

By Todd Krainin

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“This was the largest criminal investigation ever into a publisher and its source,” says independent journalist Alexa O’Brien of the U.S. investigation of Private Bradley Manning, who is accused of leaking classified document to Wikileaks. “And it seemed like there was no in-depth coverage.”

Reason's Matthew Feeney attended the Bradley Manning trial in Fort Meade, Maryland to discuss the case with O'Brien, [whose website](#) is the most complete public record of the military proceedings against Manning. Since the case's pre-trial hearing, no one has worked more successfully than O'Brien to shine a light on military process that's taking place far beyond civilian courtrooms.

To date, no transcripts of the proceedings have been made available to the public. The trial has no official website, no phone number to call for information. With the exception of [one leaked recording of Manning's testimony](#) (part of which is included in Reason's video), all recordings of the courtroom have been forbidden. Although the public has been invited to observe the trial in person, large portions of it are conducted in closed sessions.

O'Brien's response to the media blackout has been to cover the trial extensively and to invite other journalists to use her work as source material. She has become the unofficial court stenographer, unredacting documents, making trial materials available to the public, building a database of the U.S. investigation of Wikileaks, and providing her own analysis of the Manning trial.

O'Brien makes no secret of her support for Bradley Manning and for political causes such as the Occupy movement.

Put differently, the convictions that underlie her reporting are transparent and open to public scrutiny.

Which is more than can be said for the trial of Bradley Manning.