



The American soldier Chelsea Manning has accused [US military](#) guards of threatening her with exile to Guantánamo Bay without trial or acknowledgment of her gender transition after she was apprehended as the source of one of the largest leaks of state secrets in history.

Writing in the Guardian from prison at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, where she is serving a 35-year sentence, Manning marked the fifth anniversary of her military custody on Wednesday with the most personal first-hand account she has yet given of the “physical and emotional rollercoaster” of a whistleblower behind bars.

She describes her initial arrest, her harsh treatment at a US marine brig in Virginia and her ongoing legal battle to be allowed treatment for gender dysphoria, which has reached the highest levels of government.

After her arrest on 27 May 2010, a then-22-year-old Manning “expected the worst possible outcome”, she writes, but was still unprepared for the intensity of the US government’s wrath. She recalls being flown under guard to Kuwait and then caged in a large tent, only to grow extremely depressed, fearing that she would be “disappeared” by US officials hell-bent on branding her the enemy.

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