

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

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² [redacted]
² [redacted]. I have a great body". Every once in a while ³ [redacted] offered me to other side of the coin, "If you start to cooperate, I am gonna stop harassing you? otherwise I will be doing the same with you and worse every day. I am ² [redacted] and that why my govt designated me to this job. I've been always successful. Having sex with somebody is not a considered as torture" ³ [redacted] was leading the manlog ² [redacted]. Every now and then the ³ [redacted] entered the room, and try to make me speak, "you cannot defeat us, we have so many people, and we keep humilate you with American ³ [redacted]", "I have a ² [redacted] friend, I'm gonna bring tomorrow to help me" ³ [redacted] said, "At least, ³ [redacted] cooperate" said ³ [redacted] wryly. ³ [redacted] didn't address me but ³ [redacted] was touching my private parts with ³ [redacted] body. In the late afternoon, an other torture squad started with other poor detainee. I could hear loud music playing. "Do you want me to send you to that team or are you gonna cooperate" said ³ [redacted], but I didn't answer. The guards wryly used to call ² [redacted] ² [redacted] by the most of the torture took place in those buildings, and in the nights, when the darkness started to cover the sorry camp, ³ [redacted] sent me back to my cell. "Today is just the begin, what's coming is worse and that is every day" ³ [redacted] Doctor Routine check: In order ² [redacted] to see how much ³ [redacted] a detainee ³ [redacted] torture

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Jordan–Afghanistan–GTMO

July 2002–February 2003

The American Team Takes Over... Arrival at Bagram... Bagram to GTMO... GTMO, the New Home... One Day in Paradise, the Next in Hell

██████████, July █████, 2002, 10 p.m.*

The music was off. The conversations of the guards faded away. The truck emptied.

I felt alone in the hearse truck.

The waiting didn't last: I felt the presence of new people, a silent team. I don't remember a single word during the whole rendition to follow.

A person was undoing the chains on my wrists. He undid the first hand, and another guy grabbed that hand and bent it while a third person was putting on the new, firmer and heavier shackles. Now my hands were shackled in front of me.

Somebody started to rip my clothes with something like a scissors. I was like, What the heck is going on? I started to worry about the trip I neither wanted nor initiated. Somebody else was deciding everything for me; I had all the worries in the world but making a decision. Many thoughts went quickly through my head. The optimistic thoughts suggested, Maybe you're in the hands of Americans, but don't worry, they just want to take you home, and to make sure that everything goes in secrecy. The pessimistic ones went, You screwed up! The Americans managed to pin some shit on you, and they're taking you to U.S. prisons for the rest of your life.

I was stripped naked. It was humiliating, but the blindfold helped me miss the nasty look of my naked body. During the whole procedure, the only prayer I could remember was the crisis prayer, *Ya hayyu! Ya kayyum!* and I was mumbling it all the time. Whenever I came to be in a similar situation, I would forget all my prayers except the crisis prayer, which I learned from life of our Prophet, Peace be upon him.

One of the team wrapped a diaper around my private parts. Only then was I dead sure that the plane was heading to the U.S. Now I started to convince myself that "every thing's gonna be alright." My only worry was about my family seeing me on TV in such a degrading situation. I was so skinny. I've been always, but never *that* skinny: my street clothes had become so loose that I looked like a small cat in a big bag.

When the U.S. team finished putting me in the clothes they tailored for me, a guy removed my blindfold for a moment. I couldn't see much because he directed the flashlight into my eyes. He was

wrapped from hair to toe in a black uniform. He opened his mouth and stuck his tongue out, gesturing for me to do the same, a kind of AHH test which I took without resistance. I saw part of his very pale, blond-haired arm, which cemented my theory of being in Uncle Sam's hands.

The blindfold was pushed down. The whole time I was listening to loud plane engines; I very much believe that some planes were landing and others taking off. I felt my "special" plane approaching, or the truck approaching the plane, I don't recall anymore. But I do recall that when the escort grabbed me from the truck, there was no space between the truck and the airplane stairs. I was so exhausted, sick, and tired that I couldn't walk, which compelled the escort to pull me up the steps like a dead body.

Inside the plane it was very cold. I was laid on a sofa and the guards shackled me, mostly likely to the floor. I felt a blanket put over me; though very thin, it comforted me.

I relaxed and gave myself to my dreams. I was thinking about different members of my family I would never see again. How sad would they be! I was crying silently and without tears; for some reason, I gave all my tears at the beginning of the expedition, which was like the boundary between death and life. I wished I were better to people. I wished I were better to my family. I regretted every mistake I made in my life, toward God, toward my family, toward anybody!

I was thinking about life in an American prison. I was thinking about documentaries I had seen about their prisons, and the harshness with which they treat their prisoners. I wished I were blind or had some kind of handicap, so they would put me in isolation and give me some kind of humane treatment and protection. I was thinking, What will the first hearing with the judge be like? Do I have a chance to get due process in a country so full of hatred against Muslims? Am I really already convicted, even before I get the chance to defend myself?

I drowned in these painful dreams in the warmth of the blanket. Every once in a while the pain of the urine urge pinched me. The diaper didn't work with me: I could not convince my brain to give the signal to my bladder. The harder I tried, the firmer my brain became. The guard beside me kept pouring water bottle caps in my mouth, which worsened my situation. There was no refusing it, either you swallow or you choke. Lying on one side was killing me beyond belief, but every attempt to change my position ended in failure, for a strong hand pushed me back to the same position.

I could tell that the plane was a big jet, which led me to believe that flight was direct to the U.S. But after about five hours, the plane started to lose altitude and smoothly hit the runway. I realized the U.S. is a little bit farther than that. Where are we? In Ramstein, Germany? Yes! Ramstein it is: in Ramstein there's a U.S. military airport for transiting planes from the middle east; we're going to stop here for fuel. But as soon as the plane landed, the guards started to change my metal chains for plastic ones that cut my ankles painfully on the short walk to a helicopter. One of the guards, while pulling me out of the plane, tapped me on the shoulder as if to say, "you're gonna be alright." As in agony as I was, that gesture gave me hope that there were still some human beings among the people who were dealing with me.

When the sun hit me, the question popped up again: Where am I? Yes, Germany it is: it was July and the sun rises early. But why Germany? I had done no crimes in Germany! What shit did they pull on me? And yet the German legal system was by far a better choice for me; I know the procedures and speak the language. Moreover, the German system is somewhat transparent, and there are no two and three hundred years sentences. I had little to worry about: a German judge will face me and show me whatever the government has brought against me, and then I'm going to be sent to a temporary jail

until my case is decided. I won't be subject to torture, and I won't have to see the evil faces of interrogators.

After about ten minutes the helicopter landed and I was taken into a truck, with a guard on either side. The chauffeur and his neighbor were talking in a language I had never heard before. I thought, What the heck are they speaking, maybe Filipino? I thought of the Philippines because I'm aware of the huge U.S. Military presence there. Oh, yes, Philippines it is: *they* conspired with the U.S. and pulled some shit on me. What would the questions of *their* judge be? By now, though, I just wanted to arrive and take a pee, and after that they can do whatever they please. Please let me arrive! I thought; After that you may kill me!

The guards pulled me out of the truck after a five-minute drive, and it felt as if they put me in a hall. They forced me to kneel and bend my head down: I should remain in that position until they grabbed me. They yelled, "Do not move." Before worrying about anything else, I took my most remarkable urine since I was born. It was such a relief; I felt I was released and sent back home. All of a sudden my worries faded away, and I smiled inside. Nobody noticed what I did.

About a quarter of an hour later, some guards pulled me and towed me to a room where they obviously had "processed" many detainees. Once I entered the room, the guards took the gear off my head. Oh, my ears ached so badly, and so did my head; actually my whole body was conspiring against me. I could barely stand. The guards started to deprive me of my clothes, and soon I stood there as naked as my mother bore me. I stood there for the first time in front of U.S. soldiers, not on TV, this was for real. I had the most common reaction, covering my private parts with my hands. I also quietly started to recite the crisis prayer, *Ya hayyu! Ya kayyum!* Nobody stopped me from praying; however, one of the MPs was staring at me with his eyes full of hatred. Later on he would order me to stop looking around in the room.

A [REDACTED] medic gave me a quick medical check, after which I was wrapped in Afghani cloths. Yes, Afghani clothes in the Philippines! Of course I was chained, hands and feet tied to my waist. My hands, moreover, were put in mittens. Now I'm ready for action! What action? No clue!

The escort team pulled me blindfolded to a neighboring interrogation room. As soon as I entered the room, several people started to shout and throw heavy things against the wall. In the melee, I could distinguish the following questions:

"Where is Mullah Omar?"

"Where is Usama Bin Laden?"

"Where is Jalaluddin Haqqani?"

A very quick analysis went through my brain: the individuals in those questions were leading a country, and now they're a bunch of fugitives! The interrogators missed a couple of things. First, they had just briefed me about the latest news: Afghanistan is taken over, but the high level people have not been captured. Second, I turned myself in about the time when the war against terrorism started, and since then I have been in a Jordanian prison, literally cut off from the rest of the world. So how am I supposed to know about the U.S. taking over Afghanistan, let alone about its leaders having fled? Not to mention where they are now.

I humbly replied, "I don't know!"

"You're a liar!" shouted one of them in broken Arabic.

"No, I'm not lying, I was captured so and so, and I only know Abu Hafs..." I said, in a quick

summary of my whole story.*

“We should interrogate these motherfuckers like the Israelis do.”

“What do they do?” asked another.

“They strip them naked and interrogate them!”

“Maybe we should!” suggested another. Chairs were still flying around and hitting the walls and the floor. I knew it was only a show of force, and the establishment of fear and anxiety. I went with the flow and even shook myself more than necessary. I didn’t believe that Americans torture, even though I had always considered it a remote possibility.

“I am gonna interrogate you later on,” said one, and the U.S. interpreter repeated the same in Arabic.

“Take him to the Hotel,” suggested the interrogator. This time the interpreter didn’t translate.

And so was the first interrogation done. Before the escort grabbed me, in my terrorizing fear, I tried to connect with the interpreter.

“Where did you learn such good Arabic?” I asked.

“In the U.S.!” he replied, sounding flattered. In fact, he didn’t speak good Arabic; I just was trying to make some friends.

The escort team led me away. “You speak English,” one of them said in a thick Asian accent.

“A little bit,” I replied. He laughed, and so did his colleague. I felt like a human being leading a casual conversation. I said to myself, Look how friendly the Americans are: they’re gonna put you in a Hotel, interrogate you for a couple of days, and then fly you home safely. There’s no place for worry. The U.S. just wants to check everything, and since you’re innocent, they’re gonna find that out. For Pete’s sake, you’re on a base in Philippines; even though it’s a place at the edge of legality, it’s just temporary. The fact that one of the guards sounded Asian strengthened my wrong theory of being in the Philippines.

I soon arrived, not at a Hotel but at a wooden cell with neither a bathroom nor a sink. From the modest furniture—a weathered, thin mattress and an old blanket—you could tell there had been somebody here. I was kind of happy for having left Jordan, the place of randomness, but I was worried about the prayers I could not perform, and I wanted to know how many prayers I missed on the trip. The guard of the cell was a small, skinny white ██████████, a fact which gave me more comfort: for the last eight months I had been dealt with solely by big, muscular males.*

I asked ██████████ about the time, and ██████████ told me it was about eleven, if I remember correctly. I had one more question.

“What day is it?”

“I don’t know, every day here is the same,” ██████████ replied. I realized I had asked too much; ██████████ wasn’t even supposed to tell me the time, as I would learn later.

I found a Koran gently placed on some water bottles. I realized I was not alone in the jail, which was surely not a Hotel.

As it turned out, I was delivered to the wrong cell. Suddenly, I saw the weathered feet of a detainee whose face I couldn’t see because it was covered with a black bag. Black bags, I soon would learn, were put on everybody’s heads to blindfold them and make them unrecognizable, including the writer. Honestly, I didn’t want to see the face of the detainee, just in case he was in pain or suffering, because I hate to see people suffering; it drives me crazy. I’ll never forget the moans and

cries of the poor detainees in Jordan when they were suffering torture. I remember putting my hands over my ears to stop myself from hearing the cries, but no matter how hard I tried, I was still able to hear the suffering. It was awful, even worse than torture.

The [REDACTED] guard at my door stopped the escort team and organized my transfer to another cell. It was the same as the one I was just in, but in the facing wall. In the room there was a half-full water bottle, the label of which was written in Russian; I wished I had learned Russian. I said to myself, a U.S. base in the Philippines, with water bottles from Russia? The U.S. doesn't need supplies from Russia, and besides, geographically it makes no sense. Where *am* I? Maybe in a former Russian Republic, like Tajikstan? All I know is that I don't know!

The cell had no facility to take care of the natural business. Washing for prayer was impossible and forbidden. There was no clue as to the *Kibla*, the direction of Mecca. I did what I could. My next door neighbor was mentally sick; he was shouting in a language with which I was not familiar. I later learned that he was a Taliban leader.

Later on that day, July 20, 2002, the guards pulled me for routine police work, fingerprints, height, weight, etcetera. I was offered [REDACTED] as interpreter. It was obvious that Arabic was not [REDACTED] first language. [REDACTED] taught me the rules: no speaking, no praying loudly, no washing for prayer, and a bunch of other nos in that direction.* The guard asked me whether I wanted to use the bathroom. I thought he meant a place where you can shower; "Yes," I said. The bathroom was a barrel filled with human waste. It was the most disgusting bathroom I ever saw. The guards had to watch you while you were taking care of business. I couldn't eat the food—the food in Jordan was, by far, better than the cold MREs I got in Bagram—so I didn't really have to use the bathroom. To pee, I would use the empty water bottles I had in my room. The hygienic situation was not exactly perfect; sometimes when the bottle got filled, I continued on the floor, making sure that it didn't go all the way to the door.

For the next several nights in isolation, I got a funny guard who was trying to convert me to Christianity. I enjoyed the conversations, though my English was very basic. My dialogue partner was young, religious, and energetic. He liked Bush ("the true religious leader," according to him); he hated Bill Clinton ("the Infidel"). He loved the dollar and hated the Euro. He had his copy of the bible on him all the time, and whenever the opportunity arose he read me stories, most of which were from the Old Testament. I wouldn't have been able to understand them if I hadn't read the bible in Arabic several times—not to mention that the versions of the stories are not that far from the ones in the Koran. I had studied the Bible in the Jordanian prison; I asked for a copy, and they offered me one. It was very helpful in understanding Western societies, even though many of them deny being influenced by religious scriptures.

I didn't try to argue with him: I was happy to have somebody to talk to. He and I were unanimous that the religious scriptures, including the Koran, must have come from the same source. As it turned out, the hot-tempered soldier's knowledge about his religion was very shallow. Nonetheless I enjoyed him being my guard. He gave me more time on the bathroom, and he even looked away when I used the barrel.

I asked him about my situation. "You're not a criminal, because they put the criminals in the other side," he told me, gesturing with his hand. I thought about those "criminals" and pictured a bunch of young Muslims, and how hard their situation could be. I felt bad. As it turned out, later on I was transferred to these "criminals," and became a "high priority criminal." I was kind of ashamed when

the same guard saw me later with the “criminals,” after he had told me that I was going to be released at most after three days. He acted normally, but he didn’t have that much freedom to talk to me about religion there because of his numerous colleagues. Other detainees told me that he was not bad toward them, either.

The second or the third night ██████████ pulled me out of my cell himself and led me to an interrogation, where the same ██████████ Arabic already had taken a seat.

██████████

You could tell he was the right man for the job: he was the kind of man who wouldn’t mind doing the dirty work. The detainees back in Bagram used to call him ██████████; he reportedly was responsible for torturing even innocent individuals the government released.*

██████████ didn’t need to shackle me because I was in shackles 24 hours a day. I slept, ate, used the bathroom while completely shackled, hand to feet. ██████████ opened a file in his hand ██████████ and started by means of the interpreter.

██████████ was asking me general questions about my life and my background. When he asked me, “What languages do you speak?” he didn’t believe me; he laughed along with the interpreter, saying, “Haha, you speak German? Wait, we’re gonna check.”

Suddenly ██████████ the room

██████████

There was no mistaking it, he was

██████████

“Ja Wohl,” I replied. ██████████ was not ██████████ but his German was fairly acceptable, given that he spent

██████████

He confirmed to his colleague that my German was “██████████.”

Both looked at me with some respect after that, though the respect was not enough to save me from ██████████ wrath. ██████████ asked me where I learned to speak German, and said that he was going to interrogate me again later.

██████████, “Wahrheit macht frei, the truth sets you free.”

When I heard him say that, I knew the truth wouldn’t set me free, because “Arbeit” didn’t set the Jews free. Hitler’s propagandist machinery used to lure Jewish detainees with the slogan, “Arbeit macht frei,” Work sets you free. But work set nobody free.

██████████ took a note in his small notebook and left the room. ██████████ sent me back to my room and apologized ██████████.*

“I am sorry for keeping you awake for so long,”

“No problem!” ██████████ replied.

After several days in isolation I was transferred to the general population, but I could only look at them because I was put in the narrow barbed-wire corridor between the cells. I felt like I was out of

jail, though, and I cried and thanked God. After eight months of total isolation, I saw fellow detainees more or less in my situation. “Bad” detainees like me were shackled 24 hours a day and put in the corridor, where every passing guard or detainee stepped on them. The place was so narrow that the barbed wire kept pinching me for the next ten days. I saw [REDACTED] being force-fed; he was on a forty-five day hunger strike. The guards were yelling at him, and he was bouncing a dry piece of bread between his hands. All the detainees looked so worn out, as if they had been buried and after several days resurrected, but [REDACTED] was a completely different story: he was bones without meat. It reminded me of the pictures you see in documentaries about WWII prisoners.

Detainees were not allowed to talk to each other, but we enjoyed looking at each other. The punishment for talking was hanging the detainee by the hands with his feet barely touching the ground. I saw an Afghani detainee who passed out a couple of times while hanging from his hands. The medics “fixed” him and hung him back up. Other detainees were luckier: they were hung for a certain time and then released. Most of the detainees tried to talk while they were hanging, which made the guards double their punishment. There was a very old Afghani fellow who reportedly was arrested to turn over his son. The guy was mentally sick; he couldn’t stop talking because he didn’t know where he was, nor why. I don’t think he understood his environment, but the guards kept dutifully hanging him. It was so pitiful. One day one of the guards threw him on his face, and he was crying like a baby.

We were put in about six or seven big barbed-wire cells named after operations performed against the U.S: Nairobi, U.S.S. Cole, Dar-Es-Salaam, and so on. In each cell there was a detainee called English, who benevolently served as an interpreter to translate the orders to his co-detainees. Our English was a gentleman from Sudan named [REDACTED]. His English was very basic, and so he asked me secretly whether I spoke English. “No,” I replied—but as it turned out I was a Shakespeare compared to him. My brethren thought that I was denying them my services, but I just didn’t know how bad the situation was.

Now I was sitting in front of bunch of dead regular U.S. citizens. My first impression, when I saw them chewing without a break, was, What’s wrong with these guys, do they have to eat so much? Most of the guards were tall, and overweight. Some of them were friendly and some very hostile. Whenever I realized that a guard was mean I pretended that I understood no English. I remember one cowboy coming to me with an ugly frown on his face:

“You speak English?” he asked.

“No English,” I replied.

“We don’t like you to speak English. We want you to die slowly,” he said.

“No English,” I kept replying. I didn’t want to give him the satisfaction that his message arrived. People with hatred always have something to get off their chests, but I wasn’t ready to be that drain.

Prayer in groups wasn’t allowed. Everybody prayed on his own, and so did I. Detainees had no clues about prayer time. We would just imitate: when a detainee started to pray, we assumed it was time and followed. The Koran was available to detainees who asked for one. I don’t remember asking myself, because the handling by the guards was just disrespectful; they threw it to each other like a water bottle when they passed the holy book through. I didn’t want to be a reason for humiliating God’s word. Moreover, thank God, I know the Koran by heart. As far as I recall, one of the detainees secretly passed me a copy that nobody was using in the cell.

After a couple of days, ██████████ pulled me to interrogate me.

██████████ acted as an interpreter.

“Tell me your story,” ██████████ asked.

“My name is, I graduated in 1988, I got a scholarship to Germany....” I replied in very boring detail, none of which seemed to interest or impress ██████████. He grew tired and started to yawn. I knew exactly what he wanted to hear, but I couldn’t help him.

He interrupted me. “My country highly values the truth. Now I’m gonna ask you some questions, and if you answer truthfully, you’re gonna be released and sent safely to your family. But if you fail, you’re gonna be imprisoned indefinitely. A small note in my agenda book is enough to destroy your life. What terrorist organizations are you part of?”

“None,” I replied.

“You’re not a man, and you don’t deserve respect. Kneel, cross your hands, and put them behind your neck.”

I obeyed the rules and he put a bag over my head. My back was hurting bad lately and that position was so painful; ██████████ was working on my sciatic problem.* ██████████ brought two projectors and adjusted them on my face. I couldn’t see, but the heat overwhelmed me and I started to sweat.

“You’re gonna be sent to a U.S. facility, where you’ll spend the rest of your life,” he threatened. “You’ll never see your family again. Your family will be f**cked by another man. In American jails, terrorists like you get raped by multiple men at the same time. The guards in my country do their job very well, but being raped is inevitable. But if you tell me the truth, you’re gonna be released immediately.”

I was old enough to know that he was a rotten liar and a man with no honor, but he was in charge, so I had to listen to his bullshit again and again. I just wished that the agencies would start to hire smart people. Did he really think that anybody would believe his nonsense? Somebody would have to be stupid: was he stupid, or did he think I was stupid? I would have respected him more had he told me, “Look, if you don’t tell me what I want to hear, I’m gonna torture you.”

Anyway, I said, “Of course I will be truthful!”

“What terrorist organizations are you part of?”

“None!” I replied. He put back the bag on my head and started a long discourse of humiliation, cursing, lies, and threats. I don’t really remember it all, nor am I ready to sift in my memory for such bullshit. I was so tired and hurt, and tried to sit but he forced me back. I cried from the pain. Yes, a man my age cried silently. I just couldn’t bear the agony.

██████████ after a couple of hours sent me back to my cell, promising me more torture. “This was only the start,” as he put it. I was returned to my cell, terrorized and worn out. I prayed to Allah to save me from him. I lived the days to follow in horror: whenever ██████████ went past our cell I looked away, avoiding seeing him so he wouldn’t “see” me, exactly like an ostrich. ██████████ was checking on everybody, day and night, and giving the guards the recipe for every detainee. I saw him torturing this other detainee. I don’t want to recount what I heard about him; I just want to tell what I saw with my eyes. It was an Afghani teenager, I would say 16 or 17. ██████████ made him stand for about three days, sleepless. I felt so bad for him. Whenever he fell down the guards came to

him, shouting “no sleep for terrorists,” and made him stand again. I remember sleeping and waking up, and he stood there like a tree.

Whenever I saw [REDACTED] around, my heart started to pound, and he was often around. One day he sent a [REDACTED] interpreter to me to pass me a message.

“[REDACTED] is gonna kick your ass.”

I didn’t respond, but inside me I said, May Allah stop you! But in fact [REDACTED] didn’t kick my rear end; instead [REDACTED] pulled me for interrogation.* He was a nice guy; maybe he felt he could relate to me because of the language. And why not? Even some of the guards used to come to me and practice their German when they learned that I spoke it.

Anyway, he recounted a long story to me. “I’m not like [REDACTED]. He’s young and hot-tempered. I don’t use inhumane methods; I have my own methods. I want to tell something about American history, and the whole war against terrorism.”

[REDACTED] was straightforward and enlightening. He started with American history and the Puritans, who punished even the innocents by drowning them, and ended with the war against terrorism. “There is no innocent detainee in this campaign: either you cooperate with us and I am going to get you the best deal, or we are going to send you to Cuba.”

“What? *Cuba*?” I exclaimed. “I don’t even speak Spanish, and you guys *hate* Cuba.”

“Yes, but we have an American territory in Guantánamo,” he said, and told me about Teddy Roosevelt and things like that. I knew that I was going to be sent further from home, which I hated.

“Why would you send me to Cuba?”

“We have other options, like Egypt and Algeria, but we only send them the very bad people. I hate sending people over there, because they’ll experience painful torture.”

“Just send me to Egypt.”

“You sure do not want that. In Cuba they treat detainees humanely, and they have two Imams. The camp is run by the DOJ, not the military.”*

“But I’ve done no crimes against your country.”

“I’m sorry if you haven’t. Just think of it as if you had cancer!”

“Am I going to be sent to court?”

“Not in the near future. Maybe in three years or so, when my people forget about September 11.”

[REDACTED] went on to tell me about his private life, but I don’t want to put it down here.

I had a couple more sessions with [REDACTED] after that. He asked me some questions and tried to trick me, saying things like, “He said he knows you!” for people I had never heard of. He took my email addresses and passwords. He also asked the [REDACTED] who were present in Bagram to interrogate me, but they refused, saying the [REDACTED] law forbids them from interrogating aliens outside the country.* He was trying the whole time to convince me to cooperate so he could save me from the trip to Cuba. To be honest, I preferred to go to Cuba than to stay in Bagram.

“Let it be,” I told him. “I don’t think I can change anything.”

Somehow I liked [REDACTED]. Don’t get me wrong, he was a sneaky interrogator, but at least he spoke to me according to the level of my intellect. I asked [REDACTED] to put me inside the cell with

the rest of the population, and showed him the injuries I had suffered from the barbed wire.

██████████ approved: in Bagram, interrogators could do anything with you; they had overall control, and the MPs were at their service. Sometimes ██████████ gave me a drink, which I appreciated, especially with the kind of diet I received, cold MREs and dry bread in every meal. I secretly passed my meals to other detainees.

One night ██████████ introduced two military interrogators who asked me about the Millennium plot. They spoke broken Arabic and were very hostile to me; they didn't allow me to sit and threatened me with all kind of things. But ██████████ hated them, and told me in ██████████, "If you want to cooperate, do so with me. These MI guys are nothing." I felt myself under auction to whichever agency bids more!*

In the population we always broke the rules and spoke to our neighbors. I had three direct neighbors. One was an Afghan teenager who was kidnapped on his way to Emirates; he used to work there, which was why he spoke Arabic with a Gulf accent. He was very funny, and he made me laugh; over the past nine months I had almost forgotten how. He was spending holidays with his family in Afghanistan and went to Iran; from there he headed to the Emirates in a boat, but the boat was hijacked by the U.S. and the passengers were arrested.

My second neighbor was twenty-year-old Mauritanian guy who was born in Nigeria and moved to Saudi Arabia. He'd never been in Mauritania, nor did he speak the Mauritanian dialect; if he didn't introduce himself, you would say he was a Saudi.

My third neighbor was a Palestinian from Jordan named ██████████. He was captured and tortured by an Afghan tribal leader for about seven months. His kidnapper wanted money from ██████████ family or else he would turn him over to the Americans, though the latter option was the least promising because the U.S. was only paying \$5,000 per head, unless it was a big head. The bandit arranged everything with ██████████ family regarding the ransom, but ██████████ managed to flee from captivity in Kabul. He made it to Jalalabad, where he easily stuck out as an Arab mujahid and was captured and sold to the Americans. I told ██████████ that I'd been in Jordan, and he seemed to be knowledgeable about their intelligence services. He knew all the interrogators who dealt with me, as ██████████ himself spent 50 days in the same prison where I had been.

When we spoke, we covered our heads so guards thought we were asleep, and talked until we got tired. My neighbors told me that we were in Bagram, in Afghanistan, and I informed them that we were going to be transferred to Cuba. But they didn't believe me.

Around 10 a.m. on August ██████████, 2002 a Military unit, some armed with guns, appeared from nowhere.* The armed MPs were pointing their guns at us from upstairs, and the others were shouting at the same time, "Stan' up, Stan' up..." I was so scared. Even though I expected to be transferred to Cuba some time that day, I had never seen this kind of show.

We stood up. The guards kept giving other orders. "No talking... Do not move... Ima fucking kill yo'... I'm serious!" I hated it when ██████████ from Palestine asked to use the bathroom and the guards refused. "Don't move." I was like, Can't you just keep it till the situation is over? But the

problem with ██████████ was that he had dysentery, and he couldn't hold it; ██████████ had been subjected to torture and malnutrition in Kabul during his detention by the Northern Alliance tribal leader. ██████████ told me that he was going to use the bathroom anyway, which he did, ignoring the shouting guards. I expected every second a bullet to be released toward him, but that didn't happen. The bathroom inside our shared cells was also an open barrel, which detainees in punishment cleaned every day for every cell. It was very disgusting and smelled so bad. Being from a third world country, I have seen many unclean bathrooms, but none of them could hold a candle to Bagram's.

I started to shake from fear. One MP approached the gate of our cell and started to call the names, or rather the numbers, of those who were going to be transferred. All the numbers called in my cell were Arabs, which was a bad sign. The brothers didn't believe me when I told them we were going to be transferred to Cuba. But now I felt myself confirmed, and we looked at each other and smiled. Several guards came to the gate with a bunch of chains, bags, and other materials. They started to call us one by one, asking each detainee to approach the gate, where he got chained.

“██████████,” one of the guards shouted. I proceeded to the gate like a sheep being led to her butcher. At the gate, a guard yelled, “Turn around!” which I did, and “Both hands behind!”

When I slid my hands through the bin hole behind my back, one of the guards grabbed my thumb and bent my wrist. “When you fuckin' move, I'm gonna break your hand.” Another guard chained my hands and my feet with two separate chains. Then a bag was put over my head to blindfold me. The gate was opened, and I was roughly pushed and thrown over the back of another detainee in a row. Although I was physically hurt, I was solaced when I felt the warmth of another human being in front of me suffering the same. The solace increased when ██████████ was thrown over my back. Many detainees didn't exactly understand what the guards wanted from them, and so got hurt worse. I felt lucky to have been blindfolded, for one, because I missed a lot bad things that were happening around me, and for two, because the blindfold helped me in my daydreaming about better circumstances. Thank ALLAH, I have the ability to ignore my surroundings and daydream about anything I want.

We were supposed to be very close to each other. Breathing was very hard. We were 34 detainees, all of whom were Arab except for one Afghani and one from the Maldives.* When we were put in a row, we were tied together with a rope around our upper arms. The rope was so tight that the circulation stopped, numbing my whole arm.

We were ordered to stand up, and were pulled to a place where the “processing” continued. I hated it because ██████████ kept stepping on my chain, which hurt badly. I tried my best not to step on the chain of the man in front of me. Thank God the trip was short: somewhere in the same building we were set down next to each other on long benches. I had the feeling that the benches made a circle.

The party started with dressing the passengers. I got a headset that prevented me from hearing. It gave me such a painful headache; the set was so tight that I had the top of my ears bleeding for a couple of days. My hands were now tied to my waist in the front, and connected with a chain all the way to my feet. They connected my wrists with a six-inch hard plastic piece, and made me wear thick mittens. It was funny, I tried to find a way to free my fingers, but the guards hit my hands to stop moving them. We grew tired; people started to moan. Every once in a while one of the guards took off one of my ear plugs and whispered a discouraging phrase:

“You know, you didn’t make any mistake: your mom and dad made the mistake when they produced you.”

“You gonna enjoy the ride to the Caribbean paradise....” I didn’t answer any provocation, pretending not to understand what he said. Other detainees told me about having been subject to such humiliation, too, but they were luckier; they understood no English.

My flipflops were taken away, and I got some made-in-China tennis shoes. Over my eyes they put really ugly, thick, blindfolding glasses, which were tied around my head and over my ears. They were similar to swimming goggles. To get an idea about the pain, put some old goggles around your hand and tie them tight, and stay that way for a couple of hours; I am sure you will remove them. Now imagine that you have those same goggles tied around your head for more than forty hours. To seal the dressing, a sticky pad was placed behind my ear.

Sometime during the processing we got a cavity search, to the laughter and comments of the guards. I hated that day when I started to learn my miserable English vocabulary. In such situations you’re just better off if you don’t understand English. The majority of the detainees wouldn’t speak about the cavity searches we were subject to, and they would get angry when you started to talk about them. I personally wasn’t ashamed; I think the people who did these searches without good reason should be ashamed of themselves.

I grew sick, tired, frustrated, hungry, nauseous, and all the other bad adjectives in the dictionary. I am sure I wasn’t the only one. We got new plastic bracelets carrying a number. My number turned out to be 760, and my next [REDACTED]. You could say my group was the 700 series.

[REDACTED] used the bathroom a couple of times, but I tried not to use it. I finally went in the afternoon, maybe around 2 p.m.

“Do you like music?” the guard who was escorting me there asked when we were alone.

“Yes, I do!”

“What kind?”

“Good music!”

“Rock and Roll? Country?” I wasn’t really familiar with these types he mentioned. Every once in a while I used to listen to German radio with different kinds of Western music, but I couldn’t tell which one was which.

“Any good music,” I replied. The good conversation paid off in the form that he took my blindfold off so that I could take care of my business. It was very tricky, since I had chains all around my body. The guard placed me gently back on the bench, and for the next couple of hours waiting was the order. We were deprived from the right of performing our daily prayers for the next forty-eight hours.

Around four p.m., the transport to the airport started. By then, I was a “living dead.” My legs weren’t able to carry me anymore; for the time to come, the guards had to drag me all the way from Bagram to GTMO.

We were loaded in a truck that brought us to the airport. It took five to ten minutes to get there. I was happy for every move, just to have the opportunity to alter my body, for my back was killing me. We were crowded in the truck shoulder-to-shoulder and thigh-to-thigh. Unluckily I was placed facing the back of the vehicle, which I really hate because it gives me nausea. The vehicle was equipped with hard benches so that the detainees sat back to back and the guards sat at the very end shouting, “No talking!” I have no idea how many people were in the truck; all I know is that one detainee sat on my right, and one on my left, and another against my back. It is always good to feel the warmth of your

co-detainees, somehow it's solacing.

The arrival at the airport was obvious because of the whining of the engines, which easily went through the earplugs. The truck backed up until it touched the plane. The guards started to shout loudly in a language I could not differentiate. I started to hear human bodies hitting the floor. Two guards grabbed a detainee and threw him toward two other guards on the plane, shouting "Code"; the receiving guards shouted back confirming receipt of the package. When my turn came, two guards grabbed me by the hands and feet and threw me toward the reception team. I don't remember whether I hit the floor or was caught by the other guards. I had started to lose feeling and it would have made no difference anyway.

Another team inside the plane dragged me and fastened me on a small and straight seat. The belt was so tight I could not breathe. The air conditioning hit me, and one of the MPs was shouting, "Do not move, Do not talk," while locking my feet to the floor. I didn't know how to say "tight" in English. I was calling, "MP, MP, belt..." Nobody came to help me. I almost got smothered. I had a mask over my mouth and my nose, plus the bag covering my head and my face, not to mention the tight belt around my stomach: breathing was impossible. I kept saying, "MP, Sir, I cannot breathe!... MP, SIR, please." But it seemed like my pleas for help got lost in a vast desert.

After a couple minutes, [REDACTED] was dropped beside me on my right. I wasn't sure it was him, but he told me later he felt my presence beside him. Every once in a while, if one of the guards adjusted my goggles, I saw a little. I saw the cockpit, which was in front of me. I saw the green camo-uniforms of the escorting guards. I saw the ghosts of my fellow detainees on my left and my right. "Mister, please, my belt... hurt..." I called. When the shoutings of the guards faded away, I knew that the detainees were all on board. "Mister, please... belt..." A guard responded, but he not only didn't help me, he tightened the belt even more around my abdomen.

Now I couldn't endure the pain; I felt I was going to die. I couldn't help asking for help louder. "Mister, I cannot breathe..." One of the soldiers came and untightened the belt, not very comfortably but better than nothing.

"It's still tight..." I had learned the word when he asked me, "Is it tight?"

"That's all you get." I gave up asking for relief from the belt.

"I cannot breathe!" I said, gesturing to my nose. A guard appeared and took the mask off my nose. I took a deep breath and felt really relieved. But to my dismay, the guard put the mask back on my nose and my mouth. "Sir, I cannot breathe... MP... MP." The same guy showed up once more, but instead of taking the mask off my nose, he took the plug out of my ear and said, "Forget about it!" and immediately put the ear plug back. It was harsh, but it was the only way not to smother. I was panicking, I had just enough air, but the only way to survive was to convince the brain to be satisfied with the tiny bit of air it got.

The plane was in the air. A guard shouted in my ear, "Ima gonna give you some medication, you get sick." He made me take a bunch of tablets and gave me an apple and a peanut butter sandwich, our only meal since the transfer procedure began. I've hated peanut butter since then. I had no appetite for anything, but I pretended I was eating the sandwich so the guards don't hurt me. I always tried to avoid contact with those violent guards unless it was extremely necessary. I took a bite off the sandwich and kept the rest in my hand till the guards collected the trash. As to the apple, the eating was tricky, since my hands were tied to my waist and I wore mittens. I squeezed the apple between my hands and bent my head to my waist like an acrobat to bite at it. One slip and the apple is gone. I

down the A/C on the plane. The guard not only refused to meet his wish, but he kept soaking him with water drops all the way to Cuba. The medics had to put him in a room and treat him with a blazing fire.

“When they started the fire, I said to myself, here you go, now they start the torture!” he told us. I laughed when he recounted his story in the [REDACTED] the next morning.

I could tell they had changed the guard team for a better one. The old team used to say “Wader”; the new team says “Water.” The old team used to say, “Stan’ up,” the new team, “Stand up.” The old team was simply too loud.

I could also tell the detainees had reached their pain limit. All I heard was moaning. Next to me was an Afghani who was crying very loudly and pleading for help

[REDACTED]. He was speaking in Arabic, “Sir, how could you do this to me? Please, relieve my pain, Gentlemen!” But nobody even bothered to check on him. The fellow was sick back in Bagram. I saw him in the cell next to ours; he was vomiting all the time. I felt so bad for him. At the same time, I laughed. Can you believe it, I stupidly laughed! Not at him; I laughed at the situation. First, he addressed them in Arabic, which no guards understood. Second, he called them Gentlemen, which they were most certainly not.

In the beginning I enjoyed the sunbath, but the sun grew hotter with every minute that went by. I started to sweat, and grew very tired of the kneeling position I had to remain in for about six hours. Every once in a while a guard shouted, “Need water!” I don’t remember asking for water, but it’s likely that I did. I was still stuck with the blindfold, but my excitement about being in a new correctional facility with other human beings I could socialize with, in a place where there would be no torture or even interrogation, overwhelmed my pain; that and the fact that I didn’t know how long the detention was going to last. And so I didn’t open my mouth with any complaints or moans, while many brothers around me were moaning and even crying. I think that my pain limit had been reached a long time before.

I was dead last to be “processed”; people who got hurt on the plane probably had priority, such as [REDACTED]. Finally two escorting guards dragged me into the clinic. They stripped me naked and pushed me into an open shower. I took a shower in my chains under the eyes of everybody, my brethren, the medics, and the Army. The other brothers who proceeded me were still stark naked. It was ugly, and although the shower was soothing, I couldn’t enjoy it. I was ashamed and I did the old ostrich trick: I looked down to my feet. The guards dried me and took me to the next step. Basically the detainees went through a medical check, where they took note of everybody’s biological description, height, weight, scars, and experienced the first interrogation inside the clinic. It was like a car production line. I followed the steps of the detainee who preceded me, and he followed somebody else’s steps, and so on and so forth.

“Do you have any known diseases?” asked the young nurse.

“Yes, sciatic nerve and hypotension.”

“Anything else?”

“No.”

“Where did they capture you?”

“I don’t understand,” I replied. The doctor repeated the nurse’s question, but I still didn’t