

[U.S. prison conditions are so bad, Britain's putting a hold on some extraditions](#)

[By Rebecca Pilar Buckwalter Poza](#)

www.dailykos.com

Wednesday Feb 07, 2018 · 1:14 PM PST

British resident Lauri Love was arrested on suspicion of having hacked into key U.S. computer systems in October 2013. He's been fighting U.S. authorities' efforts to have him extradited ever since, maintaining that he should be tried in the United Kingdom. On Monday, Love scored a victory: An [appeals court agreed](#) that extraditing him to the U.S. would be "oppressive by reason of his physical and mental condition." Love has Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism, and suffers from depression, asthma, and eczema.

The premise of the case alone was damning: The principle questions the court enumerated for resolution surrounded Love's health and rights in light of "the conditions he would face in the United States." Indeed, much of the opinion concerns the U.S. Bureau of Prisons and its treatment (or lack thereof) of imprisoned people. Several experts testified to establish what U.S. prison practices would mean for someone with Love's unique set of ailments.

Professor Baron-Cohen took issue with the sufficiency of the protocols operated in America, to support prisoners [like Love] with Asperger Syndrome, depression and at high suicidal risk, as described by Dr Lyn, Psychology Services Branch Administrator of the Federal Bureau of Prisons ("BOP"), and others. They were not satisfactory for a patient with the unique combination of depression, Asperger Syndrome and eczema. Non-emergency mental health services are voluntary but his Asperger Syndrome would be likely to prevent Mr Love seeking regular psychiatric help, so he would not receive treatment for clinical depression until it reached "crisis/suicidal" level. He would be unlikely to be allowed to see a private physician, who could be better qualified to help. Mentally ill inmates were often put in solitary confinement where they cannot access mental health services, with especially negative consequences for Mr Love.

The court's distaste was evident in its descriptions of solitary confinement and suicide watch, as were hints of incredulity. The BOP suicide prevention programme involved an inmate on suicide watch being put into a suicide prevention room, wearing a suicide smock and being monitored for 24 hours a day, without any unapproved personal items. That would leave Mr Love feeling extremely isolated in the absence of an internet connection and undoubtedly would have a severe adverse effect on his mental state. Social isolation was known to precipitate psychotic experiences, including psychotic depression, and increase suicidal ideas. A severe deterioration in clinical depression, a likely recurrence of psychotic ideas, a severe deterioration in his physical health with an exacerbation of eczema and asthma, should be anticipated in such circumstances. Suicidal risk would increase to 'very high' in consequence, exacerbating rather than reducing the risk of suicide. His mental condition would remove his mental capacity to resist the impulse to commit suicide. His ability to cope with the trial would be severely compromised.

One expert testified that the suicide prevention measures were adequate because no one had committed suicide while on suicide watch. The court dove deeper [about] the reality of the services available in BOP prisons. In reality, in view of their other functions, only two or three

psychologists were available in each institution for direct inmate health care. Positions were often kept vacant because of cost, and the ratio of inmates in need of care for significant psychological difficulties to staff psychologists was about 100/130:1. And that one had other tasks to fulfill as well. Court ordered evaluations were the major part of the workload. But it happened sometimes that they had to act as correctional guards because of shortages. Most inmates were only treated by way of medication. The psychologists had to respond to crises all the time, and a high level of arrivals and turnover.

Even if Love were to have access to one of these mental health professionals, that contact would be insufficient to meaningfully address his medical conditions. The absence of care would exacerbate his conditions. The combination of special expertise with Asperger Syndrome and intensive cognitive behaviour therapy with dermatology treatment was not available at MCC or MDC or post-sentence facilities on a regular basis. The BOP did not provide the level of comprehensive care needed. “The failure to provide Mr Love with comprehensive mental health and medical care, in the context of the enhanced stress of incarceration and removal of his social support system, will likely result in a deterioration of his psychological condition and significantly increase the risk of suicide.”

The appeals court recognizes that it is the unique combination of Love’s particular, inter-related conditions and the shortcomings of the U.S. prison system that generated this rare refusal to extradite. Few other suspects and defendants would qualify. Yet, the precedent has been set (albeit only conceptually, as it’s not binding in future cases in Britain)—and it will stand unless the U.S. challenges the court’s decision within 14 days.

Lauri Love, 30, of Stradishall in Suffolk is accused of hacking into agencies including the US Army, NASA, the US Federal Reserve and the Environmental Protection Agency.

ONLINE COMMENTS

[jayden McGovern78](#)

[Feb 07 2018 · 03:42:02 PM](#) Americans should be ashamed of the state of their prisons but most don’t give a rat’s ass. So if the British decide they don’t want one of their more vulnerable citizens subjected to American cruelty and indifference I won’t hold it against them.

[mmstephenson McGovern78](#)

[Feb 09 · 07:30:17 PM](#) Well said. We are a rogue nation. We are a vile nation. We are a nation with no soul or decency. We are the true shithole. I congratulate the UK for not extraditing one of their citizens here to die.

[koNko McGovern78](#)

[Feb 09 · 02:15:03 AM](#) Do you know why? To expose what he considered to be corruption. He did no damage and took no data. So why prosecute him? He is defying the might and authority of the US government by refusing to give up his encryption keys. Surely that must be punished and an example set for other ASPYs, these people are a menace to society.

[palop RhodeIslandAspie](#)

[Feb 07 · 01:49:58 PM](#) Depends on the goal of the prison sentence. If the goal is punishment and revenge, then the US justice system is one of the best in the world. After all we pretty much are ok with rape as a punishment tool, as seen in all the jokes about dropping the soap. If the goal of

the prison sentence is rehabilitation and making a productive citizen when he's released, then sending him to the US is borderline insanity.

[shakker palop Feb 07 · 03:34:45 PM](#) But the most efficient part of the U.S. prison system is that it jacks the taxpayer for more money to train and hone a criminals skills so that they can and most will engage in even more crime than any other system anywhere. We also make sure they are more likely to go back to a life of crime by making it much harder to get a job after their time is served.

[kcisis shakker Feb 11 · 04:32:57 PM](#) You are SO right, then we continue to punish them in infinitely millions of ways—pay enormous fines for their “luxury stay”, while most can't find a job or a decent place to live, etc, etc. Some are A..holes that had no intent but taking the easy (criminal) way out, but others were basically decent folk to begin with & got caught up in something or they really turned their life around. The “system” makes it so hard to make it on the outside that even those with the best of intent can struggle to stay on the straight & narrow. I've seen it close up in a friend whose acquaintance I made after the fact & can't believe some of the things he's been put through.

[Sailor Jo palop Feb 10 · 07:59:01 PM](#) For whatever reasons I never got the impression that the US penal system looks for rehabilitation. The 500 year prison sentences amuse me because they are as unrealistic as they are insane. People who did their time are not accepted in society, they do not have their voting rights restored automatically and face many other problems.

[marsanges Feb 07 · 01:36:04 PM](#) I'm glad that he wasnt delivered into the possession of that system of organized cruelty. He'll face British courts and potentially jail now; bad enough but at least he may have a chance to come out mentally intact.

[Kalic0 lurker666 Feb 10 · 08:38:01 AM](#) As the parent of a child with an Autism diagnosis, I understand completely. People on the autism spectrum, have trouble understanding social situations and engaging in appropriate social behavior. This often leads them to seek social contact through the “virtual” world of online communities. Texting and text based conversations not only eliminate the uncertainty of “inexplicable” body language, but also enjoy the benefit of not having to deal with a potentially “harsh environment” (the many sensory stimulus we are being bombarded with all the time). Being forced to engage only in face to face and normal group situations can be very taxing and a toxic social environment would make it all worse. It would undoubtedly lead to a complete social withdrawal.

[GlastoSara Feb 09 · 12:13:32 AM](#) FYI Professor Baron-Cohen, who testified, is among the world's leading experts on Autism Syndrome. He's founder/leader of the Cambridge University [Autism Research Centre](#), the most useful source of info on the subject I've ever found. Note also, Lauri Love didn't do any damage, stole no secrets — merely demonstrated the vulnerabilities of their systems to the entities he hacked.

[koNko Feb 09 · 02:03:51 AM](#) The reason the US is pursuing Love is to force him to provide the crypto keys for the account he used to hack various Federal agencies to make the world a better place. You can follow this ridiculous comedy of errors with the links below:

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2015/02/accused-british-hacker-wanted-for-crimes-in-us-wont-give-up-crypto-keys/>

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/05/lauri-love-nca-legal-backdoor-crypto-keys-rejected-by-judge/>

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/06/lauri-love-us-extradition-hearing/>

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/07/lauri-love-extradition-alleged-hacking-case-september-ruling/>
<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/09/lauri-love-to-be-extradited-hacking-charges-judge/>
<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/11/lauri-love-faces-hacking-trial-in-us-after-uk-signs-extradition-order/>

Definitely an Enemy of the State and a threat to the security of the USA, LOL.

[saugatojas](#)

[Feb 09 · 03:31:35 AM](#) To note that Lauri Love is requesting that he be prosecuted in UK courts so 'all we are asking is a fair trial'. Particular concerns [were expressed] on the US practice of plea bargaining to get guilty pleas from the accused.

[Archie1954](#)

[Feb 10 · 12:09:48 PM](#) Rather than focus on the inadequacies of the US penal system, the British courts should have recognized the systemic corruption of the American judicial system. The US system is totally politicized and prosecutors will dabble in the obstruction of justice to get a win, rather than just present the case!

[Dotto](#)

[Feb 10 · 12:19:08 PM](#) Just another way the United States of America moves more and more into the realm of a "3rd World" country.

[Marglo948](#)

[Feb 10 · 12:52:53 PM](#) U.S. prisons have been known to forget about people who have been placed in solitary. Some have died, or become extremely sick even not receiving food let alone medical care. I know one man who suffered a grand mal seizure in a court room. None of the guards or judge did anything. One of the people watching the trial called paramedics who wanted to take him to the hospital. His mother jumped over the railing and positioned him to keep from choking on his vomit. The paramedics were told no. He was dragged back to the jail. No he hadn't been convicted yet. They threw him on his bunk. He threw up all the way back to the jail. His mother called a prison advocate who gave her numbers to call. They finally came for him and called in a neurologist who ordered tests that never happened. He was however given anti seizure medicine. I personally know this man and have since he was a little boy. No I would not want any one sent to our jails or prisons. He also picked up mersa which his mother diagnosed and had to threaten a lawsuit she informed them that it was highly infectious and if they didn't care about him then they should think of the guards. He finally got treatment but has a large scar. Not that it matters he wasn't there because of drugs or alcohol. But he does have some brain damage and mild autistic spectrum.

[Debra Lessard](#)

[Feb 10 · 12:54:25 PM](#) Again Corporations taking our money and running. Prisons should be helping non- violent offenders get ready for the world. Once they have done their time they should be allowed to get a job and have a better life. America makes it impossible for these men and women to make smart choices in life. Training should be made available so they have a trade when they get out. Quit stacking the deck. Also, these gangs in prisons should not be allowed. It has become an acceptable way of life in Prison. Violence begets violence. Britain is right not to send prisoners here. America has gone to hell in a handbasket since the SCOTUS appointed GW Bush. in 2000. Although Gore won the election and the popular vote. Then again after Obama, we have a fool who is destroying what We the People worked for. For 8 years we were going the right direction. The Country had hope. Now we have Chaos Trump, a fool who wants to be King.

[VernonHuffman](#)

[Feb 10 · 01:47:02 PM](#) How big a leap would it require to say Edward Snowden cannot be extradited because the USA would likely put him into long term solitary confinement, which qualifies as torture prohibited by international law?

[Roberto C](#)

[Feb 10 · 01:53:03 PM](#) Every time a prison warden takes reasonable and successful steps to reform prison the movement dies off. They understand that the majority of them will be released back to the community. The "Law and order" types want blood. Going to prison is punitive but it isn't mostly or all about punishment. If you are paroled, contact with the police can put you back in the slammer. Most of the time that contact is initiated by the police unrelated to an actual crime.

[Sailor Jo](#)

[Feb 10 · 07:44:02 PM](#) The US bully loves to silence people. People should be tried in the country where they committed the breach of the laws. Is the US above the law? US administrations regularly act that way. Must be this famous "American exceptionalism".

[dragonstongue](#)

[Feb 10 · 11:54:04 PM](#) In the USA (which should really be the DPA - Divided People of America) its every man, women, child and animal for themselves. Among the deafening cacophony of "me, me, me, ME", the few of us who are desperate to be heard shouting "us, us, us, US" - as loud as we can - are still effectively drowned out by the "ME" movement. Socially we are the most irresponsible (without the ability to respond) nation on earth. For more than two decades I was on the board of directors of two major psychiatric prisons. & "hospitals" in one Eastern and a Western facility and tried my best making simple social, health and fiscally responsible reforms by bringing in research studies that proved my point: better quality food and a multi-vitamin would clear a lot problems, full-spectrum and green lights would help calm patients down a lot, a garden to grow roots and other vegetables would keep them occupied with living things - and many other reforms that would both save money and be healthy for the patient/prisoners too numerous to mention here.. None were approved by the "me, me,me, ME" movement. As long as we're in the grip of the oliarchial head-hunters we will go down the nadir of our inevitable capitalistic path. And in the end that vanishing point will not be pretty.

[echeadle](#)

[Feb 13 · 11:40:06 AM](#) We should be ashamed of our prisons. They extort money from prisoners and their families. Thier rules are completely arbitrary. They treat people visiting like dirt. They find ways to extend sentences to make more money. They take medications away from mentally ill people, then, when the person has an episode the medication was helping, they physically abuse them and increase the sentence. We made prisons an industry, like any industry it wants to expand so we now have more prisoners than China or any other country in the world. And we pay more. Truly, American exceptionalism at work

[serious2020](#)

[Feb 13 · 09:33:33 PM](#) I am glad of the UK's decision not to allow extradition to the US. It would be fast tracking him to an immediate death sentence.

[LoneStarLaurel](#)

[Feb 13 · 11:29:48 PM](#) Congratulations, Britain, on your renewed affirmation to uphold humane principles of human rights. Texas here.

[swamptrotter](#)

[Feb 14 · 06:12:37 AM](#) Doesn't this make you proud to be an American? I sure am not any more.