

November 2, 2016

To whom it may Concern:

I am a former constitutional lawyer from New York, and am currently a Journalist at The Intercept, a news organization I co-founded in 2013. My journalism has extensively covered issues of whistleblowing, press freedom, transparency and surveillance, and my reporting on the National Security Agency (NSA) won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service while I was at the Guardian.

Among the events I have most extensively covered in my career as a journalist are those pertaining to Chelsea Manning, whom I have had the privilege of getting to know very well. I have spent many, many hours talking by telephone with Chelsea, and have visited her at Fort Leavenworth.

Chelsea is one of the most thoughtful, intelligent, empathetic, and compassionate people I have ever met in my life. Her background growing up in a conservative community and with a conservative family in Oklahoma, as she became increasingly aware of her own differences, vested with an extraordinary ability to understand people no matter how different they are from her. In the face of differences or even tension and hostility from others, her instinct is to attempt to see the world from their perspective, to empathize, rather than to judge or react in kind. This has rendered her not only an incredibly insightful person but also an incredibly kind and selfless one.

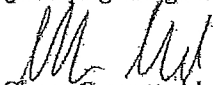
Remarkably, the difficulty of her ordeal over the last several years has only strengthened her character. Whenever I have spoken with her about her prison life, she expresses nothing but compassion and understanding even for her jailers. She is devoid of the resentments and grievances which are common even among those with blessed lives, let alone those facing great deprivation. It's difficult to believe for those who don't know Chelsea – and even for those of us who do - but the longer she has been in prison, the more compassionate and concerned for others she has become.

Chelsea's courage is self-evident. Her entire life – from joining the military out of a sense of duty and conviction, to undertaking what she regarded as an act of courage notwithstanding the risks, to coming out as a trans woman even while in a military prison – is a testament to her personal bravery.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Chelsea is a hero to, and has inspired, all kinds of people all over the world. Wherever I go in the world to speak on issues of transparency, activism and dissent, audiences filled with young and old break out into sustained and passionate applause at the mere mention of her name. She is a particular inspiration to LGBT communities in many countries, including those where being gay, and particularly trans, is still quite dangerous.

I am proud to count myself as one of her admirers. Getting to know someone as truly

extraordinary as Chelsea, and even more so, being able to call her a friend, is one of the most gratifying things that has happened to me.


Glenn Greenwald

