

before the guards pried me from the cellblock later that day. You don't know how terrorizing it is for a human being to be threatened with torture. One literally becomes a child.

The Escort team showed up at my cell.

"You got to move."

"Where?"

"Not your problem," said the hateful [REDACTED] guard. But he was not very smart, for he had my destination written on his glove.

"Brothers pray for me, I am being transferred [REDACTED] was reserved by then for the worst detainees in the camp; if one got transferred [REDACTED], many signatures must have been provided, maybe even the president of the U.S. The only people I know to have spent some time [REDACTED] since it was designed for torture were a Kuwaiti detainee and another fellow detainee from [REDACTED].\*

When I entered the block, it was completely empty of any signs of life. I was put at the end of the block and the Yemeni fellow was at the beginning, so there was no interaction whatsoever between us. [REDACTED] was put in the middle but with no contact either. Later on both were transferred somewhere else, and the whole block was reserved for me, only me, ALLAH, [REDACTED], and the guards who worked for them. I was completely exposed to the total mercy [REDACTED], and there was little mercy.

In the block the recipe started. I was deprived of my comfort items, except for a thin iso-mat and a very thin, small, worn-out blanket. I was deprived of my books, which I owned, I was deprived of my Koran, I was deprived of my soap. I was deprived of my toothpaste and of the roll of toilet paper I had. The cell—better, the box—was cooled down to the point that I was shaking most of the time. I was forbidden from seeing the light of the day; every once in a while they gave me a rec-time at night to keep me from seeing or interacting with any detainees. I was living literally in terror. For the next seventy days I wouldn't know the sweetness of sleeping: interrogation 24 hours a day, three and sometimes four shifts a day. I rarely got a day off. I don't remember sleeping one night quietly. "If you start to cooperate you'll have some sleep and hot meals," [REDACTED] used to tell me repeatedly.

Within a couple of days of my transfer, [REDACTED] from the International Committee of the Red Cross showed up at my cell and asked me whether I wanted to write a letter. "Yes!" I said. [REDACTED] handed me a paper and I wrote, "Mama, I love you, I just wanted to tell you that I love you!" After that visit I wouldn't see the ICRC for more than a year. They tried to see me, but in vain.\*

"You're starting to torture me, but you don't know how much I can take. You might end up killing me," I said when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] pulled me for interrogation.

"We do recommend things, but we don't have the final decision," [REDACTED] said.

"I just want to warn you: I'm suffering because of the harsh conditions you expose me to. I've already had a sciatic nerve attack. And torture will not make me more cooperative."

“According to my experience, you will cooperate. We are stronger than you, and have more resources,” ██████████ said. ██████████ never wanted me to know his name, but he got busted when one of his colleagues mistakenly called him by his name. He doesn’t know that I know it, but, well, I do.

██████████ grew worse with every day passing by. He started to lay out my case. He began with the story of ██████████, and me having recruited him for the September 11 attack.<sup>†</sup>

“Why should he lie to us,” ██████████ said.

“I don’t know.”

“All you have to say is, ‘I don’t remember, I don’t know, I’ve done nothing.’ You think you’re going to impress an American jury with these words? In the eyes of the Americans, you’re doomed. Just looking at you in an orange suit, chains, and being Muslim and Arabic is enough to convict you,”

██████████ said.

“That is unjust!”

“We know that you are a criminal.”

“What have I done?”

“You tell me, and we’ll reduce your sentence to thirty years, after which you’ll have a chance to lead a life again. Otherwise you’ll never see the light of day. If you don’t cooperate, we’re going to put you in a hole and wipe your name out of our detainee database.” I was so terrified because I knew that even though he couldn’t make such a decision on his own, he had the complete back-up of a high government level. He didn’t speak from thin air.

“I don’t care where you take me, just do it.”

In another session when he was talking to me

██████████. “What the fuck do you mean, tea or sugar?”

“I just meant what I said, I was not talking in code.”

“Fuck you!” ██████████ said. I figured I wouldn’t degrade myself and lower myself to his level, so I didn’t answer him. When I failed to give him the answer he wanted to hear, he made me stand up, with my back bent because my hands were shackled to my feet and waist and locked to the floor. ██████████ turned the temperature control all the way down, and made sure that the guards maintained me in that situation until he decided otherwise. He used to start a fuss before going to lunch, so he could keep me hurt during his lunch, which took at least two to three hours.

██████████ likes his food; he never missed his lunch. I always wondered how

██████████ could possibly have passed the Army’s fitness test. But I realized he was in the Army for a reason: he was good at being inhumane.

“Why are you in jail?” he asked me.

“Because your country is unjust, and my country isn’t defending me?”

“Now you’re saying that we Americans are just looking for skinny Arabs,” he said.

██████████ came with him occasionally, and it was kind of a blessing for me. I grew tired of dealing with a lifeless face like ██████████. When ██████████ came I felt like I was meeting with a human being. ██████████ offered me the appropriate chair for my back pain, while

always insisted on the metal chair or the dirty floor.\*

“Do you know that [REDACTED] is dealing such and such?” [REDACTED] asked me, naming some kind of drug.

“What the hell do you mean?” I asked.

“You know what [REDACTED] means,” [REDACTED] smiled because [REDACTED] knew that I wasn’t lying. I really could have been anything but a drug dealer, and [REDACTED] was dying to link me to any crime no matter what.

“It’s a type of narcotic,” [REDACTED] replied.

“I’m sorry, I am not familiar at all with that circle.”

[REDACTED] and his bosses realized that it took more [REDACTED]. And so they decided to bring [REDACTED] interrogator into play. Sometime [REDACTED] I was taken [REDACTED] to reservation. The escorting team was confused.

“They said [REDACTED]? That’s weird!” said one of the guards.

When we entered the building there were no monitoring guards. “Call the D.O.C.!” said the other.\* After the radio call, the two guards were ordered to stay with me in the room until my interrogators showed up. “Something’s wrong,” said the [REDACTED] one. The escort team didn’t realize that I understood what they were talking about; they always assume that detainees don’t speak English, which they typically don’t. The leadership in the camp always tried to warn the guards; signs like “DO NOT HELP THE ENEMY,” and “CARELESS TALK GIVES SECRETS AWAY,” were not rare, but the guards talked to each other anyway.

[REDACTED] was at one point a regular interrogation booth, then a building for torture, then an administrative building. My heart was pounding; I was losing my mind. I hate torture so much. A slim, small [REDACTED] entered the room followed by Mr. Tough Guy.† [REDACTED] was a [REDACTED]

Neither [REDACTED] greeted me, nor released my hands [REDACTED].

“What is this?” [REDACTED] asked, showing me a plastic bag with a small welding stick inside.\*

“It’s Indian incense,” I replied. That was the first thing that came to my mind. I thought [REDACTED] wanted to give me a treat by burning the incense during the interrogation, which was a good idea.

“No, you’re wrong!” [REDACTED] almost stuck it in my face.

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Now we have found evidence against you; we don’t need any more,” said [REDACTED]. I was like, What the hell is going on, is that part of a bomb they want to pull on me?

“This is a welding stick you were hiding in your bathroom,” [REDACTED] said.

“How can I possibly have such a thing in my cell, unless you or my guards gave it to me? I have no contact whatsoever with any detainees.”

“You’re smart, you could have smuggled it,” said [REDACTED].

“How?”

“Take him to the bathroom,” [REDACTED] said.

[REDACTED] The guards grabbed me to the bathroom. I was thinking, “Are these people so desperate to pull shit on me, I mean any shit?” In the meantime, a [REDACTED] guard was explaining to [REDACTED] how these welding sticks end up in the cells; I caught his last words when the guards were leading me back from the restroom. “It’s common. The contractors keep throwing them in the toilets after finishing with them.” As soon as I entered, everybody suddenly shut up. [REDACTED] put the welding stick back in a yellow envelope. [REDACTED] never introduced herself, nor did I expect [REDACTED] to do so. The worse an interrogator’s intention is, the more [REDACTED] covers his or [REDACTED] identity. But those people get busted the most, and so did [REDACTED], when one of her colleagues mistakenly called [REDACTED] by her name.

“How does your new situation look?” [REDACTED] asked me.

“I’m just doing great!” I answered. I was really suffering, but I didn’t want to give them the satisfaction of having reached their evil goal.

“I think he’s too comfortable,” [REDACTED] said.

“Get off the chair!” [REDACTED] said, pulling the chair from beneath me. “I’d rather have a dirty farmer sitting on the chair than a smart ass like you,” [REDACTED] continued, when my whole body dropped on the dirty floor. [REDACTED] killing me. Since June 20th I never got relief from them. [REDACTED] obviously was getting tired of dealing with me, so his boss offered him fresh blood, manifesting in the person of [REDACTED] spread the pictures of some September 11 suspects in front of me, namely [REDACTED].

“Look at these motherfuckers,” said [REDACTED].

“OK, now tell us what you know about those motherfuckers!” [REDACTED] said.

“I swear to God, I will not tell you one word, no matter what.”

“Stand up! *Guards!* If you don’t stand up, it’ll be ugly,” [REDACTED] said. And before the torture squad entered the room I stood up, with my back bent because

[REDACTED] didn’t allow me to stand up straight.\* I had to suffer every-inch-of-my-body pain the rest of the day. I dealt with the pain silently; I kept praying until my assailants got tired and sent me back to my cell at the end of the day, after exhausting their resources of humiliations for that day. I didn’t say a single word, as if I had not been there. You, Dear Reader, said more words to them than I did.

“If you want to go to the bathroom, ask politely to use the restroom, say ‘Please, may I?’ Otherwise, do it in your pants,” [REDACTED] said.

Before lunch [REDACTED] dedicated the time to speaking ill about my family, and describing my wife with the worst adjective you can imagine. For the sake of my family, I dismiss their degrading quotations. The whole time [REDACTED] offered me

