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March 21, 2022

Case Analysis on Whistleblowing

In the video titled, “Collateral Murder”, Chelsea Manning releases classified footage that shows military troops opening fire and killing over a dozen people in Baghdad on July 12, 2007. It was considered a murder once it was released to the public. In the video, it shows military soldiers shooting a group of men, killing most of them. They even laughed at the casualties almost as if it was a game to them to see how many of them they could kill. Almost all of them were civilians, but two were Reuters journalists. In the video, you can hear one of the men saying “look at those dead bastards” and the narrator of the video saying their conversation sounded like language used while playing a video game. As a result, this makes the situation even more disturbing because they did not even treat these people like they were actual human beings. Instead they treated them like characters in a video game fighting to see who could get the highest score. In this case, how many bodies could each soldier obtain. Furthermore, it is even shown in the video that they wanted a wounded man to pick up a weapon just to have an excuse to kill him. In this Case Analysis, I will argue that confucianism shows us that Manning did act out of loyalty to the United States, and that her actions were a moral case of whistleblowing.

In Vanderkerckhove’s article, he talks about loyalty and whistleblowing going along with how they contradict each other. Vanderkerckhove discusses views from an author named Duska who sees whistleblowing as interfering with loyalty. Duska “claims that employee loyalty to companies is a category mistake because companies are not proper objects of loyalty” (Vanderckhove, 2016). In other words, people are going to be in positions where they have

access to classified information, but if they see that the contents are not moral, then the company is at risk of being exposed. That is why it is difficult to determine whether a person is going to be loyal to the organization that they work for.

Vanderkerckhove goes on to talk about loyalty, which he defines as “someone who is willing to act for the benefit of someone or something else”. Likewise, that is exactly what Manning did by releasing the murder of innocent civilians to the American people, so they can see what their soldiers are really doing when they are going into battle. Going along with the idea of Confucianism, Manning did the right thing for the right reasons. She acted in the best way possible for her role. Manning knew what soldiers were doing and thought that the American people should know.

That was an act of loyalty to the American people and not out of spite. Furthermore, the whole idea of Confucian is about going down the right path in life in order to live a happy fulfilling life. Manning knew exactly what these soldiers did and it did not sit right with her and she felt she had an obligation to expose them, so that something like this would not continue to happen. If she did not do it, she would have been a part of the problem, so she chose to go down a path that was right. Confucianism tells us that we should not simply do what we are told just because someone who is a higher authority says to.

In Manning’s case, she decided that what the military was keeping private was harmful to Americans. She decided to go against her obligations to her job and chose the right path, which is to expose the violent and disturbing tactics that were used in the video. Based on this article and the video given, I believe that Manning did act out of loyalty to the United States when she released the footage in the video. Her actions constitute that of a moral case ethically speaking. It was the right thing to do and if she did not do it, we as Americans would have been left in the

dark when it comes to U.S. troops intentionally murdering people. A Confucian would be in favor of what Manning did because she acted on good intentions and did not idly stand by and let this happen without people knowing. It is important that in Vanderkerckhove's article, we understood that whistleblowing is inevitable when it comes to organizations and that loyalty only goes so far.

In Oxley and Wittkower's article, they discuss whether or not employees should be loyal to their employers and if employers can require loyalty. This is answered when they state "since people can be loyal to morally problematic organizations and ideals, loyalty does not seem to be the kind of characteristic about which one can easily make universalizable prescriptions" (Oxley and Wittkower, 2011). In other words, it is nearly impossible to ensure that a person is going to stay loyal to a company no matter what incentives an employer provides. In addition, this paper focuses on loyalty as a kind of care as a way to care about the company and people that you work for. Regarding Manning, she cared about the American people seeing this video more than she cared about keeping her job, which shows that she felt she had an obligation to Americans for them to be aware of what was going on.

Oxley and Wittkower argue that loyalty cannot be contractually mandated, meaning that employers cannot write into a contract that their employees remain loyal to them. Obligation comes from the relationship and not the other way around. To clarify, "to treat loyalty as a duty or obligation, mistakes the effect for the cause" (Oxley and Wittkower, 2011). In other words, if someone is asking you to do something you know is wrong, it does not mean that you should be out of obligation. Instead, loyalty is earned based on a person's actions. Likewise, this is what Confucianism is all about. This article shows us that whistleblowing is okay and in some cases, it can actually be a good thing. For instance, when you care about someone or something, you want to make it better.

When it comes to Manning's case, she cared about the lives lost, so she wanted to expose the U.S. soldiers for what they did because it was a senseless murder. Sometimes, you have to do certain acts to get your point across no matter the consequence if it is for the greater good. Manning did not release this footage with malicious intent. All she wanted to do was inform people of what was going on behind the scenes. Confucianism fits in perfectly with Manning's case because loyalty is not something that is guaranteed at a job or a certain position that we occupy.

Instead, loyalty is earned when you are doing the right thing. Otherwise, if people do not agree with your choices, then they are going to call you out. Or in Manning's case, releases classified footage that she believed Americans should not be left out on from seeing. Overall, this article shows us that Manning did act morally because whistleblowing was a good thing in this case because she cared about her job enough to where she did not want it corrupt with violent acts that were going to be swept under the rug. Manning wanted the American people to know what was going on, so that we all can make a change for the future soldiers to show that this video is not okay.

In conclusion, Manning did the right thing by releasing the footage to the public because it was something that should not have happened in the first place. Those soldiers treated innocent civilians like they were pawns in their game. Americans need to see these actions, so that we are aware and that it can not happen again. Unfortunately, this probably had happened many times before this footage came out, but it took one person with morals to come forward with this information. Manning's decision to release the footage to the American people was very confucian like because she did the right thing regardless of what people would think or if she lost her job or reputation. At the end of the day, her main goal for putting this footage out was to

educate people on how soldiers have been treating and endangering lives. In the future, I hope that more whistleblowers will come out to expose companies that are not doing the right thing, so that we can make a change.