

1 [John Israel, civilian, was interviewed on 12 February 2004, as  
2 follows:]

3 Q. Have you been informed of the nature of our interview  
4 today?

5 A. I would like you to explain to me exactly. We did  
6 some investigation back in Abu Ghraib, and I would like to--if  
7 you could elaborate on that a little bit more.

8 Q. I would be very happy to do that for you before we  
9 start. I just wanted to preface that by saying, if you have any  
10 knowledge, whatsoever. I am Major General Taguba. I'm the  
11 Deputy Commanding General of the Coalition Land Forces Component  
12 Command that is headquartered at Camp Doha, Kuwait. My  
13 commanding officer, Lieutenant General David E. McKiernan, the  
14 Commanding General of the Coalition Forces Land Component  
15 Command has appointed me as the investigating officer under the  
16 provisions of Army Regulation 15-6. That was under the  
17 direction of General John Abizaid, the Commander of Central  
18 Command. Our investigation is to gather all relevant facts and  
19 circumstances surrounding recent allegations of maltreatment of  
20 detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison, also known as the Baghdad  
21 Central Confinement Facility, as well as the detainee escapes  
22 and accountability lapses as reported through CJTF-7. And my  
3 inquiry will further investigate training, standards,



1 employment, command policies and internal policies concerning  
2 the detainees held at the Abu Ghraib Prison. And finally, our  
3 inquiry is to assess the command climate and the supervisory  
4 presence of the 800th Military Police Brigade and chain of  
5 command. I also want to advise you that our interview is being  
6 recorded so we can capture the accurate questions and responses  
7 that you will provide. Do you have any questions about the  
8 scope?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. For the record, please, would you please state your  
11 full name?

12 A. My name is John Benjamin Israel.

13 Q. And your social security number?

14 A. [REDACTED].

15 Q. The nature of your employment?

16 A. I am a linguist. I was hired by SOS, Titan firm, for  
17 the Army.

18 Q. So you're principally an interpreter?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Do you do any interrogations at all?

21 A. Not myself.

22 Q. Not by yourself?

3 A. No.

1 Q. But since you're an interpreter, are you interpreting  
2 for the interrogator and translating for the detainee?

3 A. Absolutely.

4 Q. Good. How long have you been doing this now?

5 A. Since October 14th until now.

6 Q. Until now. Who are you, since you're a civilian  
7 contractor hired by Titan, who is your chain of--who do you  
8 report to?

9 A. As far as civilian matters or military matters?

10 Q. Military matters.

11 A. Well, we have Sergeant--in the beginning, it used to  
12 be Sergeant Tess, then...to be honest with you, I forgot the  
13 name because we kept shifting from team to team. But my  
14 immediate guy who was in charge was Don Gravinger.

15 Q. He was a civilian or military?

16 A. He was a military--he was taking care of our  
17 businesses for the linguists.

18 Q. Who is your immediate military supervisor? Do you  
19 have one?

20 A. Well, usually it's my interrogator, Steve. And Steve  
21 has another guy to report to. Because we're working on a  
22 special project, and he has to let him know about my situation,  
3 and from there, through his report, he has to tell other people.

1 Q. But did you understand that there's a military  
2 commander above the things that you're doing?  
3 A. Yes.  
4 Q. I understand you work with civilians.  
5 A. No, I know. I forgot his name, Major Price.  
6 Q. Major Price was?  
7 A. Major Price, at that time, it was Major Price.  
8 Q. When did you arrive at Abu Ghraib?  
9 A. October 14th, I believe, either the 14th or the 15th.  
10 Q. Did you do any other interpreting, translation job  
11 before then?  
12 A. No, sir.  
13 Q. So you were assigned to Abu Ghraib?  
14 A. Yes, sir.  
15 Q. Were you hired back in the United States or were you  
16 hired here?  
17 A. No, back in the United States.  
18 Q. At that point in time, were you advised of the nature  
19 of your job?  
20 A. They told us it could be in the field, could be  
21 anywhere if I took the job, regardless of what the situation  
22 was.

1 Q. When you arrived at Abu Ghraib, did anyone explain to  
2 you the nature of your job?

3 A. Yes, indeed, Chief Gravinger, and they give us like a  
4 little seminar of what's going on, what's going to happen,  
5 what's the limitations, what you're supposed to do, what not to  
6 do. If you see anything wrong, you're to report it immediately,  
7 and things like that.

8 Q. So you received a briefing and a seminar.

9 A. They did give us a briefing, yes, sir.

10 Q. How long was that training?

'1 A. That's a good question, an hour, give and take. To be  
12 honest with you, I don't recall, but I think it was a lengthy  
13 one, because they went through all the procedures.

14 Q. Did they give you, beyond that, the conditions and the  
15 personnel that are being held at Abu Ghraib prison, did they  
16 give you additional instructions or information with regards to  
17 the nature of the operating environment?

18 A. Yes, and no. The reason, for example, they told us  
19 what our limitations is. We have to be with an interrogator and  
20 we have to have an analyst and things like that. We cannot--we  
21 have to stay with the detainee. If we see anything wrong, we  
22 have to report it and things like that. And they told us, "If  
3 you don't like the environment, you just could stop and walk

1 away and you could report immediately any abuse incident," and  
2 things like that.

3 Q. What were some of those limitations that you talked  
4 about? What were you authorized to do in your job performance  
5 and your role as a----

6 A. My job is just a translator, no more, no less.

7 Q. No more, no less?

8 A. That's it.

9 Q. Okay, all right. Do you have any knowledge,  
10 whatsoever, of the Geneva Convention?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Was it ever instructed to you, or were you given some  
13 sort of a piece of paper that basically said, "Anything that we  
14 do here or not do here is governed by the Geneva Convention"?

15 A. Yes, indeed, they mentioned that.

16 Q. Who mentioned that to you?

17 A. To be honest with you, I don't recall, but I remember  
18 the detainees' rights and things like, human rights and things  
19 like that. They do mention it, but exactly, I don't recall, to  
20 be honest with you.

21 Q. But they did not give you any written references, Army  
22 regulations or field manuals or SOPs to read?

1           A.    I believe they gave us some paper to read, and we had  
2 to sign it at the time.  But the details, I don't recall, to be  
3 honest with you, but I signed two papers, I believe I signed.

4           Q.    Do you recall what you signed?

5           A.    Some of the procedures, the limitations for the--if  
6 you see anything wrong, you have to report it, anything unusual,  
7 you have to report it and things like that.  But to be honest  
8 with you, Geneva Convention, I might have read it.  I might have  
9 signed it, but I don't recall too much.

10          Q.    Do you know what the Geneva Convention is?

11          A.    You know, how to--if somebody has a prisoner of the  
12 war, you have to treat them nicely, because it's a mutual  
13 situation.  We could be detainees on the other side, so there is  
14 rules and regulations, like that effect his personal rights and  
15 things, you know.  There's limitations for everything.

16          Q.    Did they explain to you how your employees would  
17 protect you should you be detained by Iraqi or anti-coalition  
18 forces?

19          A.    That's a good question, I don't think so.

20          Q.    They never explained that to you.

21          A.    No.

22          Q.    That you could be detained at any time by other people  
3 that were anti-coalition forces?

1           A.    That's a good question.  I can't answer that, sir.  I  
2 don't recall.

3           Q.    You don't recall that being explained to you?

4           A.    I don't recall.  They might, but I don't recall.  If  
5 they mentioned it, I might--it's a great question.

6           Q.    Did they explain to you if you get hurt or if you die  
7 here or you're captured----

8           A.    They gave us a file.  They said, give it to the  
9 immediate people just in case something happens to you, they  
10 have the record.  They have things, the next of kin and things  
11 like that.

12          Q.    Let me move forward now with the context of your duty  
13 as a translator purely for doing the interrogation period.  And  
14 I'm not looking for anything specific or the contents of the  
15 interrogation, specific contents of the interrogation.  Could  
16 you describe for me what typically happens, generally, in the  
17 conduct of an interrogation?

18          A.    Okay, what would happen is usually the interrogator  
19 goes to the MPs and says, "I want this prisoner," and they would  
20 say, "Where do you want him to be?"  If there's empty booths,  
21 they will guide the detainee to that location.  And then what  
22 happens is the interrogator will set up the tables, the table  
3 and the chairs according to the way he wants it to see fit.



1 I've seen some of the interrogators, they tell me to stay behind  
2 the detainee. Some of the guys tell me to sit next to him.  
3 Some of the guys tell me to "Sit next to me facing the  
4 detainee." And then they want to ask a question, then I have to  
5 translate back and forth, from Arabic to English, from English  
6 to Arabic.

7 Q. So it's never the same.

8 A. Never the same.

9 Q. It could be, where we're sitting today, you're to my  
10 left.

'1 A. Right.

12 Q. And the detainee could be to the right, and the  
13 interrogator could be in the middle.

14 A. Or sometimes what they do is they put the detainee in  
15 the corner with a chair, and I will be sitting next to the  
16 interrogator.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Some of the interrogators, they have their own  
19 preference. They will say, "We want you to be--" they put the  
20 detainee halfway in the middle. I'd be behind him and they--  
21 facing him--because some of the detainees, they like to see the  
22 interpreter because he speaks the same language, they always go  
23 like this [turning his head to the side].

1 Q. So it's not always the same.

2 A. No.

3 Q. I got it. Prior to the interrogation being conducted,  
4 is there a plan?

5 A. Yes, lately, they put a lot of emphasis on it. The  
6 interrogator will say, "Okay, this is my game plan." Sometimes  
7 he will say, "I'm going to ask him 12 questions, and don't  
8 listen to him. Just translate my questions to him and don't  
9 listen to what he's going to say." Or sometimes they will say,  
10 "Okay, this is the game plan. We're going to ask easy questions  
11 and we want----"

12 Q. So like a rehearsal?

13 A. A rehearsal, absolutely.

14 Q. Is that in writing, or is that given to you verbally?

15 A. Oh, verbally. But he has----

16 Q. You said "lately," now, you said, "lately," there's  
17 been more emphasis on the interrogation plan.

18 A. No, as a matter of fact, this goes back to September,  
19 the beginning of September.

20 Q. And you arrived here in October.

21 A. In October, yeah. I would say end of November or last  
22 part of November, they put a lot of emphasis on that.

3 Q. You said this was typically done verbally.

1 A. Verbally, yes, sir.

2 Q. Did you see anything in writing signed by somebody?

3 A. Usually, the interrogator will have the info, usually.  
4 Because that's done by the interrogator, will brief us, we have  
5 an analyst, and then we'll walk into the booth.

6 Q. Please describe for me at the conclusion of the  
7 interrogation what happens next?

8 A. What happens, after back and forth session of  
9 questions and answers, questions and answers, me and my  
10 colleague, which is the interrogator and analyst, will sit and  
11 he will try to absorb what happened in the room. And there will  
12 be questions and answers. And he will say, "Did I miss  
13 anything, as for as----"

14 Q. Is this in the presence of the detainee?

15 A. No, after we send the detainee, we go back to the ice  
16 room----

17 Q. Okay, let me back up. At the end of the session,  
18 let's just say we just ended now and----

19 A. Okay, I see what you're saying. In that case, what  
20 happens is, one of the--usually the analysts are military.  
21 What happens is they stay with the detainee and we'll go tell  
22 the MPs that we're done and they will come and guard it. This  
3 is--we are in the hard cell, in the ISO. But if we are in the

1 outside, what will happen is the analyst, which is the military  
2 guy, personnel, he will guard the detainee--obviously he has the  
3 handcuffs on. He will put them back on his hands. He will take  
4 them where--if it's a walking distance to his camp or they might  
5 put him in a HMMWV and take him back to----

6 Q. To somewhere else.

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. But let's just focus for a moment, those detainees  
9 that are placed in the hard site, at the conclusion of the  
10 interrogation, do you accompany the detainee back----

11 A. Absolutely not.

12 Q. No?

13 A. I cannot continue with it.

14 Q. Okay. And of course, you've never done that.

15 A. No, no, sir.

16 Q. So, those detainees then are given back to the MPs....

17 A. The MPs and the MPs will-----

18 Q. Take them back.

19 A. Okay, what we do also, for example, if we're in the  
20 building, usually the analysts will go and tell the MP, because  
21 sometimes the analyst would be a civilian. The interrogator  
22 will stay with the detainee. I will be next to the interrogator  
3 just in case, if he wants something, he wants to say something,

1 and I also will tell the MPs. It's walking distance from the  
2 second floor to the first floor, and they will come and guide  
3 the detainee back to his cell.

4 Q. Do you know at that time when the detainees are given  
5 back to the MPs, whether there are additional instructions given  
6 by the analyst to the MP?

7 A. To be honest with you, I don't interfere with that.

8 Q. But you're not aware of any instruction?

9 A. No, sir. Usually, the interrogator will go back to  
10 the MPs if they have anything that needs to be discussed.

11 That's their job.

12 Q. So the detainees are given back to the MPs and they're  
13 placed back in their cell. And then you said that now you and  
14 the analyst will then review the process....

15 A. And the interrogator.

16 Q. The interrogator, I'm sorry, will review the process  
17 and to, they will ask, "Did I miss something?"

18 A. As far as, for example, when he speaks Arabic, he  
19 might mention a few things that I wasn't able to elaborate on in  
20 detail. I might say, "You know what, also, I think this is what  
21 he meant."

22 Q. Okay.

3 A. Give him some example.

1 Q. An after action review.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. But not in any kind of depth, type of a post-  
4 interrogation review is the analyst asking you for your thoughts  
5 in terms of what to do next.

6 A. No, no. It's a matter of conversation that the  
7 detainee was talking about just in case, you know, because a lot  
8 of times in the Iraqi accent, there is a lot of things that he  
9 mentions, so you have to be aware of that. Since I'm an Iraqi,  
10 I know what they want to say, so I will try to help them as much  
11 as I can as far as what he's saying.

12 Q. Did you have any knowledge, whatsoever, to rumors or  
13 direct knowledge of escapes or shootings or detainee  
14 mistreatment in the Abu Ghraib facility?

15 A. I heard about the escapee cases, but indirectly, but  
16 we didn't hear it from the military, that aspect. We heard  
17 there was an escapee. And the shooting, it happened, was a  
18 quirk, we didn't know about it. That night, we were supposed to  
19 go on an interrogation with the same guy that started shooting.  
20 It could've been me or it could've been the interrogator. But  
21 we knew about it like later on. And that day, I worked from  
22 almost 10 o'clock at night all the way to the next day until--  
3 what was it, like 2 o'clock, 2 in the afternoon.

1 Q. So interrogations typically happened at any given  
2 hour?

3 A. Right, absolutely. We have a schedule. They have a  
4 schedule. But in my case, because the shooting happened that  
5 night, they didn't know what was going on. You know, they need  
6 a linguist. So I stayed interrogating a lot of people because  
7 they didn't know who got the gun, what's going on. So I  
8 volunteered and I stuck there until the next day until almost 3  
9 o'clock, and then I went home.

10 Q. How many linguists or translators are working at Abu  
11 Ghraib?

12 A. That's a good question. As far as on my team, with  
13 the MI, I would say about 16 or 15, because we have the  
14 screening people that work in the screening. And we have the  
15 interrogation team, I would say a minimum of 12.

16 Q. Do you work with the same interrogator all the time?

17 A. Lately, I work with the same interrogator because we  
18 have a special case. But previously, I was with a team and that  
19 team, maybe there's three or four interrogators, and I switch my  
20 time with them. As soon as this guy's done, the next guy is  
21 ready, I go with the next guy.

22 Q. So it's not--you're just based on the need.

3 A. On the need, yes, sir.

1 Q. So you knew about the shooting that happened. What do  
2 you know about that?

3 A. I would say like with the next----

4 Q. Do you know what month it was?

5 A. That's a good question. I think it was December.

6 Q. December?

7 A. I think.

8 Q. And you were there when that shooting----

9 A. No, we went and ate chow and----

10 Q. You were in the facility.

'1 A. In the facility, yeah, and then...I forgot his name,  
i2 he's transferred now. He came and he said there was a shooting,  
13 and he took a [inaudible] he's trying to [inaudible] and things.  
14 Because [inaudible] and we didn't know what was happening and  
15 everybody was alert. And he came and told us...Colonel Jordan.

16 Q. Colonel Jordan.

17 A. Yes, he came and told us the shooting happened and  
18 this is what's going on. And he did elaborate in detail as far  
19 as what's going on. He was very concerned. And like after  
20 that, they came and tell us, "We want some help with the  
21 linguists " So that's how we got stuck until the next day.

22 Q. Okay, let me fast forward now. Do you recall on the  
3 20th of December, you were accompanying Mr. Stefanowicz and



1 Sergeant Eckhart to the hard site whereby a prisoner was being  
2 returned back to custody to the MPs and being accompanied by  
3 Sergeant Cathcart or a Sergeant Elliott. Do you recall that  
4 date?

5 A. I met with Eckhart and Stafanowicz, but I don't recall  
6 the details, honestly, because I go back and forth so many  
7 times, I didn't pay attention, I didn't concentrate on the  
8 situation, so it's hard to tell.

9 Q. Let me be a bit more clear on that. That particular  
10 day was given as a date where a prisoner was given back to the  
11 MPs where Sergeant Cathcart and also Sergeant Elliott, where  
12 supposedly noises were heard when prisoners were being put back  
13 in their cells, whether a prisoner was being--a detainee, I'm  
14 sorry, was either falling down or was being struck by something.  
15 Do you recall that?

16 A. No, sir, I honestly do not.

17 Q. Have you heard any comments from any of the MPs or any  
18 of the interrogators or analysts regarding any rumors or direct  
19 information in regards to detainee abuses?

20 A. Honestly, no.

21 Q. You don't recall any of that at all?

22 A. No, because what happens is a lot of times I walk  
3 behind them. And when they talk together, I don't want to

1 interfere. Because once my job is done, I'm so tired, because  
2 when I translate, I want to be fair for both parties. I don't  
3 want to compromise anybody's situation. I'm so tired from  
4 talking. Usually the session goes an hour, an hour and a half  
5 just constantly talking back and forth from both sides. And  
6 sometimes, you know, it's a peace of mind for me to keep quiet,  
7 just walk to my place.

8 Q. Is there a rule in the unit that you belong to now, at  
9 the conclusion of the interrogation regarding whether it's the  
10 same interrogator or a different interrogator, is there a rule  
11 that states not to discuss the contents of that interrogation  
12 with other translators----

13 A. Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, especially in my case  
14 with Steve. I have to be quiet. Even, I can't tell you  
15 anything unless if you want to go ahead and ask, that's up to  
16 you.

17 Q. I'm not asking for the specific details----

18 A. Exactly, but in my case, I usually keep quiet. He  
19 tells me to keep quiet, but he knows I'm quiet. I don't like to  
20 elaborate on my cases.

21 Q. Did they give you a security clearance at the time you  
22 were hired?

3 A. My case is pending, sir.

1 Q. So your case is pending.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. You don't have a security clearance at this time.

4 A. No, sir. I wish I could have one, sir. At least I'd  
5 know I have a job for the whole year.

6 Q. Were you given an interim clearance?

7 A. To be honest with you, at that time, I didn't know  
8 what the procedures were, but I knew that I was accepted, I'd be  
9 able to go to Iraq.

10 Q. Do you know that you were supposed to have a  
'1 clearance?

12 A. I'm looking forward to it. I'm trying to do my best  
13 to have a clearance, but that's all up to them.

14 Q. If you don't mind me asking you, Mr. Israel, are you  
15 an American citizen?

16 A. Absolutely.

17 Q. And how long did you live in the United States?

18 A. Since 1981, sir.

19 Q. So you've been there forever.

20 A. Absolutely, that's my country now.

21 Q. Since you were governed by the interrogation rules of  
22 engagement, you're familiar with that. Did you know that to be  
3 in writing, or was this just given to you?

1 A. I can't recall that, sir.

2 Q. You can't recall? Let me show you something here that  
3 states what the interrogation rules of engagements are. Are you  
4 familiar with that?

5 A. Yeah, as a matter of fact, they did one time, they  
6 gave us this, we went over it, yeah.

7 Q. So you're familiar with that?

8 A. Yes, because the reason I'm saying this, one of the  
9 sergeants, she went in details, she went an extra effort with  
10 her interrogators. And we were sitting in the meeting just to  
'1 know what's going on. And she went over the issues, explained  
12 to everybody what's going on, yes, indeed.

13 Q. So there was a lot of explanation----

14 A. Yes, yes, this goes back, I think, to December, mid-  
15 December, I think. Don't quote me on the dates, I could be  
16 wrong.

17 Q. You mentioned meetings. How often do you have these  
18 meetings?

19 A. Meetings?

20 Q. General meetings, everybody there.

21 A. When a lot of information happens, but as far as  
22 meetings, usually, if something needs to be elaborated on, for

1 example, in that case, she gathered us, I think she spent about,  
2 I think 2 hours, about 2 hours, yeah.

3 Q. About 2 hours.

4 A. Yeah, it was a nightshift, I think. And she said,  
5 "The reason I want you to be here for the linguists..." because  
6 part of that wasn't our concern, it was just to know what's  
7 going on.

8 Q. Let me go back again just to clarify something. Up  
9 until the time that you were hired, on or about the middle of  
10 October, again, you did not receive any training or instructions  
11 as to the nature of the job you were going to perform here in  
12 theater?

13 A. Well, they told us it was going to be like an  
14 interrogation thing. Chief Graninger took us for a tour. He  
15 showed us the booths----

16 Q. When you arrived.

17 A. When we arrived, yes, absolutely, the first day. Then  
18 he said, "It's going to be like a trial for 2 weeks just to see,  
19 you know, who could accept this. He said, maybe some people,  
20 it's against their religion. Some people, maybe they don't  
21 accept the situation. And which was true, after 2 weeks, things  
22 happened. I stayed with the interrogation team, and some other

1 guys, they went to screening. Some of the guys went to MPs, and  
2 things like that.

3 Q. So it kind of divided.

4 A. Divided, yes.

5 Q. Before you arrived, there was nothing----

6 A. Absolutely not, absolutely not.

7 Q. And then at the time you were shown or given  
8 familiarization, I should say, and other instructions on the  
9 conduct of your specific job, were there other instructions  
10 given or any changes to the procedures given to you or at least  
11 instructed to you with your other coworkers?

12 A. Could you elaborate on "changes"?

13 Q. Yes, let me just be specific on that. At the time of  
14 the shooting, at the time of allegations of detainee abuse,  
15 which I'm sure people were made aware of, were there any changes  
16 made to the procedures from when you were conducting the  
17 procedures that you were now executing?

18 A. I'm sure changes happened, but as far as visually, I  
19 didn't see changes. But as far as, we can't walk with the  
20 detainee too far. We have to have the military escort the  
21 detainee all the way back. I'm sure changes happened, but I  
22 didn't see any changes as far as----

1 Q. During the course of your involvement with  
2 interrogation operations and then when the detainee was given  
3 back to the MPs, did you see any physical action that would lead  
4 you to question whether they were right or wrong? What I'm  
5 saying is, when they're handling detainees, besides handcuffing,  
6 besides leading the detainee back to his cell and besides having  
7 the bag placed back on his head, did you see anything out of the  
8 ordinary----

9 A. Well, one time, like I mentioned in the--previous with  
10 the criminal investigation, I saw that they were searching their  
11 cells. They got all their stuff out. I think after the  
12 incident of the shooting, they were searching their cells and  
13 there was a dog present in the hallway.

14 Q. Were you there at the time?

15 A. Yeah, one time, I couldn't do anything. I just backed  
16 up because I couldn't do anything when they were searching the  
17 cells.

18 Q. So you were in the cell?

19 A. Not in the cell, no, in the hallway.

20 Q. You were in the hallway.

21 A. In the hallway, but I saw the dog present and stuff on  
22 the ground. They were searching the cells and they wanted to  
3 make sure there was no weapon or anything.

1 Q. Was the detainee in the cell or outside the cell, that  
2 you can recall?

3 A. That's a good question, because I saw the stuff on the  
4 ground. I saw the dog. I didn't go inside the hallway, because  
5 I was on this side, and the hallway was this way and the dog was  
6 in the hallway to your right, and the cells are to the left and  
7 the right. You could see the cells.

8 Q. Which part of the hard site was that? Was that on  
9 Tier One A?

10 A. I think it's in the A, which is where the politicians  
'1 and the----

12 Q. The security detainees.

13 A. Right, the Iraqi section, the other section.

14 Q. So you had been in the hard site?

15 A. Yes, I have.

16 Q. Did you notice anything peculiar like detainees  
17 without their clothes on?

18 A. That I didn't see. That I didn't see, and I hate to  
19 see people naked. Until now, I don't take a shower as a naked  
20 person. I have to go by myself.

21 Q. Did any interrogation ever happen in the cell, itself?



1           A.    In the cell, itself? No, because the cells are so  
2 tiny. You can't conduct interrogations in the cell. There is  
3 no way.

4           Q.    Very confined.

5           A.    Yes. Because maybe sometimes, the first session would  
6 be, for example, they would say, "Ask him this, ask him that."  
7 Because a lot of times when I'm done with my session, the MPs  
8 would say, "Could you come down and see what he wants, what he  
9 needs, because we can't understand his language?" And I would  
10 go and ask him what he wants. Like a couple incidents happened,  
11 one of the guys, he was sick and he wasn't feeling good, and he  
12 wanted a doctor. And I had to translate that, "This is how his  
13 feels. Maybe he has a stomach pain or back pain," or things  
14 like that.

15          Q.    Was it common, was it just you they were asking for,  
16 or were there other translators----

17          A.    It happened that moment I was there. They might ask  
18 me because I'm done with my session and I'm about to walk and  
19 they say, "Could you please come here for a second? Just ask  
20 him what he wants." And then I'd say, "I'd be glad to." And I  
21 would ask him what he wants and he would say, "I'm not feeling  
22 good," things like that. Maybe the next interrogator or the  
3 next linguist, he might be 2 hours later. They might--if he

1 wants something from him, the MPs, he would ask them the same  
2 thing.

3 Q. The night or the day, I should say, where you were  
4 there observing a dog doing the searching in the cell and things  
5 on the ground, was that because you were called to assist as an  
6 interpreter?

7 A. Oh, no, no. I think we had a session, we wanted to do  
8 an interrogation and we didn't do it because the situation  
9 didn't happen because of the search incident and stuff.

10 Q. Why were you there to begin with?

'1 A. What happened is, we were the nightshift. We have to  
12 do interrogation on the nightshift. We were--like 24 hours.  
13 And my nightshift was--I think, starts from 10:30 all the way to  
14 7 o'clock. So as we were about to go to interrogation, then  
15 when we saw the scene, it didn't help. We declined to go  
16 forward. We just----

17 Q. So you were there to take custody--or actually, not  
18 take custody, but you were there to accompany the detainee to an  
19 interrogation site, but because a search was happening at that  
20 time, you could not conduct your interrogation. Is that what  
21 you meant to say?

22 A. No, sorry, let me say this. Because usually in the  
3 nighttime because of the mortars they hit us with it, we used to

1 do some of the interrogation in the building, itself, in the  
2 ISO.

3 Q. What's an ISO?

4 A. Isolation section, they call it isolation.

5 Q. In the hard site?

6 A. In the hard site, itself, in the building, itself  
7 because of the shells. There was the stairs, kind of like a  
8 room, we used to sit there and do the interrogations because we  
9 don't want to take the detainee outside, so we used to go there  
10 [inaudible] and take him back to his cell, which is nearby.

11 Q. Which is a separate area away from the cell.

12 A. Right, right, it is separate. Then before you go to  
13 that section, there's a door, you have to pass that door, then  
14 the cells would be to your left and to your right. They're  
15 subdivided according to the numbers. And we were in the  
16 hallway, then we saw the dogs. We saw the things, and the  
17 element didn't help. So we didn't go forward. We just stopped.

18 Q. But you didn't see the detainee, himself?

19 A. No, no, sir, absolutely not.

20 Q. But was that the detainee you were supposed to  
21 interview or interrogate that night?

1           A.    Yeah, because we were supposed go to do the  
2   interrogation.  Then when we saw the dog, we just--they were  
3   searching, so....

4           Q.    They were searching the cell of the detainee that you  
5   were going to interrogate that night.

6           A.    That's a good question, it could be him, it could be  
7   anybody because they were searching all the cells.  So I don't  
8   know what they were planning on.

9           Q.    Oh, I see.  But typically, back to the interrogation  
10  plan, are you then made aware or informed which detainee that is  
'1  going to be interviewed?  Or do they just bring in a detainee  
12  and say, "Okay, now we're going to do the interview."

13          A.    Usually, they tell us there is--we're going to do  
14  interrogation, could be for me the first time, or could be for  
15  me, for example, the case that we're working on, it's been like  
16  a month and a half.  But previously, it could be anybody.  So I  
17  didn't know exactly who we were going to--they might say he's a  
18  General.  They might say he's this.  They might say he's a bomb  
19  maker.  They give us a head start.

20          Q.    Okay, but they don't tell you the ISN number of that  
21  detainee.

22          A.    The number, no, that has nothing to do with me.

1 Q. They just say, "We want to interrogate somebody that  
2 has something to do with----"

3 A. Right, for example, they would say, this is--maybe  
4 he's [inaudible]. Maybe he has a relation with Al Qaeda. "This  
5 is what the game plan is. This is what we're looking for, his  
6 friends and things like that." But as far as his number, they  
7 might tell me the first name and they might tell me some of the  
8 background so I will be mentally prepared what kind of person  
9 I'm going to see. But as far as his prisoner number, no.

10 Q. Let me go back to the interrogation plan. After you  
11 conduct an interrogation, the detainee is given back to the MPs  
12 so he can be returned to the cell, you mentioned.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And then, you and the interrogator will then discuss--  
15 you do an after action review, basically, whether the questions  
16 were answered to the satisfaction of the interrogator or whether  
17 something else was missing. Is that typically what happens?

18 A. Usually, for example, I would say--he would say, "This  
19 is what he meant, right?" I'd say, "Yeah, this is what he  
20 meant." If there is another answer to the same question, I  
21 might tell them. If not, that's what it is.

22 Q. So you try to recall----

1           A.    Exactly, I try to recall what he said and things like  
2 that, if I missed anything, just to be just for both sides.

3           Q.    How confident are you with the procedures now that you  
4 have been in that operating environment now since your arrival  
5 at Abu Ghraib?

6           A.    Right now, it's very decent.  I'm confident now  
7 because everybody knows what they're supposed to do.  Once we're  
8 done, they let the MPs know that we're done, they will come and  
9 escort the detainee back to his cell, and that's what it is.

10          Q.    Have you worked with Mr. Stefanowicz before?

11          A.    Yes, as a matter of fact, from October...couple times,  
12 then the last case, basically, I'm all the way with him until  
13 now with him----

14          Q.    Because you're working on a special project.

15          A.    Yeah, I'm on that special project.

16          Q.    How many other interrogators, roughly, did you work  
17 with?

18          A.    I would easy, five or six.

19          Q.    Did you know who Colonel Tom Pappas was?

20          A.    Yes.

21          Q.    How often did you see him?

22          A.    Very often.

3           Q.    Very often?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Indirectly?

3 A. Indirectly.

4 Q. You mentioned Colonel Jordan. Did you see him  
5 directly all the time?

6 A. I seen him. He greeted me the first time when I went  
7 to Abu Ghraib, he gave me a pep talk. And every now and then,  
8 he used to come. He used to eat chow with us and all that. I'd  
9 see him more often. He used to walk a lot in the hall facility.

10 Q. To check?

'1 A. To check, absolutely.

12 Q. Did you know any medical facilities that were  
13 exclusively for the detainees when they get sick? You mentioned  
14 people said, "I don't feel good," and they'd call you into the  
15 site and asked you to interpret what is wrong with them.

16 A. Yeah, what happened is, something urgent, or "This is  
17 what I think," they might call the doctor. There is a doctor  
18 standby. But also, I used to do in the morning, I used to go  
19 spend an hour and half, about an hour and a half in the open  
20 camp translating for the doctor. There was certain days I am  
21 supposed to go in the morning with our doctors, because it's an  
22 open camp. There is tents. There is a lot of Iraqi detainees.  
3 They used to stand in a row. Everybody comes in and I will

1 explain to the doctor what is going on with this guy. This guy  
2 will tell me-----

3 Q. His condition, his----

4 A. Yeah, and the doctor will give the recommendation.  
5 "This is what I'm going to give him, this is what happening,"  
6 the dosages and all that.

7 Q. Is it a military doctor?

8 A. Yes, it was a military doctor, yes.

9 Q. Was it an Army doctor?

10 A. It was an Army doctor. Lately, we have, I think, Air  
11 Force doctors, sir.

12 Q. Okay, again, have you now been advised about the  
13 contents of the Geneva Convention at all? Since you mentioned  
14 you were not originally aware of that, and upon your arrival,  
15 your supervisor had not mentioned that to you, was that----

16 A. To be honest with you, I want to be fair to all the  
17 parties. They might have mentioned it, but I don't recall it.  
18 They may not have mentioned it because it didn't register in my  
19 mind. They might, but you know, the situation is so stressful.  
20 I might forgot about it. I apologize for that.

21 Q. Well, the only reason why I bring that up is because  
22 you said it's reciprocal. If you were in their position, the  
3 detainee's position, you would want to be treated----



1           A.    Right, it's only common sense.  Not only that, but  
2 back in the States, you listen to news and the Geneva  
3 Convention, and besides, I study the law from this country, so I  
4 know what the Geneva Convention is.

5           Q.    Speaking of that, what is your civilian employment  
6 before you were hired as a translator?

7           A.    My background is accounting.  I have a degree in  
8 electronics.  I work for Icon Office Solutions for almost 12  
9 years.  I'm a field technician, a senior tech.  I service Ricoh,  
10 Canon, Hewlett Packard product and Sharp product.

11          Q.    Typically automation----

12          A.    Automation, office, yeah, networking, printers and  
13 things like that.

14          Q.    Okay, all right, is there anything else you want to  
15 add, Mr. Israel?

16          A.    No, sir, but I'd be glad to--if you guys need me in  
17 the future, I'd be glad to serve.  And I'm happy to serve the  
18 United States Army.  It's a pleasure for me because they opened  
19 the door.  The United States gave me a home, so they made me  
20 feel at home.  That wasn't my original home, and I'm dedicated  
21 to serve the United States in my full capacity.

22          Q.    I'm glad you mentioned that, Mr. Israel, because I'm a  
3 naturalized citizen myself, so I understand how you feel.

1                   Okay, well, let me remind you please to not discuss  
2 the contents of our interview here or the scope of our  
3 investigation with your coworkers or anybody that is  
4 unauthorized. I also want to advise you, please, that you will  
5 be subject to recall for a re-interview and we will advise you  
6 and your supervisors of when that's to occur. Up until that  
7 time, please safeguard the information.

8           A.    Absolutely.

9           Q.    Do you have any----

10          A.    Could I ask a couple of questions?

11          Q.    Sure.

12          A.    Is that going to affect my clearance situation?

13          Q.    You're not being suspected of anything. What we're  
14 trying to do, as I mentioned to you, we're trying to gather  
15 facts and relevant information to the allegation of  
16 mistreatment, any of this information where we could ascertain,  
17 in other words, once we go through and evaluate the information  
18 of whether we have the relevant information and the facts  
19 associated with that. So for now, sir, you are not being  
20 suspected of anything. We just want to gain your knowledge of  
21 conditions and information associated with Abu Ghraib.

22          A.    My pleasure to help you, sir.

1 [Mr. Israel departed the interview area. The interview

2 terminated at 1114, 12 February 2004.]

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