



The lawyer for Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of having leaked a massive trove of US state secrets to WikiLeaks, has accused his military jailers at the marine base in Quantico, Virginia, of ritually humiliating his client by stripping him naked in his cell every night.

David Coombs, who is representing Manning in his court martial procedure, criticised the commanders of the Quantico brig for punishing the prisoner for a sarcastic comment he made in protest at his treatment. Coombs said Manning quipped that if he wanted to harm himself he could do so with the elastic waistband in his underpants or with his flip-flops.

Though the comment was sarcastic, Coombs claims it was used by the military guards to tighten Manning's already harsh treatment under a prevention of injury order or POI. Each night since Wednesday, and for the indefinite future, Manning is forced to remove all his clothing and sleep naked in his cell, then required to endure what Coombs calls the "humiliation of standing naked at attention for the morning roll call".

Quantico is refusing to explain why it is forcing Manning to strip naked at night, citing privacy rules. But a spokesman has denied any desire to humiliate or embarrass the prisoner.

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