

## The New York Times

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# *Adrián Lamo, Hacker Who Reported Chelsea Manning to the F.B.I., Dies at 37*

By Jeffery C. Mays

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Adrián Lamo, a hacker best known for breaking into the computer networks of The New York Times and other major corporations, and for reporting the Army whistle-blower Chelsea Manning to the authorities, was found dead on Wednesday in Wichita, Kan. He was 37.

Mr. Lamo's body was discovered in an apartment in the city, The Wichita Eagle reported. His father announced the death in a post on Facebook on Friday. Kate Flavin, a spokeswoman for Sedgwick County, Kan., said on Saturday that the cause of death was unknown.

Mr. Lamo was 22 when federal prosecutors accused him of breaking into The Times's computer network, creating fake usernames and running up over \$300,000 in data research fees. Mr. Lamo also gained access to the computer networks of Yahoo, Microsoft and Cingular Wireless, prosecutors said.

"It's like someone kicking in your front door while you're on vacation and running up a \$300,000 bill on your phone, and then telling you when you arrive home that he had performed a useful service by demonstrating that your deadbolt wasn't secure enough," James B. Comey, then the United States attorney in Manhattan, said in 2003, referring to Mr. Lamo's activities.

Mr. Lamo pleaded guilty to one count of computer damage, telling a federal judge that he was "genuinely remorseful" for his actions. He was sentenced to house arrest and probation.

Mr. Lamo was never a "malicious hacker," his father, Mario Lamo, said in a message, adding, "Everything that he did was out of curiosity." The younger Mr. Lamo told Wired magazine in 2010 that he had Asperger's syndrome.

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In 2010, Ms. Manning, an Army private, contacted Mr. Lamo via instant message. They chatted for a week about her personal problems in the military. Ms. Manning admitted that she had leaked classified video of a helicopter attack in Baghdad that left 12 people dead, including two Reuters

employees, to WikiLeaks.org, which published the video online under the title “Collateral Murder.”

Mr. Lamo said Ms. Manning had also admitted leaking to WikiLeaks 260,000 classified diplomatic cables and video of a 2009 Afghanistan airstrike that left 96 people dead.

“He was just grabbing information from where he could get it and trying to leak it,” Mr. Lamo told The Times in 2010 about Ms. Manning, a transgender woman who was then known as Bradley Manning.

Mr. Lamo called the F.B.I. and relayed Ms. Manning’s admissions. She was arrested and eventually sentenced to 35 years in prison for leaking over 700,000 government records, the longest punishment ever imposed for a leak conviction. President Barack Obama commuted Ms. Manning’s sentence in January 2017, and she recently filed to run for the United States Senate in Maryland.

Mr. Lamo said he was worried that the leaks provided by Ms. Manning would endanger people’s lives.

“I thought to myself, ‘What if somebody dies because this information is leaked?’” he said in 2010.

WikiLeaks and others condemned Mr. Lamo for turning Ms. Manning in to the federal authorities.

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, called Mr. Lamo a “serial F.B.I. snitch” on Twitter. In comments on the Facebook post announcing Mr. Lamo’s death, some called him a “real hero” and “true patriot.”

Mario Lamo said his son went through a difficult period after reporting Ms. Manning to the authorities.

“He was vilified by many people by his position about the Manning affair,” he said. “I was with him when this happened and understood that he lived by some principles and he stood for them.”

Adrián Alfonso Lamo Atwood was born in Malden, Mass., on Feb. 20, 1981. He attended high school in San Francisco before being expelled after altercations with his computer teacher.

Mario Lamo said his son went on to obtain his high school equivalency diploma and later became friends with the computer teacher.

Mr. Lamo first became interested in computers after receiving a hand-me-down Commodore 64. He became familiar with software after gaining access to the coding used to create the video games that he played.

After receiving his first laptop computer in high school, Mr. Lamo began using a simple web browser to find holes in security. Mr. Lamo would report the security holes he uncovered to the affected companies. Until his death, Mario Lamo said, his son worked as a computer security consultant.

In addition to his father, Mr. Lamo is survived by his mother, Mary Atwood, and two siblings, Andrea Lamo Atwood and Julián Lamo Atwood.

*Follow Jeffery C. Mays on Twitter: @jeffcmays.*

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