

Jennifer Bryson (former Guantánamo interrogator)

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Q: I wanted to ask you generally about your experience in interrogation, and starting chronologically. And maybe the best thing is for you just to simply lay out how you got involved with it and why.

A: I began working for the Defense Intelligence Agency as a civilian employee in January 2003. And in August of 2003, I was being transferred to a new position and when I met with the boss, he told me, "We've arranged for you to go to interrogation training," and this came as quite a surprise to me, I had never thought about becoming an interrogator, but I was working in human intelligence collection and my individual case is very unusual because at the time, the Department of Defense did not have an interrogation training program set up for civilians. The civilian interrogators they had were retired military who had formerly been interrogators. And this is still fresh enough after 9/11 and that it's in this window of everything surging faster than the capacity of our building, so they did something very unusual with me. They sent me to Fort Wachuka, to two classes in the fall of 2003. The first one was a course for a reserve intelligence unit that was being sent to Guantanamo and the unit had interrogators, analysts and a few counter-intelligence personnel. And this particular course, the acronym was ISCT. I think that stands for Intelligence Support to Counter-Terrorism. It was developed for intelligence personnel who already had the basic training—were mission-qualified—to give them sort of a crash course in both 9/11 information and also refresher courses in their skills before sending them to theater. And this developed because in the earliest years at Guantanamo, they were sending personnel who had had training years before, had not been using the training and they realized that we needed to do better. So, I was not the kind of person this class was designed for; I was really in every way an exception. As a civilian, I was an exception, and because I hadn't been to the basic interrogation course. But there simply wasn't one available. So they put me in with this reserve unit. This was an experiment and it was a fantastic experience that I wish they had continued because as a civilian I also learned a lot about working with the military by training with them, whereas now the training is mostly separated and then out in the theater all of a sudden you have to work together. But I went to this course, and it was a refresher course in the basics of interrogation according to the U.S. Army Field Manual.

Q: 3452?

A: Yes. And it was more... it was pretty much a condensed, high-speed version of basic interrogation as well as some lectures about Islam, about al-Qaeda, about what they were seeing from detainee practices. And some staff who were at Guantanamo came to visit for a few days, so that we could, you know, start to get a sense of what was going to be coming. The course was about five or six weeks and after that the reserve unit that was there went to Guantanamo, but I stayed for a second course, the Defense Strategic Debriefing Course, DSDC, which is normally not taught to interrogators, but is extremely useful, and it's more of a high-level detailed training program in collecting information from willing sources, and a lot of training in writing and in how intelligence information is structured. Then, in the winter of 2004, is when I was deployed the first time to Guantanamo for six months.

Q: Meaning... You mean in January 2004 or December?

A: It was the very beginning of February.

Q: OK.

A: If I could just back up to January. While I was in Washington, DC between the training and going to Guantanamo, I was informed that when I arrived at Guantanamo, I would be the Team Chief for the Central Asia Team.

Q: Is that a tiger team?

A: No. The detainee population there was divided into four teams. One team was all Saudis; they were a quarter of the population. Three teams were regional, with detainees from a whole bunch of different countries of that region. The idea that they would send *me* to be the Central Asia Team Chief, I think, spoke a lot to some of the lack of planning and thinking about it, because I was going down there with a Ph.D in Arabic Islamic studies and spoke Arabic, and there were three teams that had Arabic-speaking detainees, and one that didn't. And they were going to assign me to be the Team Chief of the only team that didn't have Arabic-speaking detainees. However, my departure got delayed by about two weeks because a supervisor arranged for me to go to an extra training course that was not related to Guantanamo [inaudible], and because of that, by the time I got to Guantanamo a few weeks later than expected in February, somebody had arrived in between, and it was just the next person in the slot at that level was put in charge. And it just so happened the next Team Chief position that opened was the Saudi Arabia Team. So I was in charge of the Saudi Arabia Team, which means I was in charge of the interrogators and the interrogation support analysts. And this was that phrase "Tiger Team" that would come up. Where you would... They did something in Guantanamo that was fantastic. Rather than have the analysts off in another building or even off in a different continent just communicating by computer, they took a few analysts and they paired one analyst and one interrogator, which helped the interrogators better understand analysis and the analysts better understand interrogation, so they had much more realistic expectations, which is important. Also I was an interrogator, and especially in those first six months, I had much more time to do interrogation and I would often have to do it evenings and weekend just because of scheduling, but I was doing both at once.

Q: You mentioned that in talking about the training, the military realized that we can do this without [inaudible], did anybody say anything along those lines, or refer to that in the process of your training in terms of lessons learned and why?

A: There were... For example, some of the people we met who came to visit us from Guantanamo had been there in some of the early days when I sense they felt they had personnel who had very rusty skills, had very limited skills, and also were... had been trained with much more cold war-oriented training. Where, for example, military interrogation was much more tactically oriented.

Q: Were you trained... What were you about the applicable legal standard? I mean outside the Field Manual. Was it discussed whether Geneva applied?

A: My memory from that course, this is a few years back at this point, was really Field Manual, Field Manual, Field Manual, Field Manual, and I was with an enlisted reserve group, and even a number of questions I asked, I was quickly told "We don't ask questions here." When a trainer told me that, I actually thought they were joking, and I laughed, but I found out they weren't joking. You know, and from the background I've come from, that's what you do is you ask questions. So this was so not an environment where people were having long conversations over a cup of coffee about conceptualizing what we should be doing. This was really not the most practical training, but to give you some examples of the tenor of the training: one that I remember very specifically: so the interrogation training was first lectures reminding of where right is and where left is and the limits in the Field Manual,

Q: Uh, hm.

A: You know, the basic interrogation approaches, and then we have practical exercises where trainers would role play detainees, and we would do interrogations and the analysts would also work together with us and help with the information. And one day during a training session, one of the interrogators threw a cup of water on one of the role-playing detainees...

Q: Uh, hm.

A: And right at that point, the instructor stopped every single session that was going on, not just that one. They pulled every single person out of exercise, and they brought us back to the lecture room and really set down that under absolutely no circumstances are you to be engaging in behavior of where you are harassing or getting physical towards detainees. I remember that very, very vividly.

Q: Mm hmm

A: Because some of the stuff that went on at Guantanamo, you might keep in mind, at this point we still haven't even heard about it, and also something that was important in the training is our interrogation trainers were experienced interrogators.

Q: Uh, hm.

A: So I remember during any breaks I would be always trying to find the training staff to ask them questions about their experience. They had had experience in Somalia, the first Gulf War, and this was really important for the quality of the training and they 100 percent, consistently, from experience, trained us that you build rapport with the detainee to be effective.

Q: Uh, hm.

A: There was no ambiguity, and it was because they were well trained and experienced.

Q: Jennifer, did anybody train counter to that? Did you get any advice...

A: Never.

Q: Did you get any advice contrary to the use of rapport building?

A: No.

Q: In the training, you indicated that the Field Manual was the model. Were you specifically told, other than the incident you described, that there were certain things you could not do?

A: Well if it was not in the Field Manual, you could not do it. I mean that was, that was clear.

Q: If I recall, the Field Manual has some explicit statements about detainee treatment. Did you go through those?

A: Yes. And, the instructors created... really created a culture of focus on rapport building. Not just memorize what the approaches are in the Field Manual, but they created an entire culture around that, that the only reason you should be choosing certain approaches is if it would help with rapport building.

Q: And that might vary from team to team.

A: Right, right. But I think it was very important because with some of the approaches there, if they are taken out of the context of 'your purpose is rapport building,' something like fear up, good cop, bad cop, I think could be used in bad and ineffective ways.

Q: OK. You mentioned that, at some point, someone told you that you don't ask questions at the training. Do you remember that the question was that you asked that prompted that reaction?

A: I remember my question had to do with an exercise that we were doing about an Afghan detainee, and I was, you know, Afghanistan, I consider everything about it absolutely fascinating geographically and historically and the strategic location, so I don't remember the particular question, but I remember my question was speculative of, "Wow, we saw this and this and this, well I wonder if, you know, the next steps to this could be...", and it was the type of question that would be sort of starting a conversation and because the trainer had been working on this for a while, and I was interested. But we were under... had very little time. They had a very defined, set curriculum they had to go through, and as I said I was also coming at this from an entirely different learning environment.

Q: OK. So, to summarize, was it your conclusion that it wasn't the substance of the question, it was just this was a, as you said, 'we're going to lay out the nuts and bolts' program, not have...

A: It was not the substance of the question. It was, we have a lot to teach you, we're here, and also the trainers were mostly former enlisted in the military and I think that they were also, you know, it was a professional expectation that they felt they really had to stick to what they knew exactly as trainers. And they didn't want the conversation to go beyond that, which in retrospect, I can respect, but it was just a bit of a jolt, you know, for me as a civilian, and when I would find trainers during the breaks and ask them questions about their experience, they were very willing to be helpful.

Q: Did anything happen during the training that led you to have any concerns that there was detainee treatment... mistreatment, excuse me?

A: No.

Q: Is there anything you were told in the training that led to a concern on your part that they might be giving instructions that could lead to mistreatment

A: No. And we'll get to the next point of the timeline, what happened when I actually arrived at Guantanamo. That's where the surprises begin.

Q: OK. Well, then maybe you should ask me about...

A: [Laughter]

Q: Ok, what happened when you got to Guantanamo, what surprises did you see?

A: The... in 2004, the pace of operations was very fast. I arrived about 2 weeks after the previous Saudi Arabia Team Chief had left, so I had no overlap. And on my first day on the island I was in the interrogation booth because the staff sergeant who had been heading up the team while they were waiting for me had an interrogation scheduled. His interpreter was not available and I knew I needed to start learning and get going so my first day on the island I was in the booth with a detainee, helping out by working as an interpreter for one of the interrogators there. I mean, it was a place where you hit the ground running. And the surprise that came, and this is something that has been in newspapers and open source information, is that there were some people at Guantanamo using this method of putting a detainee in a room with strobe lights and extremely loud music, and I've read about this in the newspapers, you know, and I feel like I can talk about it because it's been out there that this was going on. And I just wasn't sure what to make of this because this had nothing to do with how I had been trained. And this was the exception, not the norm.

Q: Uh, hm.

A: And the interrogators I was supervising on the Saudi Team, the ones who were working by daytime, were doing, you know, standard approaches in the Field Manual, trying to build rapport, so I had no idea what this was or where it had come from. When I questioned the interrogators they showed me some articles, I guess that they had gotten them online, um, about doing this, and they tried to assure me it would be OK because somebody had studied how loud you could make music without hurting eardrums.

Q: Uh, hm.

A: And this was hard to deal with. I was also the first female team chief and the first civilian team chief. And with my educational background, with a Ph.D from Yale, I could tell that there was some sort of chatter going on in the culture of the staff of "who is this person, you know, why are they sending us this person?" So there was pressure to maintain credibility. And others had been allowing this to go on, so I didn't expect that the people around me were going to be the ones I could go to to say "what is this?" Also, one woman was very important at this point, and I think there's an important lesson in this. She had been... She was there as a contractor, and she had been very senior enlisted in the military before she had retired. And I quickly got a feeling that this woman was very professional, very serious and really committed to just doing the right thing. So I pulled her aside and I asked her: "What have you seen going on that you think I should prioritize to keep an eye on?" Because, as I said, you hit the ground, and the pace of operations was at a breakneck speed. And she had been there for quite a few months, and I knew the only way I was going to be able to hit the ground running was to try to learn from the people who had already been there. And she is the one who said to me, I remember her phrasing on this, she said: "Keep an eye on the night shift, Ma'am." And I was surprised she addressed me so respectfully, as "Ma'am." And it was on the night shift where this method was going on. At this point, the team chief had the role... interrogators could not go in to do an interrogation unless the individual interrogation session had been approved in advance by the team chief as well as the deputy commander of the ICE: I.C.E, Interrogation Control Element. So I went to another person who was there, and this was also, it's very valuable to have reservists on staff who are from related fields in their civilian experience. There was an officer... a reserve officer there whose civilian career was a homicide detective in an American city. So he had a lot of experience with interrogating people who didn't want to talk. And he... I could quickly see he was doing excellent work in rapport building, helping to mentor interrogators in rapport building. And it was what was working. And I went to him and I said, "I want to stop approval for this dark room, strobe lights, loud music. I really think I should do this, am I doing the

right thing?” And he just said, “Yes, absolutely, thank God, finally, somebody is stopping this.” So I told the interrogators I wouldn’t approve that method any more, and they had to move to daytime. We did not have enough staff to have supervisors there in the middle of the night. Also, at this point, while the speed is still incredibly fast, we had... it was not so fast that we needed to be going 24 hours a day. We had the resources of office space and of guards to move detainees in interrogation rooms, to be able to work at least sort of 6:00 am – 10:00 pm(ish). Another thing that was important at this point is that the Saudi team was doing very, very poorly. When I arrived, the team chiefs would report to the General each week about the number of interrogation reports they got. That’s how they measured success. And they told me in advance, they told me this in Washington even, you know “Saudi’s don’t talk, Saudi’s don’t talk” and I got down there and everybody on the team said: “Saudi’s don’t talk.” And in briefing, the general... the staff sergeant helping me said, “Don’t worry, don’t worry, it’s totally OK to get up there and say zero reports. That’s what they expect. You can just... So you don’t need to worry about it, they don’t think that you’re failing, they just know that Saudi’s don’t talk.”

Q: So you only filed a report if there’s actually a conversation and they don’t just refuse to say anything?

A: Uhhhhh, oh, OK, I should explain, the interrogators had to write a report about every single session, but...

Q: Yeah.

A: ... those were different from a report of collected intelligence. It’s a report of collected intelligence. But I thought from the training we’d had where I had had trainers who had worked with people from different cultures, different continents, different globes, different age groups, you can build rapport with people and they will talk to you. So I became what was known as the ‘forbidden sentence’ on the Saudi team. And I forbade hearing or seeing written the sentence “Saudis don’t talk.” And the team stopped using it. And then, I also brought together the Department of Defense interrogators who were on my team and I... At that point unusually, the FBI was starting to have interrogators there, not interrogators, but FBI investigators there for longer periods of time. And so they had assigned some to work just with the Saudis, so I actually knew who my counterpart was. This is very unusual in an environment where it’s really inter-agency warfare. So I invited them to a meeting and it was interrogators only, not the analysts, and I... we had a group meeting and I got the interrogators one afternoon to schedule no interrogations and we shared ex... lessons about what works and what doesn’t with each other. I saw some of my interrogators doing very well and some doing very poorly, I wanted to help the ones who were doing poorly, and with consistency what worked was rapport-based. There were no exceptions. There was nobody who argued for anything else who also was actually having any success collecting intelligence.

Q: How do you define what works and what’s successful?

A: Collection of intelligence that’s meets the requirements of the intelligence community.

Q: Accurate information? Or is that...

A: The role of the interrogator is not to analyze the information. The role of the interrogator is to collect the information and record it. However, there is, I mean a, having information which is accurate is, of course, the goal but they train you very much to not try to be second guessing and screening out what you happen to think is accurate and inaccurate. And with the system we had of analysts working with

us, it was very much geared towards finding information that also fit into a wider web of things, which is where the either affirmation or rejection process comes in.

Q: OK.

A: But our role, and you know, if you're at the interrogation level at that level, you know, we didn't... we didn't have the super-high level detainees. We were... also, because the Saudi team had been doing badly for quite some time, we had a lot of ground to cover, so it was pretty basic.

Q: Uh, hm.

A: So, our role as interrogators at that point was, we're there to collect and report.

Q: So what did, what I'm trying to get a sense of, and I probably didn't ask the question too well because I'm not an interrogator, but the question I have is what is the difference between a successful interrogation and an unsuccessful interrogation? You talk about approaches that work and approaches that don't, what... What's the difference?

A: Uh... I'm pausing here because I'm not comfortable talking about the system the military uses to... for feedback loop about whether information is correct or not.

Q: Fair enough.

A: So I'll just say there is one. And, so success is information which responds to a question, an official question.

Q: Mm hmm

A: And at a second level, information which then also gets an extra "kudos, bravo" through the system. So there, there were ways of getting feedback as to whether or not we were making progress.

Q: And success would mean that not only information was obtained but that there was progress...

A: Yes, you got some...

Q: ...towards some goal.

A: ... some "atta boys," official.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now, what would be an example of an interrogation that didn't work? And you can obviously use a made-up example.

A: Uh, detainee staring at the floor, silently.

Q: So they don't talk?

A: Right. Umm, detainee took control: detainee took control and lectured about the weather for two hours to avoid, you know, the interrogator. Uh, an effective interrogation is that the interrogator is in control of the line of conversation and the detainee is responding to substantive questions. But it's very important to note that getting to that point can take many sessions. And I considered it successful when a detainee who had previously only stared at the floor would start making eye contact, would engage in conversation.

Q: Right.

A: If I had a detainee who had not talked at all and I prepared very nice cookies and tea, and the detainee said "thank you" to me, I would consider that progress and a step forward.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: Um, it's not yet going to meet the, you know, threshold of what the intelligence community considers "success," but what I allowed my interrogators time to do that type of work because that's how you get to success.

Q: Yeah. OK. Um, you mentioned a couple of techniques in particular that you found questionable that you asked to be stopped. Where there any other techniques that you saw when you were at Guantanamo that fell into that same category—things that you thought were improper?

A: No. We had questions on, you know, "if a detainee needs to go to the bathroom, what do I do?" You know, we'd have new interrogators arrive. Because it was quite a complicated process if a detainee needed to go the bathroom, because you had to stop the session, had to get the guards, there were a limited number of guards, there was a limited amount of times, you had to make sure there weren't other detainees moving. So there were discussions about things that I think could have led to people making a wrong decision, but by the time I got there in 2004 things had become very orderly and I heard that, you know, late 2002, into 2003, before Gen. Miller had got there, that there was a lack of orderliness. So, keep in mind that I'm getting there in 2004 for the first time.

Q: Right. So did you hear anything about [inaudible], whether you witnessed it or heard people discussing about short-shackling, hot... heat or cold, any of those techniques?

A: No heat or cold. I had heard about short-shackling from the past but...

Q: It was discussed in past tense. It's not something that anyone was doing then.

A: Past tense, yeah. And at this point also, personally something I do not understand is what happened in the Department of Defense from the early 1990s to 2002, because the interrogators I know from Vietnam War, Somalia conflict, first Gulf War all experienced and taught rapport based, rapport based, rapport based. How this somehow got forgotten is something I really want to understand because we need to not let that happen again. But by the time I get there, and by the time we really start to yet again see patterns, which if we had been paying attention decades before we would have already know, by 2004 we're seeing the people who are engaged in rapport based interrogation are doing the right thing morally and they are the ones getting intelligence. And the others are not.

Q: OK.

A: The others are not and I experienced this as an interrogator that when you interrogate a detainee who, you know, had been brought in with, you know, dark and strobe lights, head banger music, it took a lot more work to get that detainee around to the point of "let's have a conversation. No, I am not the person who did that. I and I know you associate me with them because we work for the same government." So the interrogators who did that on the team I supervised did not get intelligence reports and they created a situation that created more work for us and things proceeded more slowly than they could have otherwise.

Q: When you say... Did you actually see this going on, strobe lights and music?

A: Only once.

Q: Can you describe what the impact appeared to be on the detainee?

A: I didn't see the detainee.

Q: OK.

A: Um, I walked into the hallway of a trailer once when this was going on.

Q: OK, um, but you did subsequently interrogate the detainee to whom that had happened?

A: [Inaudible]

Q: OK. That's a yes?

A: He was, yeah, yeah, he was angry. He was annoyed. He was distrustful. And all of those are characteristics which don't make somebody want to talk to you.

Q: Did you conclude that those characteristics resulted from the mistreatment he had been subjected to or did he say that?

A: He said they did. Yeah.

Q: What did he say?

A: Well, you know...

Q: I mean, yeah, that was a long time ago but [inaudible] you could paraphrase it.

A: You know, he wanted me to realize that it was going to be hard for him to trust me. That I had arrived at a time that was different from how things were before. So, you know, our experience on our team was, as I said, not only was it not moving us forward, I felt it move us backwards.

Q: OK.

A: And it was interesting because I still don't understand where it came from.

Q: Did other... Did you have conversations with other interrogators about this where you shared the perception or the view that this treatment of detainees had in fact...

A: Yes.

Q: ...put you further behind in intelligence gathering? Was that pretty much the considered viewpoint of everyone else you talked with or most of the people or...

A: Interrogators that I talked with, yes. The ones... especially the ones who were there at this point where there practices are almost completely gone.

Q: OK.

A: But who are still kind of inheriting the detainees, some of them, you know not all have gone through this, and also by 2004 there, it seemed at that point that we started to get more interrogators through contracting practices who were more experienced and on my team, with 100% consistency—I can't think of a single exception, the experienced interrogators were rapport builders who were frustrated by, you know, feeling like they had to kind of undo what had been done before they do what they do best.

Q: OK. In the article you wrote you last month, you mentioned three impacts...

A: Mm hmm

Q: ...of abusive procedures and one you mentioned was torturing the interrogatee. And did you see anything that you would describe as torture or hear about anything happening while you were there that you would describe as torture or cruel and inhuman treatment?

A: Not 'torture,' and I say that because later training I had got into a lot more detail about legal thresholds of torture.

Q: Mm hmm

A: But practices which were not treating a detainee well. I mean, I don't think this loud music is treating a person 'well.' I don't think, you know, leaving a person short-chained is treating a person well.

Q: Did detainees ever sort of say... tell you: "I was tortured before"?

A: No.

Q: OK. Did they say: "I was mistreated before; oh this happened to me," anything that would indicate to you that either you thought they had been abused from what they described it or they had concluded they had been abused.

A: No.

Q: Just to be clear, I'm not asking about incidents of it just happened. I'm also asking, like if they talked about it, you know, something that happened in Afghanistan or...

A: I think the plane ride was stressful. A few mentioned that. But by this point, by 2004, that's not what they're to us about.

Q: OK.

A: And the mission, with the mission being pretty well-organized by 2004, the medical staff were very organized and, you know, if medical said to us a detainee couldn't come to interrogation it was an absolute trump card, you know. So I didn't, I wasn't having detainees coming in who were, you know, in bad physical condition.

Q: You said several times that by the time you got there it seemed there was a restoration order process [inaudible at 42:12]. Were there any discussions that you had were anybody told you what it was like before? I mean, did anybody say: "well this is what's happening now but you should have seen it in 2003"?

A: I think the staff were under much more pressure. There was a culture of "another terrorist attack could happen pretty soon; we've got to do something."

Q: This was before?

A: Yeah. I mean, this is what I heard about before. By 2004 things were still tense but people would say to me it was even more tense before.

Q: I mean, was there active pressure to get intel... Was there pressure to find things out regardless of the methods that were used, or any instructions along those lines? "Do what you need to do."

A: Never instructions along those lines but I think that an environment in which there is tremendous time-sensitive pressure really requires high-quality, experienced leadership to make sure that pressure doesn't lead into dangerous creativity.

Q: Mm hmm, OK. Um, one of the second impacts that you expressed concern about in the article was the impact on the interrogator or the guard. Did you see instances or were you aware of any instances where mistreatment of detainees had some sort of adverse impact on the people who carried it out?

A: Not directly that I witnessed, but in 2004 during my first tour in Guantanamo was when the Abu Ghraib case broke.

Q: Mm hmm

A: And this, I remember the day the news came to us. I just had a sense that day professionally, for me it was going to be turning a corner; that the whole profession was entering a new chapter. It came as a shock to us. And when I returned to Washington, DC and was talking with some senior intelligence official at the Defense Intelligence Agency who had *tremendous* experience, Vietnam War and more, in the field. I remember he said to me, you know, and I knew him personally so got into a little more about personal discussion, was he said: "this, this is at the level that these people are going to have to deal

with this with their souls.” Among those who were very, very, very experienced there was... it was a very deep sense that people do not get involved in such dark activity without it having a personal impact. Also, you know, keep in mind that while I am the Team Chief, I’m supervising everybody, I’m doing interrogations, I’m reporting to the general once a week, I’m trying to track patterns and figuring out how we can improve. So I’m not having a huge amount of time to spend with individual interrogators.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the, uh, one of the interrogators, for example, who wanted to be using this strobe lights/loud music, was also my most unhappy interrogator. I’m not a psychologist, you know, I’m not qualified to make any clinical observations, but there was nothing in the situation which seemed to be working and felt right. And also, while I was at Guantanamo, I experienced news reports about Guantanamo that had nothing to do with what my experience was, but friends and family back home thought I was engaged in all kinds of awful stuff. And I really knew as an interrogator I had to be able to sleep at night. There’s no... it’s such an emotionally intense experience that it has an impact on the interrogator.

Q: OK. I had a question. Now, you were there around the time that lawyers started coming to Guantanamo, habeas lawyers. Did you find that had any effect on the interrogation process?

A: Yes. Detainees suddenly had more sources of information. There was a lot more confusion about what their status was going to be. But at the same time, you know, an interrogator said to the detainee: “that’s separate. We’re not involved. If you have questions about that you need to talk to them.” You know, we were told: “stay in your lane, do your thing, don’t talk to your detainees about their habeas meetings.” So it also, this may sound small but it really does have a big impact when you’re on, in such an intense operation. All of a sudden, overnight, guard sources needed to be diverted away from bringing detainees to interrogation to bringing detainees to lawyer meetings, but you don’t add something to an operation like that without having to take something away. So, you know, some of our experience with it was also logistical but, you know, for the interrogators this is a decision that’s been made in Washington and we go with the flow.

Q: Um, also [inaudible], did the... did you have any involvement at all with the CSRT process? Were they asking questions?

A: No.

Q: So it was just sort of like... so, I mean, no members of the CSRT panels would talk to the interrogators at all?

A: No. It... now there were some analysts who supported the CSRT process, which created a strange duplication that we couldn’t figure out. And because they had analysts who were very new and were very few in number and we had analysts who were very experienced and we had more of them, sometimes some of the analysts would talk to analysts but the CSRT process was something the interrogators were not involved in. And when a detainee in the scheduling process, when it came up on the schedule that a detainee had a CSRT, that was a priority. That was unquestioned, that if somebody had wanted to do an interrogation that afternoon, simply wasn’t going to happen.

Q: Were you there when there were any hunger strikes?

A: Yes.

Q: Uh, did you interrogate anybody who was on the hunger strike?

A: Yes. Although the... there were detainees who were very, very far into hunger strikes and medical told us we couldn't interrogate them so we didn't.

Q: Mm hmm

A: That was monitored.

Q: What did the detainees tell you, if anything, about why they were on hunger strikes?

A: We were the enemy and they were fighting us. They wanted out.

Q: Mmkay. Those might potentially be different things.

A: Yes. But I think that they were both present to them.

Q: Was... the first would suggest that they considered it a form of combat. The second would suggest that the detainees were frustrated by detention that they felt was unwarranted.

A: Um...

Q: See the...

A: Yeah. Well, you know that they are different things... different sentiments but they're not... I mean I experienced both sentiments in a single detainee, I don't think they're incompatible.

Q: Mm hmm

A: Also, I mean, Guantanamo was a prison. There... something that I really... I mean, prison and detention are uncomfortable settings, and something that I had to work on training my interrogators, there was so much fear of Stockholm syndrome and reverse Stockholm syndrome, that interrogators were almost afraid to let themselves consider what the detainee might be feeling. And I, you know, insisted to the interrogators it was essential for effective interrogation and there was nothing counter to interrogation in it that to be aware that a detainee is in a cell and the door is locked and you are living a life where your door is not locked is a fact that will help you to understand who this person is and what is going on in their life and that moment. And we had... it was a power relationship which you in any prison, in any detention setting, that I felt we had to be aware of.

Q: Did you see any detainees that you felt, for whatever reason, were in a state of psychological distress?

A: No. I mean there was a detainee whose personality was extremely difficult to deal with but that is different from being in a state of psychological distress. Also, while I was there, and I was there twice—we may want to go back to the timeline at some point—the, you know, they were expanding the

medical facilities, so there, you know, there was a lot of attention and resources put to trying to provide for the detainees. And another think is, you know, for me as an interrogator and as a team chief of interrogators, first of all there was a system set up at Guantanamo that if we ever had any medical questions, because the interrogators did not have contact with the medical staff and vice versa.

Q: OK.

A: And so—this was intentional—so an officer was designated to be a liaison between the interrogation staff and the medical staff. So it could be anything from, you know, “an interrogator is baking cookies for a detainee, can you tell me if this detainee has any food allergies I should be aware of?” to, you know, “I had a detainee come in and he, you know, he said he bruised his hand when he fell playing soccer and it’s still hurting him,” that our job was simply to report what the detainee told us to the liaison.

Q: OK.

A: You know, and they would report it to medical. So we had a system in place that if there were problems we had a way to report it without getting involved with the medical staff and then at a strictly practical matter for the process of interrogation, the interrogator doesn’t want a detainee to be unhinged. For example, you know, if I found, OK I’m not a brain scientist so I’m going to put this in very lay terms, but, you know, anger happens in the limbic system of the brain, and when the limbic system goes into that ‘fight or flight’ response, it’s taking blood and resources of the brain away from the cerebral cortex. Well as an interrogator you want the detainee to be in that cerebral cortex, calm, thoughtful, building relationships, providing depth and breadth of information. So even strictly from a practical standpoint, in addition to a humane treatment standpoint, if a detainee had been, you know, extremely unhinged, first of all we were trained to report it through our liaison, and it wouldn’t be useful, which I will say I view as a secondary consideration.

Q: OK. Can you just go through the timeline of events [inaudible]?

A: So my first tour at Guantanamo was a 6 month deployment. I returned to the US in July. Most of the of the Defense Intel... the Defense Intelligence Agency deployments at that time were all 179 days. Constant turnover of staff was a real problem at Guantanamo. So I returned. I was on another assignment and in the, around March of 2005 I received a phone call from one of the senior people at intelligence at Guantanamo asking if I would return for 6 months and I said yes. And about 2 weeks later they called back and they said “would you move here for two years?” And I said yes. And this was the first time at the level, at the mid-level of interrogation team chief, that DIA had been willing to move somebody there for 2 years. I’m told that it was at the request of Gen. Hood, who was the commander.

Q: And he had... he had been the commander during your initial...

A: He arrived, Gen. Miller was there when I first arrived in 2004 and then there was a change of command and Gen. Hood was there for the remainder of my deployment in 2004 so he had worked with me. It’s extremely important for missions like this that we have people who are there for longer periods of time. So I was able to PCS (“permanent change of station”) to move there and this also had an impact from the very beginning on how I was able to approach my work because I was able to take a long term view and begin thinking about projects that needed to be taken care of that would take longer than my 179 days. Also, going there for the second time I was able to tap into the experience I’d had before. So

the second time I stayed, instead of 24 months I stayed for 18 months, and the second tour also I was Saudi Arabia Team Chief and an interrogator. It's during the second tour that in the wake of Abu Ghraib and other concerns, the Department of Defense became much more systematic about qualifications for interrogators. But I should note that my very strange, unusual experience of having been sent to a refresher course and then going down there twice, I was the only person like me that I knew.

Q: OK.

A: There was nobody else in that situation. Civilian interrogators who came after me came at a time when the Department of Defense, through the Defense Intelligence Agency, had actually developed a basic interrogation training course based on the Army basic interrogation course. So civilian interrogators who came after me, who had not previously been military interrogators, had basic interrogation training, however, I did not. So I was there on a second tour without the official qualification course and that during my second tour the Department of Defense sent me back to the US to... first they sent me to a course that was I think called Joint Advanced Interrogation Training, that was designed for interrogators who already had the basic course, who already had experience and it was a course that was designed to begin training interrogation management. This was entirely new.

Q: OK.

A: That there was a course like this. I think it's an *extremely* valuable investment to develop interrogation management. If I can go jump back into the timeline to 2004, the military, I'm not sure when they started doing this but I know at least by... it was definitely, I think, after the Vietnam War, I may be wrong. They made a decision that officers would not be trained in interrogation. They... that interrogation was treated like a technical skill for the enlisted. What this resulted in is that you then had officers supervising interrogators, who knew very little or nothing about interrogation. And that intelligence officers were, and I mean that in the uniform officer sense, were viewed as interchangeable so that an intelligence officer who had technical skills in computer stuff could be sent to Guantanamo and have a say in development of, you know, supervising for interrogators. And, I think it's a very bad practice. Interrogation is a very strange, really only doing interrogation and being trained in it is what helped me to understand it. It is a window onto an entirely different way of dealing with people in a whole new world. So, the new course that was started when they started to have some junior officers who were able to go to interrogation training and then to train them at a second level, I think this was part of lessons learned that were being applied and that I hope are being continued. And, it was after that course when it really became a requirement and you have to check the box, you know, and all of us said we obviously have to do this, that they sent me back to take the beginning level interrogation course. And, it was in that course that we had the most extension training on the Geneva Convention. We were required to take a written exam about this Geneva Convention, especially about the Third Convention before we were even allowed to continue in the class. And we were informed that if we didn't pass the exam, we would not be allowed to continue to training in method and practical exercises.

Q: When was this in time again?

A: This would have been the winter of 2006 for me.

Q: Winter of 2006 being again, is it January or February of 2006, or November, December 2006?

A: I went to two courses. So I went to the Joint Advanced Interrogation Training I'm going to say around January. And, I think, I don't remember exactly, I think I went to the Basic Interrogation Course then it would have been maybe in March.

Q: Okay.

A: I wish I had records. I don't. Somewhere I have my certificates. I would have to dig them out.

Q: But, you sound like you're pretty sure it was in the first half of 2006.

A: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Also, it was striking to me that the Geneva Conventions training included a lecture on the history of the conventions and how they had come to be. Because I had from the get go at Guantanamo, you know, even in 2004, our working assumption was our standard needed to be that it should be Conventions—you know for us it was mostly the Third Convention—and then to learn more about the history of the horrific conditions of these Conventions had come out of. I really increased my appreciation for them. And, also we had some really, we had a great instructor who also took us through some examples of European case law of some cases dealing with the IRA where there had been accusations of torture and how the European courts had to find a threshold to what was torture, you know, and then they told us this is a European court, Americans are not European but you should be aware of, you know, what kinds of discussions are going on and when pushing it too far was viewed as pushing it too far and also in this course we had experienced interrogators teaching the class, only experienced interrogatories and a 100% of them taught rapport-based interrogation was what works.

Q: Were you at Guantanamo when the detainees committed suicide, the first 3 suicides?

A: I think so. I mean, I remember, remember all sorts of drama, you know, while I was there but it wasn't something that involved directly what I was doing, so you know, I mean, it was troubling. People... was concern.

Q: Have you or any of your interrogators interrogated those detainees?

A: Not me and I don't remember any others.

Q: And then, in general how did you interact with the just I guess military police was it who was in charge of the detention side of the operation?

A: So the detention side—and they weren't all military police. Especially, I don't, I sensed that it was because of deployments to Iraq that there is a shortage of military police, of enlisted and officers with the military police, MOS, So there were also artillery and other specialties who were there working in the guard force, but they received training before working the guard force. It was the guard force which was originally the acronym you probably know as JDOG and later was changed to JDG.

Q: Couple questions, follow up. Did General Miller give you any instructions?

A: The only specific instructions he gave us were on, um uh, we had, there were records kept of time of day that detainees were interrogated. There was a point at which he wanted, he said the Saudi detainees should be interrogated at night. So, uh.

Q: Wait, was that before or after you had asked that they not be...?

A: After. Yeah.

A: Okay.

Q: Yeah, this was, yeah so this was, you know, were using field manual only and also when I had, you know, had the session of bringing the interrogators together, what works is the people who started to have success was all daytime. There was nobody who was interrogating in the middle of the night who was starting to make progress. So, I, because I knew that the officer in charge of the interrogation unit whose stood between me and General Miller would support me, I decided that data would be my support. So, I went back through all the interrogation records I could find and build a chart showing that it daytime interrogation that was having success. And when that didn't work, I, uh, night time was defined as 7 pm to 6:59 am. And also my interrogators were on the brink of a revolt when they heard about this because they knew that daytime interrogation is what worked. And so we all got together and what we did was we scheduled interrogations that would go past 7 pm until like 8 pm or 9 pm, and because of space limitations we generally worked in two different shifts, early morning to midday and midday to evening. And then we had a few interrogators who would come in and start at like 6:50 in the morning so that on the statistics it would show up as nighttime, but we knew that we were doing the right thing. And this was the only situation I had where I really had to try to put a fight.

Q: Did anyone else discuss the pattern, discuss having similar experiences on other interrogation teams with day versus night interrogations?

A: I don't know.

Q: Okay. Now it sounds like, to put it bluntly, that at least some people thought that the instructions to move people to nighttime interrogations was an effort to take them out of the rapport building mode and put them back into a more abusive mode and that there was opposition to that. I mean, is that fair to say that's what was going on?

A: Nobody talked about it as an attempt to make things abusive again but it was perceived as a type of harshness?

Q: Tactic. Tactic.

A: Harshness, I would say.

Q: Okay.

A: Which is, that I really, I really...

Q: To ask, to ask the question...

A: ...that we were opposed to.

Q: To ask the question a different way, it is clear that you and other people did not

A: Everybody on my team.

Q: Did not want a nighttime team to do the interrogations.

A: Everybody on my team.

Q: Now, why was that?

A: Because it didn't work. Waking people up in the middle of the night made them mad and the interrogators were really investing in building relationships and also this was the team that every week being reporting zero. And this was the team that was starting to report success.

Q: You mean that the nighttime team reported ...

A: The Saudi Arabia Team as a whole was used to saying every week, well other regional teams were having success in numbers, the way we measured numbers of reports. This was a team that was coming out of months of week after week, after week of zero. And this was a team that was moving to rapport building, was beginning to rack up numbers of success that had detainees who were not yet providing reportable information, but that's where the trajectory was and the whole team viewed this, you know, "you have to move to nighttime" instruction as a step backwards. So we, you know, obeyed the officers and felt we could still manage to do what was effective and right at the same time.

Q: Now you described waking people up. It sounds like sleep interruption is among the methods you were concerned about. Is that correct?

A: Methods for us were the field manual methods. We didn't talk about intentional sleep interruption as a method.

Q: I probably didn't articulate that question as effectively as I could have. It sounds like one of the things that you did not want to happen was for detainees to be woken up in the middle of the night.

A: Yes. We found it didn't work.

Q: Now, did you know whether or not people were being actually sleep deprived?

A: I didn't know of cases of intentional systematic sleep deprivation. And simply from a logistical matter, I don't see how somebody could have done that because the number of hours you would have to devote to a single detainee, and that also, interrogators were working on shifts that were, weren't long enough for sleep deprivation and it wasn't, I didn't know of cases of any "let's try to deprive people of sleep." Because, we had a lot of detainees and they were divided up and assigned to interrogators, so we didn't have a situation where one detainee was assigned to two interrogators and you would have an interrogator on daytime shift and interrogator on nighttime shift the same detainee. An interrogator who was seeing somebody at 4:00 in the morning, that detainee was not being seen in the evening.

Q: How many detainees were assigned to you or, I don't know if you had fewer interrogations than others because of your leadership responsibilities, how many interrogators would be assigned?

A: My, I did have fewer because of leadership responsibilities. That varied because we had pretty significant ebb and flow of staff numbers. Based on when we could get reservists, when contractors were coming, if interrogators were, at one point when some of our interrogators were sent to Iraq instead, not as part of that famous delegation that went during General Miller's time, but after that simply a movement of personnel numbers. They were first deployed at Guantanamo ...

Q: They weren't trainers; they were just on a different deployment?

A: Yeah. They realized that Iraq had greater needs than we did and they were simply redeployed. This varied so much not only because of personnel numbers but also as a team chief, I did not necessarily everybody had the same numbers of detainees, depending on the types of detainees they had, and the type of work they were doing. I would say generally 10 to 20? Which as I later learned, once we started to have more contact with people who were working interrogation in Iraq and Afghanistan, we learned that was a luxury.

Q: Did you ever find out why General Miller gave that direction for people to be interrogated at night?

A: I sense that he thought that that's what would work.

Q: Did anything he said or anything anyone else said that gave you that impression?

A: Well, he was clearly very committed. He wanted us to succeed. I sensed, what I am going to say now, I wasn't there before I was there, of course, so I don't know, but as a first civilian team chief, and I am not sure if it was because I was a civilian or if it was just personality, I found that I was more willing to explain why we were doing the things the way we were doing them than others were. General Hood loved this. He was constantly seeking understanding. So, I didn't sense that General Miller had been surrounded by people who were willing to make an argument for why they were doing something.

Q: Okay. And how did this whole episode resolve? Was the end of it the practice that you mentioned where your team interrogated people slightly into the night and early into the morning and that counted as a nighttime shift?

A: It was for a specific time period because of some specific event coming up that he had wanted us to do this. And so when that passed we, you know, we'd been able to slide under the radar screen and we went straight back to doing what we had been doing before.

Q: Okay. So this event basically was the end of the order that tried to do the nighttime. What was the event, do you remember?

A: I rather not get into it right now.

Q: Okay. I understand. Is this something that you might be willing to get into later or something that you can't get into at all?

A: I'm not sure.

Q: Alright. Should we check?

A: Let's see.

Q: Okay, thanks. I appreciate that. You described the training as going further into the second round of training as having much more depth as to the Geneva Conventions than the first. Did anyone explain to you why that was?

A: Well, the second, well actually the third level of training I went to was the basic interrogation course. And it was called the qualifying course. So it was designed under the assumption that they would be sending people to interrogate and potentially this was the only training they would ever have. And, whereas the first course I went to, a requirement for the course was that everybody had already been to the basic course. I was only allowed to attend as an exception. So, the assumption in the refresher course was that people had already had that Geneva Conventions training.

Q: You may not know this but you mentioned that a supervising officer over the interrogator specialists would not, would likely not have been an interrogator himself. Does that mean...

A: Would not have been an interrogator. Not just not likely but it would not have been.

Q: Would not have been. Did they ever get trained on the Geneva Conventions? Or, you know, specific, or the Army Field Manual?

A: They all knew about the Geneva Conventions.

Q: Right.

A: We all had it at hand physically down there referred to it. Our working assumption was this was the standard we're trying to uphold. The only exception was that we didn't give the detainees music instruments. And we were aware that we were consciously making an exception.

Q: So it's the full range of Convention Three?

A: Yeah.

Q: Except for musical instruments.

A: I would, I don't know, I mean I've never seen the curriculum for how intelligence officers are trained—uniformed officers. So, I mean the officers that were supervising us who were at the Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel level, and also later then we had some civilian DIA employees who were around GS-14. I mean they knew the field manual inside and out and they had it. They knew that that's what their guidance was.

Q: Mm hmm

A: But I don't have experience with how the military trains them.

Q: Now, in your article you indicated that you had been reluctant to talk about this before and now you wanted to. What prompted you to publicize your opinions about this subject?

A: I was concerned about the high level of support in American public discourse for torture, and specifically the final straw on the camel's back for me, because I had been gnashing my teeth over this for quite a while, was after Bin Laden was killed. I was on a panel at Princeton University, so the news of Bin Laden was killed came to us on Monday morning and this panel was Tuesday evening.

Q: [Charlie] Come in! [Aram Roston] Hey folks, I don't want to bug you guys so why don't you keep on talking. I got to go and take care of the baby. [Charlie] Oh, Gosh, sorry. [Aram] No problem. Just send an email and I won't interrupt you. Goodbye. Feel free to send me an email or call me. [Charlie] We will have to do this another... [Aram] Yeah, I'll be around. [Charlie] Okay. [Aram] Okay.

A: So, Bin Laden was killed when I was on this panel at Princeton, somebody on the panel was expecting support for harsh treatment of detainees as a way to get them to talk and it was the first time that I have been sitting there with a microphone in front of me and an audience and I thought I have to say something, I have to say something. I spoke out against that and articulated my argument in terms of American experience in interrogation that I knew if somebody came up and asked me, I could back up based on experience in Vietnam. Because I got interested in the history of interrogation, and finding histories of American experience in interrogation and it was consistently I found supporting building rapport building. And then after that, when I talked to my boss at my think tank, and he knew I had been an interrogator, I told him that when I came to work there because I knew if it became public that, you know, there could be implications for them. And, I told them that I was really concerned with how the panel discussion had gone and also in the news media I was seeing so much support for torture and I explained to him why I was so opposed to this and he said, "You need to write about this. People haven't heard from somebody who had experience." He said, "What you were saying to me makes sense and I have always kind of wondered, but I haven't heard it from somebody who had done this." So it was after that that I had made just a personal decision that to the extent possible, staying outside of classified information...

Q: Sure.

A: ...I was going to write and talk about interrogation. One of the most difficult things for me was just a tremendous sense of sadness. Right now, for example, I think I probably would not be able to go travel, for example, in Yemen, which is a place where I was a student. I have worked there. I absolutely loved being in Yemen and would love to go back someday. I have met wonderful people there. But, I just think that there would be a safety issue potentially for me and a even greater concern would be for people around me. So, and I, you know, security-wise probably not the safest thing in the world to be publicly identified as a Guantanamo interrogator. Guantanamo is such a loaded, you know, hot spot, but for me it was a personal moral decision.

Q: Okay. Do you believe that the mistreatment... I want to take a step back from that. You indicated that you would be concerned with travelling in places like Yemen. Is that because of the mere fact that you had publicly identified yourself as a Guantanamo interrogator and it would create risk for you?

A: I think it would

Q: Do you think ... well, maybe it is probably a combination that the revelations of what happened in Guantanamo Bay were illegal, although you did not engage in them, have created animosity?

A: I even had an experience ... let's just say I have found that there is a sort of radioactive association with Guantanamo. And I think it is a good thing that people are outraged that bad things happened, but I have been frustrated that sometimes it seems like they would hear a single story a hundred times and they'd think that 99 different things happened. They were unaware of the periods at Guantanamo in which it was very orderly and professionally run. I'm not afraid of my former detainees that I interrogated. I will say that, though. One of them has invited me to dinner at his house and if there's a chance to go, someday I would. You know, and I said to my interrogators, I said: "These detainees, many of them are going home someday and when they think American, they are going to remember you. You have the power to have an influence on what that memory is going to be. If these detainees then in their city there is an American hotel, what is their association going to be with Americans?"

Q: How many detainees did you interrogate?

A: I don't know exactly. I spent most of my time on less than half-a-dozen. And there were others I saw to.

Q: Were you allowed to talk about the country of the detainee that invited you to dinner?

A: Well, since I was Saudi Team ...

Q: I was going to ...

A: No, that's fair. I only dealt with Saudis.

Q: Okay. What recommendations would you have for our Task Force Members if you could talk to them directly about what our policies should be about detainee treatment and interrogation?

A: I think how we train our interrogators and how we train interrogation management is very important. I would like to see some foundations providing money to some historians to try to figure out how there was such a break in lessons learned from Vietnam, Gulf War, Somalia, Panama, Haiti to suddenly late 2001 to 2003. When I opened up a book on the history of interrogation Vietnam, for example, already in the foreword before I even got into the book, one of the most, you know, things that we learned solidly in Vietnam, were that one-year rotations were too short. And I read that while I was working on a mission with six-month rotations. And now that I understand more about the history of Americans in interrogation, when I think about what I experienced when I went down there, I just think, "we knew how to do it – how did we not ...?" So trying to understand that history of the training, I also think very important policy recommendations that is very feasible is that the Army has got to rethink the way it selects interrogators. So, in the services, there aren't many Air Force interrogators. Army has most of the interrogators, the Navy has some and the Marines have interrogators. The Marines have a process of selecting interrogators that is totally different. In the Marines, a person cannot be assigned to become an interrogator until they've already been in the Marines for two years and then the Marines who are themselves interrogators meet those who have applied to be interrogators and select the interrogators. I can't begin to tell you how sense this makes. But an interrogator has to be emotionally, very, very, very controlled. An interrogator needs to have human skills. The process the Army has of kind of randomly assigning people to be interrogators is not matching human skills with the task.

Q: It is assigned randomly?

A: Well, I mean, it seems, you know, with the Army that you have recruiters, you know, they are recruiting and they need to fill certain numbers of slots and somebody can sign up for, you know, and they have to pass on the ASVABs aptitude test, you know, if they have a certain score then there are certain military occupational specialties that they can qualify for. And so somebody then entering the army can say, ok I'll be an interrogator. Also, a lot of our interrogators are reservist, or we have interrogators who are active duty who are trained as interrogators but spend their non-war time experience in totally unrelated fields. I think we need to develop a professional set of skilled people who are constantly developing their human interaction skills and their writing skills. I think, I sense that interrogators become more desperate with dangerous creativity when they feel that they are failing. Whereas if you have well-trained and skilled interrogators, I think you will reduce the risk of people developing a mentality in which they think it is okay to start doing quote-unquote "whatever" it takes.

Q: Did you ever hear anybody express that mentality to you in those terms or terms like it?

A: I would have new interrogators arrive on the island who, you know, were very serious about the mission and committed, you know, in the U.S. and in the news media, there is this culture of fear about al-Qaeda terrorist attacks, and they had been trained in the army field manual and they knew that that's where their right and left limits were, but I felt as the Team Chief it was important to take off even the indications of edginess or unease, but the mission was having really good management and very systematic organization doesn't create room for that. You know, the interrogators will had to ask, had to explain for every individual interrogation what they were planning to do and that had to be approved.

Q: When you say right and left, do you mean right and wrong? Or do you not making up the Manual?

A: You're right, I do mean right ... well, right or wrong, I think it comes out of military ...

Q: Permissible and impermissible.

A: Yeah, you knew where your limits were. You knew the realm of what was okay. And you knew that you stayed what was okay, what was approved.

Q: And that was the Manual.

A: Yes.

Q: Those are really all the questions I have for now. I don't know if she has anything additional, Katherine? [Katherine] Were interrogators... Do you know what ERFing was? Was that something that was... interrogators have any role in?

A: No, that was guard force.

Q: Okay. Were you, did you interact with the guard force? Like, there was a dynamic in other situations where interrogators were giving instructions to the guard force. Was that happening? Was that specifically prohibited?

A: We couldn't tell the guards what to do. And this was having these very orderly... was important. Our interaction with the guard force was, you know, calling up and making arrangements for, "I want to see detainee number such at such in such time and such a room;" and it was up to the guard force to go get

the detainee and bring them. In the interrogation trailers, there were always guards watching on TV monitoring screens with no audio, but watching. So we were around the guards then. If the detainee needed to go to the bathroom during interrogation, we would interact with the guards. And then socially, I mean this is a very, very small place. And then also, of course, during the hunger strike, there was a great deal more contact between the guards and the interrogators. In addition to that, as a Team Chief, I went to the weekly meetings where we briefed the commanding general and both the joint detention group and the joint intelligence group would brief the general. So at the leadership level we had contact with each other. We also had contact with the guard force, for example, you know, if an interrogator was delivering or wanted to deliver something to a detainee, let's say like a book or an article, we had a system through the guard force, you know, where that would be delivered to the detainee. So there were a number of points in sort of systematic interface.

Q: Were there, I mean I know at one point it was approved that removal of comfort items would be an approved technique. Was that, so would that be something that interrogators would interact with the guards on?

A: Well, there was a very basic level that each detainee had and then there were rewards above that. So, our only interaction was anything that adjusted the rewards going up and down above that.

Q: Okay. You mentioned ...

A: For example, we could not remove a detainee's Quran.

Q: Okay. You could go up, but you couldn't go down?

A: Right, there was a base line below which we couldn't go, but above that, you could sort of adjust up and down. But that's where interaction with the guards for the interrogators was important because you could have a detainee who was great to the interrogators but throwing urine and feces on the guards. And we had to recognize that we also needed to protect the well-being of the guard force and we would sometimes have to forego wanting to give the detainee a reward if the detainee was engaging in something like throwing feces on a guard.

Q: Right. What was the baseline?

A: I don't remember, but it was everything spelled out in black and white.

Q: Okay. You mentioned that you had some interaction with the guard during the hunger strikes. Could you describe what that interaction was and what the guard said?

A: There was a great deal of concern about the detainees. Also, if a detainee was coming to interrogation and eating, the interrogators kept track of this because the interrogation was a place without peer pressure for some of the detainees. We also had interaction with the guard force on moving detainees – it could be a reward to move a detainee next to somebody they're friends with and there was a system for us to put in a request.

Q: Did the guards say anything to you about what they thought the motivations with the detainees were in hunger strikes?

A: No, I don't remember us having a lot of conversations about "what are their motivations?" because, you know, if you are being held ... it just seems ... I guess we face a real pragmatic situation where we had to figure out what to do when we didn't have a lot of time to spend musing about it. Also, you know, Americans were detained, were trained to be detained, you know, or trained not to love and adore their captives. So, it wasn't a surprise to us that there would be times of tension.

Q: Okay. And just a couple of last questions because I know you got a time limit too. You mentioned briefing the generals and I wanted to ask you if you briefed General Miller or General Hood.

A: Weekly.

Q: Weekly. Okay. What sort of feedback did you get from them? Starting with General Miller.

A: Keep in mind that this is an overall command briefing to the generals, so lots of different people are briefing.

Q: Okay.

A: So you have a very limited amount of time.

Q: Alright. Well, "did you get any feedback?" I guess, would be one question.

A: It was always good feedback when you were getting intelligence reports. You know, I mean their styles were different and styles of leadership are always going to be different. You know, and what they demanded and expected of us. Also, they were there at different times during the mission, and it was a constantly evolving mission, so the differences also had a lot to do with what's possible at any given time. It was a, you know, we briefed on, the commander wanted to be aware of what was going on and we were part of the chain of information to provide our little piece.

Q: Did General Miller ever tell you to do anything different from the way you were doing it?

A: No, other than the one time when he said "I want you to be interrogating at night." I said, "No."

Q: So that was actually a direct conversation?

A: Although, keep in mind that hierarchy is very important in this situation. And in this room, even if I'm there, he is saying that to me, but it's understood that he is saying that to my boss, who is sitting right there too.

Q: But it's a command, right?

A: I guess it's different for me as a civilian. I mean, you know, he was in charge and we followed, but I think that there is a technical definition of what a command is and since I was there as a civilian, I experienced it differently.

Q: Okay. But, it sounds like the way you described it, he said "I want you to interrogate at night," and you said no.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what happened after that?

A: You know, well, I mean, you know, it was clear that my boss, you know, was saying, you know, "Yes Sir."

Q: So you didn't abruptly say "No" back to him at that time.

A: Well, I knew I had to take it up with my boss. And I knew he wasn't going to support me.

Q: So, yeah, yeah, yeah. Are you just saying that he said that to you and you were thinking "No" or did you actually say ...

A: I don't know if "no" is the word I used, but I remember being told, I want you to interrogate at night and my explaining it to him, well, with having experience with what works was to interrogate during the day.

Q: So you pushed back?

A: I pushed back – that would be an appropriate... yeah. But, you know, under time pressure and in a situation where I knew I would not have support from the in-between [inaudible at 01:43:24], but we found a way.

Q: How about General Hood?

A: He had very high standards for the leadership underneath him. I loved working for General Hood. I think some people found it very stressful because he demanded so much. For example, with the interrogation team chiefs, General Hood wanted each regional team chief to brief him, to give him an overview of the detainees, not just to be briefing him on individual interrogation stories. This was really a new higher level of, you know, synthesis and analysis. Also, General Hood expected us to know about our detainees and during the briefings he would ask specific questions and you were expected to know that detainee's, you know, intelligence, history, everything we knew about them, what was happening with that detainee in the camp at the time. He also, General Hood, one of his principles of leadership that he explained to everybody who was a leader under him that he said he expected of himself, and therefore he expected of everybody else, was be around. So, he himself would do this. He would periodically just show up in the camp and go walking through the interrogation trailers and in the trailers or the observations rooms. So he really made a point of just randomly being present. He would occasionally come to our trailers where we were interrogating. And it is also important to keep in mind the time of my deployment, that I was there for several weeks with General Miller at the end. And I was there with General Hood for a longer period of time.

Q: Did they put you over there again before you left or ...

A: In my second tour, General Miller left towards the end of my second tour and a Navy Admiral came.

Q: You mean, Hood?

A: General Hood left, yeah.

Q: That's Harris?

A: Yes.

Q: And did you have ... what was your experience with him?

A: I didn't work with him as long. There wasn't ... I think also at that point the mission was more established so that as it goes the transition was smoother, less change. General Hood also wanted to know why rapport based interrogation worked. He never suggested that we should be doing anything else, but it wasn't, I think it's just his intellect and style of leadership. He really wanted to understand what we were doing and why, and how to do it best. And also, he was experiencing success because people told him "This body briefing every week used to be zero, sir, and what you are seeing now isn't what it used to be when we would come and report results." So when he saw something was working, he had a very ... he wanted to understand at many different levels so he would ask a lot of questions.

Q: But it sounds like he never told you "Take a different approach."

A: Never.

Q: Well, thank you. I don't know if we have anything else. [Katherine] I don't, I think that's it for now. Thank you. [Charlie] I want to...

[Tape ends and then starts again]

Q: We are back on for a brief addendum ...

A: P.S.

Q: P.S. to our discussion with Jennifer.

A: So in the basic interrogation course where was I mentioned we had lectures on the Geneva Conventions and we had to pass a written exam on the history of the conventions and also what was in the Third Convention before we were allowed to continue. They also covered the UN Convention Against Torture and we were trained on that as a treaty to which the U.S. is a signatory. And so, you know, we were trained as you are Americans. The ... American is a signatory to these conventions and these are the conventions we will follow.

Q: I'm going to ask a follow-up and that is: we talked about the Geneva Conventions, you talked about the Third Convention. And I want to ask about something that's part of the Third Convention but also part of all of them called Common Article 3. And I want to ask you specifically if Common Article 3 was something that you were trained on?

A: Yes it is, definitely.

Q: Okay. And, as regards to the prohibition on torture, the requirements for human treatment.

A: And I use to know it inside and out because it was such a basic part of our training and it came up so often.

Q: Were you told that the requirements of Common Article 3 applied even to detainees who were not prisoners of war?

A: Uh, so we had trainers who, so we knew during the training that technically speaking the Guantanamo detainees weren't prisoners of war, but we knew that this was the standard that U.S. interrogations sought to meet. Also, there was this consistent, really consistent spirit among the trainers who had been interrogators in past conflicts who were not trying to undermine the leadership of the U.S. government, but who found ways to make sure that we understood that in their personal opinions, we should have just openly been following the Geneva Conventions from the beginning at Guantanamo and also, when we studied the Conventions, we studied the passages that were about those captured in insurgency, those who had taken up arms without having put on uniforms were covered in the Conventions, so our instructors ... the Conventions themselves, we felt sort of laid this out. But, this was not legal training about determining status so that wasn't ... and also at Guantanamo during my second tour, they had mandatory Geneva Conventions training for everybody and it had to be completed by a certain date and if you didn't complete it by that date, you were not allowed to conduct interrogations.

Q: Do you remember when that happened?

A: I don't. If I went through enough detainee history and it was tied to change and policy in Washington, but we had ...

Q: I wanted to ask if it was in the second half of 2006 or later?

A: I don't remember, I just know it was during my second tour and the lawyers were the ones who conducted the training. They found one of the few large buildings that was available. They set up time slots and it was up to the team chiefs to make sure that everybody got there and there were absolutely no ifs, ands, or buts. That if you hadn't completed the training by a certain date, you would be denied admission to the camp. But, it was cursory training relative to what we had received in the interrogation training. The interrogation training on the conventions was more in-depth.

Q: Did anybody say anything along the lines of "The Supreme Court has now required this"?

A: They may have, but when you are really busy and you are working at that level...

Q: I know, it's really....

A: Also, there were so many, there was so much happening in Washington that seemed so crazy at the time because we were periodically getting new policy documents that were, we were told that were from very, very high up, and we had to confirm that we had read them, and, as the Team Chief, I would read them, I would say, okay, I read it, but we are already doing this. Whereas, the new story in Washington was there was this new policy document and now we were going to treat the detainees humanely. So, we had so many of those that you just, you know, I'd follow, I'd read them, but I don't remember the narratives of what led to this.

Q: Okay. Do you think the multiplicity of policy pronouncements ever lead to confusion?

A: No, because they were so consistent, um, at that point.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say while [inaudible]?

A: No.

END OF TAPE.