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Roger Williams University School of Law

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January 13, 2017

Newsroom NBC News: Coombs on Chelsea Manning

RWU Law Professor David Coombs talks to NBC News about why President Obama should commute the 35-year sentence against convicted 'WikiLeaker' Manning.

FROM NBC NEWS: ["Army Leaker Chelsea Manning on Obama's 'Short List' for Commutation"](#) by Cynthia McFadden, Kevin Monahan, William M. Arkin and Tracy Connor



January 11, 2017: President Obama has put Chelsea Manning, the former Army intelligence analyst serving a 35-year sentence for leaking classified material, on his short list for a possible commutation, a Justice Department source told NBC News.

A decision could come as soon as Wednesday for Manning, who has tried to commit suicide twice this year and went on a hunger strike in a bid for gender reassignment surgery. [...]

[Manning's] words of contrition did not sway the military judge, who gave Manning a sentence about 10 times longer than those of recent whistle-blowers.

"After this case, I had to tell Chelsea — 'I've represented murderers. I've represented rapists. I've represented child molesters. And none of them received 35 years,'" defense lawyer [and **RWU Law Chief Justice Weisberger Visiting Professor of Law**] [David Coombs](#) told NBC News. [...]

The Manning leak included video of a deadly 2007 air strike in Baghdad in which the U.S. helicopter crew could be heard laughing about the casualties and State Department cables with blunt comments from American diplomats. "I don't think any harm was done," **Coombs said** of the disclosures. "A lot of embarrassment, certainly." [...]