

SOUFAN'S NARRATIVE

Ali Soufan didn't get to read his entire prepared statement in today's SJC hearing. But his prepared statement adds some more nuance to the narrative of how CIA started to torture Abu Zubaydah. (Except where linked, the details below come from Soufan's testimony.)

March 28, 2002: Abu Zubaydah caught.

March 31, 2002: AZ flown to Thailand.

Early April, 2002: Soufan and his partner arrive in Thailand and start interrogating AZ with the help of CIA officers stationed in Thailand.

Immediately after Abu Zubaydah was captured, a fellow FBI agent and I were flown to meet him at an undisclosed location. We were both very familiar with Abu Zubaydah and have successfully interrogated al-Qaeda terrorists. We started interrogating him, supported by CIA officials who were stationed at the location, and within the first hour of the interrogation, using the Informed Interrogation Approach, we gained important actionable intelligence.

The information was so important that, as I later learned from open sources, it went to CIA Director George Tenet who was so impressed that he initially ordered us to be congratulated.

Several days later (early April): Upon learning that the FBI was having success with AZ, Tenet sends CIA CTC team to Thailand.

That was apparently quickly withdrawn as soon as Mr. Tenet was told that it was FBI agents, who were responsible. He then immediately ordered a CIA CTC interrogation team to leave DC and head to the location to take over from us.

During his capture Abu Zubaydah had been

injured. After seeing the extent of his injuries, the CIA medical team supporting us decided they were not equipped to treat him and we had to take him to a hospital or he would die. At the hospital, we continued our questioning as much as possible, while taking into account his medical condition and the need to know all information he might have on existing threats.

We were once again very successful and elicited information regarding the role of KSM as the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, and lots of other information that remains classified. (It is important to remember that before this we had no idea of KSM's role in 9/11 or his importance in the al Qaeda leadership structure.) All this happened before the CTC team arrived.

"Within a few days" (early April): CIA CTC team arrives and takes the lead, with FBI continuing to assist. CIA starts with **clothing and sleep deprivation**. (Note, AZ's ICRC narrative starts when he wakes up naked, so if all sources are telling the truth, he doesn't remember the early interrogations with the FBI and so his entire narrative lacks about a week. He describes later being shackled to the bed, which the CTC claimed was their means of depriving sleep. He says the sleep deprivation lasted two to three weeks.)

A few days after we started questioning Abu Zubaydah, the CTC interrogation team finally arrived from DC with a contractor who was instructing them on how they should conduct the interrogations, and we were removed. Immediately, on the instructions of the contractor, harsh techniques were introduced, starting with nudity. (The harsher techniques mentioned in the memos were not introduced or even discussed at this point.)

April 2002: CIA OGC lawyers begin conversations with John Bellinger and John Yoo/Jay Bybee on proposed interrogation plan for Abu Zubaydah. Bellinger briefed Condi, Hadley, and Gonzales, as well as Ashcroft and Chertoff.

Early to mid April 2002: Soufan and his partner resume control of interrogation. (After two to three weeks of sleep deprivation, AZ describes briefly being given his clothing back.)

The new techniques did not produce results as Abu Zubaydah shut down and stopped talking. At that time nudity and low-level sleep deprivation (between 24 and 48 hours) was being used. After a few days of getting no information, and after repeated inquiries from DC asking why all of sudden no information was being transmitted (when before there had been a steady stream), we again were given control of the interrogation.

We then returned to using the Informed Interrogation Approach. Within a few hours, Abu Zubaydah again started talking and gave us important actionable intelligence.

This included the details of Jose Padilla, the so-called "dirty bomber." To remind you of how important this information was viewed at the time, the then-Attorney General, John Ashcroft, held a press conference from Moscow to discuss the news. Other important actionable intelligence was also gained that remains classified.

Mid to late April: CTC regains control of interrogation, introduces **noise and temperature manipulation**. (Note, AZ describes this as happening at the same time as the sleep deprivation.)

After a few days, the contractor attempted to once again try his untested theory and he started to re-implementing

the harsh techniques. He moved this time further along the force continuum, introducing loud noise and then temperature manipulation.

Throughout this time, my fellow FBI agent and I, along with a top CIA interrogator who was working with us, protested, but we were overruled. I should also note that another colleague, an operational psychologist for the CIA, had left the location because he objected to what was being done.

Late April: Soufan and his partner resume control of the interrogation. (AZ describes a period of mixed interrogation where clothes were given back as a reward.)

Again, however, the technique wasn't working and Abu Zubaydah wasn't revealing any information, so we were once again brought back in to interrogate him. We found it harder to reengage him this time, because of how the techniques had affected him, but eventually, we succeeded, and he re-engaged again.

May 2, 2002: The US "un-signs" the International Criminal Court treaty.

May 8, 2002: Jose Padilla taken into custody based on material warrant signed by Michael Mukasey and based on testimony from Abu Zubaydah.

Mid-May 2002: CIA OGC lawyers meet with Ashcroft, Condi, Hadley, Bellinger, and Gonzales to discuss alternative interrogation methods, including waterboarding.

Mid-May 2002: CTC requests the ability to use the **small box confinement**. (AZ says the confinement boxes were used two and a half to three months after he was captured, so around Mid-May to June.)

Once again the contractor insisted on stepping up the notches of his experiment, and this time he requested the authorization to place Abu Zubaydah in a confinement box, as the next stage in the force continuum. While everything I saw to this point were nowhere near the severity later listed in the memos, the evolution of the contractor's theory, along with what I had seen till then, struck me as "borderline torture."

As the Department of Justice IG report released last year states, I protested to my superiors in the FBI and refused to be a part of what was happening. The Director of the FBI, Robert Mueller, a man I deeply respect, agreed passing the message that "we don't do that," and I was pulled out.

Mid-May 2002: Soufan leaves Thailand.

Mid to late May 2002: Small box confinement and walling used, per AZ.

Early June: Soufan's partner leaves Thailand.

July 10, 2002: Date of first interrogation report from Abu Zubaydah cited in 9/11 Report.

July 13, 2002: CIA OGC (Rizzo?) meets with Bellinger, Yoo, Chertoff, Daniel Levin, and Gonzales for overview of interrogation plan.

July 17, 2002: Tenet met with Condi, who advised CIA could proceed with torture, subject to a determination of legality by OLC.

July?: Waterboarding and other combined techniques.

Late July 2002: Bybee discusses SERE with Yoo and Ashcroft.

July 24, 2002: Bybee advised CIA that Ashcroft concluded proposed techniques were legal.

July 26, 2002: Bybee tells CIA waterboarding is legal. CIA begins to waterboard Abu Zubaydah.

August 1, 2002: "Bybee Memo" (written by John Yoo) describes torture as that which is equivalent to :the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death."