12-21-2011

Newsroom: Coombs Defends Accused 'Wikileaker'

Roger Williams University School of Law

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life

Recommended Citation
https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life/230

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives & Law School History at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Life of the Law School (1993- ) by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.
Coombs Defends Accused 'Wikileaker'

The Providence Journal's Katie Mulvaney profiles Adjunct Professor David Coombs, in an article focusing on the WikiLeaks defender's RWU Law ties.

From the PROVIDENCE JOURNAL: "Local ties for WikiLeaks defense: Adjunct Roger Williams School of Law professor is part of defense team for accused soldier" by Katie Mulvaney

BRISTOL, Dec. 21, 2011 — A defense lawyer in the case of an Army intelligence analyst accused of leaking a trove of classified military information to Wiki-Leaks website has ties to Rhode Island's first and only law school.

David E. Coombs, a lawyer who specializes in court-martial defense, taught trial advocacy and evidence as an adjunct professor at the Roger Williams School of Law in 2009 and 2010. His wife, Tanya J. Monestier, too, has been an associate professor at the school of commercial law and class action suits for the past two years.
David A. Logan, dean of the law school, praised Coombs and Monestier Tuesday. Coombs, he said, has been an extremely popular member of the faculty whose “deep expertise in litigation has informed his teaching.” He described Monestier as high-performing.

Most recently, Coombs has appeared in the national media as the oft-quoted lawyer for Bradley Manning, the Army private facing possible court-martial over allegations that he leaked military secrets that were then published on the anti-secret Wikileaks website. The hearing into whether 24-year-old Manning will be court-martialed began last week at an Army post in Maryland. He could face up to life in military prison.

Manning is accused of releasing hundreds of thousands of documents that included Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, confidential diplomatic cables and a classified military video that showed an American helicopter shooting and killing a Reuters news photographer and his driver in 2007.

His lawyers have argued that the troubled Manning should never have had access to classified material and that workplace security was unduly lax.

Coombs has blogged regularly about Manning’s treatment in military prison, charging that Manning was held illegally in solitary confinement and was cruelly forced to stand naked during roll call. The Army found that the commander did not exceed his authority or abuse his discretion when he kept Manning isolated for 23 hours a day in maximum custody.
A lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves, Coombs came to Roger Williams after years with the Army JAG Corps. As a prosecutor and then a defense lawyer, Coombs worked on cases ranging from murders to fraud in the United States, Italy, Iraq and Kuwait, according to his resumé. He also mentored Iraqi prosecutors and judges as part of a task force aimed at redesigning Iraq's judicial system.

Today, his Fall River-based private practice focuses on representing Army soldiers facing court-martial or other administrative actions. Coombs could not be reached for comment this week.

For full story, click here.