

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, June 25, 2013

MEDIA ALERT

WHAT: LGBT Community to March in Support of Gay Whistleblower Bradley Manning at Pride Parades Across the Country

WHERE: Pride Parades in Chicago, New York City, San Francisco, Seattle

WHEN: Sunday, June 30, 2013

CONTACT: Lisa Geduldig (San Francisco) (415) 205-6515 - lisag@igc.org
Elias Holtz (New York) (206) 351-9623 - bradleyprideny@gmail.com
Andy Thayer, (Chicago) (773) 209-1187 - LGBTliberation@aol.com

FACEBOOK: San Francisco - <https://www.facebook.com/events/327236664071988>
New York City - <https://www.facebook.com/events/421403307955701>

#BRADLEYPRIDE - LGBT Community to March in Support of Gay Whistleblower Bradley Manning at Pride Parades Across the Country

LGBT supporters of Private First Class Bradley Manning are showing their support in numbers at Gay Pride Parades across the country Sunday, June 30th, to both bring attention to his plight and to advocate for his release from prison. Bradley Manning is a 25-year-old openly gay United States Army intelligence analyst currently on trial for releasing to the public via Wikileaks thousands of classified documents, including the infamous "Collateral Murder" video, which shows a U.S. Army helicopter gunning down Iraqi civilians and two Reuters journalists.

Bradley Manning's imprisonment has created an international movement calling for his release. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists see national Gay Pride Parades as a way to show the world that the LGBT community broadly supports Bradley Manning.

"Bradley exposed war crimes because he felt the truth was more important than his own safety or career; his courage has inspired a new wave of whistleblowers," explained Elias Holtz, of the Freedom Socialist Party, and a lead organizer of the New York contingent. "The government is wasting money on his trial and on war in general, when LGBT people need resources for jobs, housing and healthcare. Bradley is a hero of the queer community and we want him free."

In NYC over a dozen groups have come together under the banner "#BradleyPride" and are collaborating with playwright Claire Lebowitz and People's Puppets of Occupy Wall Street to stage a performance in which a 10-foot-tall golden Lady Justice will free an actor playing Bradley Manning from a jail cell float. The moving performance piece will be accompanied by two dozen members of the local activist marching band, Rude Mechanical Orchestra.

"As we march in the parade, we'll be staging a performance where we'll literally break an actor playing Bradley Manning out of jail, to signify the fact that with enough support, we can actually help free Bradley," said Jessica Turner, one of the organizers in the NYC #BradleyPride Coalition. "It is Gay Pride after all, so we hope for a bit of a spectacle."

In Chicago, the efforts will be led by Gay Liberation Network, who have led a yearly pride group with a huge yellow "Free Bradley Manning" banner that reaches one story high and spans the width of the street. GLN founder Andy Thayer believes it's critical for the LGBT community to get behind Manning: "Bradley Manning has contributed more to human rights than probably any other American LGBT activist organizing today. From exposing U.S. war crimes in Iraq, to helping spur the Arab Spring by showing links the U.S. government have to North African oligarchies, to blowing the lid off of the Obama administration's support for the brutal coup in Honduras, responsible for many LGBTs' murders. He is someone whom all LGBT activists, indeed all genuine activists, must support."

In Seattle, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 92 are joining up with gay activists, another example of how veterans' and LGBT groups are working together to advocate for Manning nationwide.

In San Francisco, the Bradley Manning Support Network will have a contingent in the San Francisco Pride parade for the third consecutive year. This year its numbers are expected to be in the hundreds. Support for Manning in the local LGBT community has grown dramatically since the San Francisco Pride Board's action to recently rescind naming Bradley Manning as a Grand Marshal of this year's parade. Local activists and gay veterans have met the decision with numerous protests, speak outs, meetings and teach-ins since the end of April. Former military strategist, Daniel Ellsberg, who in 1971 leaked secret documents known as the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times, has lent his support and has spoken at two of the actions and will be riding in the San Francisco contingent in support of Manning.

"As a community Grand Marshal in the San Francisco Pride Parade in 2012, I was proud to vote for Bradley Manning for the same honor this year," said Gary Virginia. "Due to questionable ethics by SF Pride, they rescinded Manning's legitimate election by the electoral college of past grand marshals. This has worked in our favor to educate people about Manning's heroic whistle-blowing; we will be honoring him as 'The People's Grand Marshal' in numerous contingents and are also very proud to have Daniel Ellsberg representing Manning in the Parade. PFC Manning will also be honored in both the SF Dyke March and Trans March this year."

An international petition asking the SF Pride Board to reinstate Bradley Manning has been circulating. Hundreds of people have signed from over 14 cities in the USA and in 12 countries, including Turkey, Sweden, UK, Greece, and New Zealand. www.gopetition.com/petitions/san-francisco-pride-board-reinstate-bradley-manning-as-grand-marshal.html

Those who wish to show support for Manning in these parades can find local information here, or contact organizers for help in forming a contingent in their city:

Chicago: Roger Fraser - rfraser4584@gmail.com, 773-209-1187

NY: Elias Holtz - 206-351-9623, bradleyprideny@gmail.com
Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/421403307955701>

San Francisco: Michael Thurman - michael@couragetoresist.org
Manning supporters are invited to meet at Howard and Beale on Sunday, June 30 at 10am and march with the Bradley Manning Support Network Pride contingent at the SF Pride Parade.
Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/327236664071988/>

Seattle: Veterans for Peace, Greater Seattle, Chapter 92: info@vfp92.org

Endorsing Organizations In NYC: ACT UP, Bradley Manning Support Network, Brooklyn For Peace, CODEPINK, CODEPINK NYC, Feminist Resistance, Freedom Socialist Party, Gay Liberation Network, Granny Peace Brigade, NYC Mumia Coalition, People's Puppets of Occupy Wall St., Radical Women, Rude Mechanical Orchestra, Susie Day and Laura Whitehorn, QUEEROCRACY, Queers Without Borders - Hartford, CT, Veterans for Peace Chapter 34 NYC, World Can't Wait

Endorsing Organizations in San Francisco: ACT UP SF & East Bay, BFUU Social Justice Committee, Freedom Socialist Party, Gay Liberation Network, Gays without Borders, Gray Panthers San Francisco, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Occupy AIDS, Occupy Santa Cruz & Occupy SF. Organized by Courage to Resist and the Bradley Manning Support Network, Queer Friends of Bradley Manning, Queer Strike, Radical Women, SEIU Local 1021, SF Green Party, The Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, Veterans for Peace