman. My punishment is 14 days in solitary confinement. 7 of those days are "suspended." If I get in trouble in the next six months, those seven days will come back. The term for this status is "disciplinary segregation." There is no set date set for this to start. After I receive the formal board results in writing, I have 15 days to appeal. I expect to get them in the next few days. I am feeling hurt. I am feeling lonely. I am embarrassed by the decision. I don't know how to explain it. I am touched by your warm messages of love and support. This comforts me in my time of need."

Last week, following a 5-day hunger strike and a flurry of public protest, the government finally agreed to provide Chelsea with some of the health care that she needs. Despite the good news related to medical treatment, Chelsea will now be punished with solitary confinement, which the United Nations has condemned as a form of torture.

The July incident where Chelsea attempted to take her own life followed years of the government systematically denying her access to medically recommended treatment for gender dysphoria, and previous threats of solitary confinement following minor prison "infractions," including possession of mislabeled general research materials that Chelsea used for article writing and an expired tube of toothpaste.

After she receives written notification of her solitary confinement sentence, Chelsea has 15 days to appeal the disciplinary board's decision.

The Chelsea Manning Support Network, and Fight for the Future, a digital rights group that has been supporting Chelsea, is encouraging all supporters of human rights to sign the petition at [FreeChelsea.com](http://FreeChelsea.com) calling for the US government to drop these unjust charges. Celebrities including Michael Stipe of REM, Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, and Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, have uploaded videos speaking out on Chelsea's behalf and asking fans to sign the petition. The group plans to keep supporters updated on Chelsea's situation, and ways to take action to support her.

**To earmark your tax-deductible donation for Chelsea Manning's defense efforts, please make checks out to "Courage to Resist / AFGJ" and note "Manning Defense" on the memo line, otherwise, donations will be used to support other military war objectors as well. Courage to Resist is a program of the Alliance for Global Justice (AfGJ), a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. In collaboration with the Chelsea Manning Support Network, we have been responsible for covering the vast majority of Chelsea Manning's legal fees since June 2010.**