

## Pentagon hacker faces 70 years in US jail - because CPS won't try him in Britain

By [Laura Powell](#)

Last updated at 12:45 AM on 01st March 2009

Gary McKinnon, the UFO-obsessed computer geek who hacked into the Pentagon networks, has received a massive setback in his fight against extradition to America.

Mr McKinnon, an unemployed 42-year-old with Asperger's syndrome, faces up to 70 years in an American prison as a terrorist under a controversial extradition treaty.

He had hoped to avoid extradition to the US by being tried in the UK – but was dealt a huge blow last week when the Crown Prosecution Service announced it would not bring charges against him.

The move opens the way for him to be extradited instead, under the 2003 Extradition Act.



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**Battling on: UFO-obsessed Gary McKinnon is fighting extradition to the US**

Glasgow-born McKinnon was accused of breaking into Pentagon computers and raiding 98 networks used by the US army, navy and Nasa between February 2001 and March 2002.

He has always maintained he hacked in to find evidence of UFOs. He also told police that the US systems had been accessed by other hackers, many of Chinese origin.

Now, his last hope appears to rest with a judicial review of Home Secretary Jacqui Smith's decision that, despite his Asperger's syndrome, there is no medical objection to his extradition for trial.

His supporters include pop star Sting and wife Trudie Styler, who have written to Jacqui Smith backing his case.

Sting told The Mail on Sunday: 'It's a travesty of human rights that Gary McKinnon finds himself in this dreadful situation.

'The US response in relation to the true nature of Gary's crime is disproportionate in the extreme. Gary is even contemplating suicide because of his fear of incarceration as a terrorist in a US jail.

'The British Government is prepared to hand over this vulnerable man without reviewing the evidence.'

Sting pointed out that Mr McKinnon faces extradition under an Extradition Act signed by Britain but not Washington – which means Britain does not have reciprocal rights.

Prof Simon Baron-Cohen, director of the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University, also backs Mr McKinnon. He said: 'He should be tried in the UK and not treated as a terrorist but as a man with a social disability.'

McKinnon – who is also being supported by London Mayor Boris Johnson – is living in his home in Wood Green, North London, until the final decision is made.

His mother Janis Sharp, said: 'I'm heartbroken at the lack of compassion shown towards my son.

'Somebody, somewhere please wake up and realise the extradition of even one vulnerable person cannot be a price worth paying to save the US's embarrassment.'



**Support: Mr McKinnon now has the backing of Sting**

## Comments (54)

The Foreign office and Home office put no value whatsoever on their own citizens. They could not care less. A Large percentage of the legal system in the USA consists of laws that, the UK as a much, much older nation has done away with. This man is no terrorist. But the courts in the USA will not take that into consideration at all. The pentagon is a joke if some disabled jobless bloke in his bedroom can hack into them.

If we are going to accept this, we may as well become the 53rd state of the USA.

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- David, Leeds, 01/3/2009 10:23

The government are happy to hand over suspects to the US government when there is no evidence. I think it would be very prudent not to send people to the US for arrest. and charging, surely the UK has enough evidence to convict this man in the UK under our laws.

I know I would not want to rely on US government to handle a case against me in a correct and proper manner.

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- Stephen Brown, London, 01/3/2009 10:22

So the US is mortified, that somebody who's mentally disabled can get around their obviously deeply flawed security measures? Good. So they should be.

But making an example of this otherwise completely docile, autistic man, makes an absolute mockery of their arrogant, high handed approach to international diplomacy.  
Of course he'll end up getting extradited, despite all this.

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- Simon, London, UK, 01/3/2009 10:13

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