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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

‘WikiLeaks Lawyer’ Coombs Joins Faculty

Military lawyer David Coombs, lead defense counsel for Chelsea Manning f/k/a PFC Bradley Manning, will teach criminal procedure, coach trial team.



- *Professor Coombs' Aug. 22 statement, and video of a 2013 appearance on [The Today Show](#).*
- *Read media coverage from [San Francisco](#) to [Houston](#) to [Fall River](#).*
- *For WPRI television coverage, click [here](#).*

BRISTOL, R.I., August 21, 2014 – As its Fall 2014 semester begins, Roger Williams University School of Law has welcomed renowned WikiLeaks defense lawyer David Coombs to its faculty as Visiting Associate Professor of Law.

Coombs, who has previously taught at RWU Law as an adjunct faculty member, will be coaching the school’s trial team and teaching “Criminal Procedure: Investigation,” a required second-year course, during the Spring 2015 semester.

In recent years, Coombs – whose Providence-based law practice focuses on defense work in military courts-martial proceedings – won national media attention as the lead defense counsel for Chelsea Manning f/k/a PFC Bradley Manning, the soldier convicted last summer in the largest leak of documents in United States history.

“What an amazing opportunity for our students,” said RWU Law Dean Michael Yelnosky, of Coombs’ decision to join the faculty. “David was defense counsel in one of the most complex and important trials of this century. Moreover, he is an experienced and effective teacher. It makes me want to take Criminal Procedure again.”

Coombs is also looking forward to this latest posting. “I’m excited to be joining the faculty at RWU Law as a visiting professor,” he said. “Having taught at the law school as an adjunct, I appreciate how extraordinarily well RWU Law does in providing both scholarly excellence and

real-world practical skills to its students. I look forward to contributing to the school and having the opportunity to work with so many great students and colleagues.”

During the Manning trial, Coombs won praise for his excellent trial work and, in particular, for avoiding a conviction on the most serious charge that Manning was facing, that of aiding the enemy. The *New York Times* wrote that Coombs mounted an “aggressive defense” and that he “attacked the government’s case on every conceivable ground, even as he conceded that Private Manning was the Wikileaks source.”

On August 21, 2013, Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison for providing over 700,000 classified documents to WikiLeaks. Coombs made a widely covered appearance at the law school last fall, offering his first detailed public statements on the trial and verdict to a standing-room-only crowd of students, alumni, faculty and media.

Coombs is still representing Manning, and is presently concentrating on “the one year anniversary of Chelsea’s request for HRT (hormone replacement therapy) treatment, and our plans to enforce her constitutional right to adequate medical treatment should the Army refuse to provide the requested medical care,” he said.