

# WHEN DID ADRIAN LAMO START WORKING WITH FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS?

The first suspicious moment in the chats between Adrian Lamo and Bradley Manning occurred at 12:54 on May 22—ostensibly the second day of chat communication between them (though Manning had sent Lamo encrypted emails for an unspecified period of time before that point). The BoingBoing version of the logs shows that Manning had just referenced 260,000 cables that, he went on to say, would give Hillary Clinton and other diplomats a heart attack when they were released. The chat was seemingly plagued by 3 minute delays in message transmission, with Lamo’s side reporting resource issues. Lamo tells Manning he’s going for a cigarette—“brb”—but that he should “keep typing.”

(12:54:47 PM) Adrian: What sort of content?

(12:56:36 PM) Adrian: brb cigarette

(12:56:43 PM) Adrian: keep typing <3

It is over 45 minutes before Lamo returns from his “cigarette” at 1:43:51. In the meantime, Manning did as he was told, typing out agonized confessions about how isolated he was. After Lamo returned from his “cigarette,” all the resource issues appear to be fixed and the delay in transmission appears to be gone, with response time in the 9 to 20 second range. It seems likely that Lamo did something other than smoke a cigarette in those 45 minutes. It appears he altered something technical on his side of the chat, chats that Lamo had directed Manning to use instead of encrypted emails.

Upon returning, Lamo immediately reverts back to Manning’s comment just after he left for his

“cigarette,” picking up on the reference to diplomatic scandals. Using that as a segue, Lamo asks Manning to prove his bona fides.

(1:43:51 PM) Lamo: back  
(1:43:59 PM) Manning: im self medicating like crazy when im not toiling in the supply office (my new location, since im being discharged, im not offically intel anymore)  
(1:44:11 PM) Manning: you missed a lot...  
(1:45:00 PM) Lamo: what kind of scandal?  
(1:45:16 PM) Manning: hundreds of them  
(1:45:40 PM) Lamo: like what? I’m genuinely curious about details.  
(1:46:01 PM) Manning: i dont know... theres so many... i dont have the original material anymore  
(1:46:26 PM) Lamo: play it by ear  
(1:46:29 PM) Manning: the broiling one in Germany  
(1:47:36 PM) Manning: im sorry, there’s so many... its impossible for any one human to read all quarter-million... and not feel overwhelmed... and possibly desensitized  
(1:48:20 PM) Manning: the scope is so broad... and yet the depth so rich  
(1:48:50 PM) Lamo: give me some bona fides ... yanno? any specifics.

So Manning mentions the cables, Lamo leaves and fixes technical issues on the chat, and Lamo returns to demand specifics about what the 260,000 cables include.

Over the course of that allegedly first substantial conversation, Lamo’s attitude towards Wikileaks varies. He first asks a generic question.

(12:46:17 PM) Adrian: how long have you helped WIkileaks?

He then makes what—from the context of the logs thus far released, at least—appears to be an

unsupported insinuation (and one that, given current reports about the Administration's prosecution strategy, is a critical issue): that Manning "answers to" Julian Assange.

(1:51:14 PM) Lamo: Anything unreleased?

(1:51:25 PM) Manning: i'd have to ask assange

(1:51:53 PM) Manning: i zerofilled the original

(1:51:54 PM) Lamo: why do you answer to him?

(1:52:29 PM) Manning: i dont... i just want the material out there... i dont want to be a part of it

So, in spite of the fact that just two days before this exchange, Lamo had solicited donations for Wikileaks, he still suggested it was a problem if Manning "answered to Julian Assange."

Lamo then immediately presses a point he would return to numerous times in their chats—a probe about their operational security.

(1:52:54 PM) Adrian: i've been considering helping wikileaks with opsec

(1:53:13 PM) bradass87: they have decent opsec... im obviously violating it

Then there's a gap of about 10 minutes in the published chat logs during which—from the context—further conversation about Assange personally appears to have taken place. Such content is suggested from the way the chat moves from Manning reporting he is a "total fucking wreck" to returning to Manning's relationship with Assange, with Manning seemingly correcting what appears to have been a Lamo suggestion that he—Manning—is a "volunteer" (remember, Lamo was pretending he wanted to "volunteer" to help Wikileaks with operational security).

(2:04:29 PM) Manning: im a source, not quite a volunteer

(2:05:38 PM) Manning: i mean, im a high

profile source... and i've developed a relationship with assange... but i dont know much more than what he tells me, which is very little

Again, note how this exchange—Manning's apparent correction regarding his relationship with Assange—actually hurts the reported current prosecution strategy of painting the Assange-Manning relationship as something other than a journalistic one.

Now, one of the many narratives he would tell about his role in turning Manning in, Lamo suggested he contacted the military when he heard that Manning had accessed the 260,000 cables (though Lamo's story varies on what day he contacted the Feds). Which is why I find this sequence—which Wired summarized but did not publish in its own publication of the chat logs—so interesting. All of the narratives about how Lamo came to out Manning to investigators start a day or two after this curious day of activity.

Yet already on this first substantive day of chat logs, Lamo appears to be fixing technical issues in the chat, demanding specific evidence about the cables, and—most suspiciously—presenting seemingly contradictory opinions about Wikileaks and Assange that had the effect of eliciting information about operational specifics and details on Assange's own role in Wikileaks' operations.