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**NAVAL  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS INTO U.S. MILITARY  
ABUSES AT THE MY LAI MASSACRE AND ABU  
GHRAIB PRISON SCANDAL**

by

Lisa I. Carroll

June 2015

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Erik Dahl  
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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS INTO U.S. MILITARY ABUSES AT THE MY  
LAI MASSACRE AND ABU GHRAIB PRISON SCANDAL**

Lisa I. Carroll  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(COMBATING TERRORISM: POLICY AND STRATEGY)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Incidents of abuse by U.S. service members, even if few and far between, have nearly irreversible impacts on the United States, including straining foreign relations, decreasing public support of U.S. policy, and negating counterterrorism efforts. A lot of research exists to discover why individuals participate in abuse, but little is known why individuals report abuse. This thesis looks at various models and their subcomponent elements from four bodies of literature: psychology; terrorist engagement; terrorist disengagement, deradicalization, and non-radicalization; and gang involvement, to better understand the disparate behavior between abusers and whistleblowers. After extracting applicable elements, a preliminary model to explain the difference between abusers and whistleblowers is formed, and then tested comparatively against two case studies: the My Lai massacre, and the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. The preliminary model is then discarded of elements that failed to explain the differences in behavior, leaving a final model. Measures to deter abuse and encourage reporting are then derived from this final model, leaving the reader with an enhanced understanding of not just why individuals participate in abuse, but why, under relatively similar conditions, others actively stop or report the abuse.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2LT	Second Lieutenant
AOR	area of operation
CAPT	Captain
CID	Criminal Investigation Division
COL	Colonel
CPL	Corporal
DOD	Department of Defense
HUMINT	human intelligence
LCOL	Lieutenant Colonel
LT	Lieutenant
MP	military police
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCOIC	noncommissioned officer in charge
NCR&R	non-chargeable rest and recuperation
PFC	Private First Class
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SGT	Sergeant
SPC	Specialist
SSG	Staff Sergeant



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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Two of the most controversial conflicts involving the United States were the Vietnam War (1955–1975) and the War in Iraq (2003–2011). Among other controversies, incidents of inhumane violence committed by U.S. military personnel came to public attention, specifically the My Lai massacre<sup>1</sup> and the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.<sup>2</sup> Many blamed the incidents on “a few bad apples,” but upon further investigation, the offenders were seemingly ordinary Americans showing no signs of potential to commit evil.

Since the My Lai massacre, many scholars and organizations—including the Department of Defense—have studied how to prevent this kind of abuse. The Office of Naval Research, for example, sponsored the famous Stanford Prison Experiment, which raised awareness about the possibility of abuse in institutional and organizational settings.<sup>3</sup> Still, decades later, a whistleblower revealed similar abuses by the U.S. military at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Were the abuses at Abu Ghraib a failure to learn from the consequences of My Lai, or are there other elements yet to be discovered that can aid in the prevention and interruption of illegal and immoral abuse by U.S. military members? Perhaps a more important question relating to My Lai and Abu Ghraib is why was it that some military personnel committed atrocities, others did nothing, and a small handful objected? This thesis asks the questions, why do some individuals in the U.S. military engage in inhumane violence, while others stand by or actively object under the same conditions? More specifically, how can we identify

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<sup>1</sup> On March 16, 1968, a group of U.S. Army soldiers, while on patrol in the Vietnamese village of My Lai, murdered several hundred non-combatants including women, children, and old men. More details of the incident are included in later chapters.

<sup>2</sup> In late 2003, the media reported ongoing abuse at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. Pictures were revealed of U.S. Army soldiers, both men and women, engaging in inhumane treatment of detainees, including forced nudity, sexual abuse, and other forms of unauthorized torture. More details of the incident are included in later chapters.

<sup>3</sup> “Stanford Prison Experiment, Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed 2 October, 2014, <http://www.prisonexp.org/faq.htm>.

conditions conducive to abuse and encourage individuals to prevent or stop abuse at its earliest stages?

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The significance of these research questions is twofold. First, it is vitally important for the U.S. military to understand why uniformed personnel continue to occasionally engage in illegal and immoral actions such as those conducted at My Lai and Abu Ghraib. As a world hegemon, the United States must do everything possible to ensure that its military operates according to the rule of law and the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. But there is a second reason why this research is important, and why it is critical to understand these issues today: incidents like the My Lai massacre and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib reduce American credibility and support around the world, which deteriorates our ability to combat terrorism and preserve American security both at home and abroad.

Maintaining credibility as a state is imperative in counterterrorism operations. When U.S. military abuse occurs, there is an unaffordable loss in counterterrorism effectiveness, both at the domestic and the international level.<sup>4</sup> At the domestic level, targeting non-combatants and inhumanely treating the enemy may anger human rights advocates and society in general as it severely violates American societal values. The repercussions of declining domestic support of foreign affairs can include budget cuts, more stringent legal restrictions, and less resources allocated to government counterterrorism operations. Likewise at the international level, abuse such as that at My Lai and Abu Ghraib is certainly not condoned by international human rights groups or partner and ally nations. Relationships between allies become strained and the critical support of locals where terrorist organizations operate diminishes. Additionally, the damage caused to the “enemy” is far from a victory. Inhumane abuse only incites more hatred from terrorist groups and further fuels their cause to continue violence against the United States.

---

<sup>4</sup> Richard English, *Terrorism: How to Respond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 140.

So why do American military members carry out such atrocities? Violent, indiscriminate behavior of this type is unlawful and against the Uniform Code of Military Justice of the United States, yet U.S. Armed Forces personnel still occasionally and deliberately engage and participate in it. What is worse is that most perpetrators subconsciously justify their actions, actions they might otherwise condone from an outside perspective. It is probable that they deployed without the intention to commit abuse. For example, Ronald Ridenhour, who nearly singlehandedly started the investigations into My Lai by writing numerous letters to Congress, said:

Most of them had never been away from home before they went into the service. And they end up in Vietnam, going there many of them because they thought they were going to do something courageous on behalf of their country and they thought they were going to do something which they thought was in the American ideal- whatever that meant. But it didn't mean slaughtering whole villages of women and children, innocent people. Or even people who weren't innocent. It didn't involve that... One of my friends when he told me about it said 'you know, it was this Nazi kind of thing.' And that's exactly right. It was this Nazi kind of thing. We didn't go there to be Nazis. At least none of the people I knew went there to be Nazis. I didn't go there to be a Nazi.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly a discrepancy existed between expected behavior and executed behavior, furthermore disproving the “bad apple” explanation that the offenders are inherently evil people. Understanding situational and psychological elements<sup>6</sup> that led to the shocking incidents of My Lai and Abu Ghraib may assist in the prevention of future incidents and increase a state's success in counterterrorism campaigns.

On the other hand, researching why not everyone engages in the same behavior under the same situation can shed light on why abuse occurs and ways to prevent it. Although evidence is almost always present to indicate elements that could have reasonably prevented the abuse, incidents like My Lai and Abu Ghraib, even if infrequent, continue to happen around the world. A more recent example occurred in

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Bilton and Kevin Sim, *Four Hours in My Lai* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 371.

<sup>6</sup> The term “element” is used as a component of a larger model. This term may be referred to as something different, depending on the author. For example, Stanley Milgram refers to the components of his model as “conditions,” John Horgan calls them “factors,” Philip Zimbardo calls them “situational forces” or “social dynamics,” etc.

early 2010 when a small group of U.S. Army troops, dubbed “the Kill Team,” staged fake attacks so they could murder unarmed Afghan civilians.<sup>7</sup> The first murder was of a young boy, around 15 years old: afterwards, the soldiers took trophy pictures with the boy’s body and cut off his pinky finger for a keepsake.<sup>8</sup>

## **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is worth knowing up front that a plethora of literature exists that analyzes and explains how situations like My Lai and Abu Ghraib occur; however, in examining the models and specific elements of why individuals behave abusively, we find there is a lack of literature on why other individuals are not abusive, and why some actively object to abuse. Regardless of this discrepancy, various bodies of literature exist that may offer useful insight to answering the research questions of this thesis.

### **1. Psychology**

The first body of literature that sheds light on the thesis questions is work within the fields of psychology, specifically research involving the psychology of obedience and group psychology. After the horrible truth of the Holocaust came to light in the world, people struggled to understand how humans could do such terrible things, even though violence has plagued human history. Psychology has much to offer in understanding isolated incidents of abuse. The impacts of a group setting often have a profound impact on individual emotion and behavior. Several trademark experiments, especially the Stanford Prison Experiment and Stanley Milgram’s Shock Experiment, revealed astonishing aspects of individual behavior in social hierarchies.

Although psychology is appropriate in explaining why seemingly ordinary and moral people engage in immoral and violent behavior, there is a relative lack of explanation of why not everyone is subject to evil behavior when in the same setting.

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Boal, “The Kill Team: How U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan Murdered Innocent Civilians,” *Rolling Stone*, March 27, 2011, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-kill-team-20110327?page=3>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore, this body of literature provides even less of an explanation for the difference in participators and bystanders from those that actively object. The question of “why are some, but not all subject to blind obedience?” gets little attention. Philip Zimbardo, director of the Stanford Prison Experiment, appears to offer the only research focusing on the majority of people that did not commit abuses. He claims that for every situation where people can become perpetrators of evil, they can also become heroes because it is a choice.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of outside elements, situations conducive to abuse always boil down to an individual decision. Zimbardo’s advice is instead of teaching our children to not get involved and mind their own business, teach them to have a heroic imagination where they grow up waiting to someday be in a situation where they have the opportunity to stop abuse.<sup>10</sup> Although this advice is plausible, it requires a long-term dedication to altering an entire society and changing the culture. Perhaps this change is possible, but it does not offer a solution in the near future, nor does it adequately explain how the whistleblowers of Abu Ghraib and My Lai differ from the bystanders and abusers.

## 2. Terrorist Engagement

A second body of literature that applies to this thesis is the work in terrorism studies that seeks to understand why people join terrorist groups and engage in terrorism, including “lone wolf” terrorism.<sup>11</sup> Although there may be some overlap, this body of literature varies from the first in that it also considers other elements such as economics, politics, and more.<sup>12</sup> Even if abuse by U.S. military personnel is not typically motivated by politics, economics, etc., the end result is violence, like terrorism. Understanding why individuals feel the need to resort to violence and engage in terrorism may help in

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<sup>9</sup>Philip Zimbardo, “The Psychology of Evil,” Technology, Entertainment, and Design video, 23:10, February, 2008, [http://www.ted.com/talks/philip\\_zimbardo\\_on\\_the\\_psychology\\_of\\_evil?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil?language=en).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Lone wolf terrorism is a term referring to perpetrators of terrorism not affiliated with a particular terrorist organization. Lone wolf terrorists generally act as individuals or within very small groups.

<sup>12</sup> Several examples include Richard English’s book *Terrorism: How to Respond* and Rex Hudson’s Congressional Research Service report *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?*



understanding why U.S. military personnel occasionally resort to violence other than in a traditional combat role. Part of this body of literature includes the Rational Choice Theory (RCT). RCT originally developed to explain that committing crime is a result of the criminal's thought process and what he or she believed to be a rational action.<sup>13</sup> The RCT extends to terrorism. People resort to terrorism because, in their minds, it is the most rational and practical thing.<sup>14</sup> Why else would mentally stable humans, as rational animals, act illogically? RCT extrapolates to isolated acts of military abuse as well. It is natural for humans to justify their actions, whether it was LT Calley who gave orders to kill non-combatants at My Lai, the soldiers who felt they should follow those orders, or even the whistleblowers. Still, this body of literature does not in itself address why most people do not become terrorists, let alone answer the research questions of this thesis.

### **3. Terrorist Deradicalization, Disengagement, and Non-radicalization**

Although deradicalization, disengagement,<sup>15</sup> and non-radicalization<sup>16</sup> are slightly different concepts, they are grouped together as one theoretical background for the sake of simplification. At first glance, deradicalization might not appear to apply to the Abu Ghraib and My Lai case studies because the U.S. Armed Forces are not generally categorized as a radical group; however, one could argue, as LCOL Robert Rielly does in his article "The Inclination for War Crimes," that the beliefs and values of the individuals indeed changed,<sup>17</sup> possibly classifying the individuals as radicals. For instance, if the soldiers that participated in the My Lai Massacre were asked, prior to their arrival in Vietnam, their thoughts on killing non-combatant women and children, including babies,

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<sup>13</sup> Ronald V. Clarke and Derek B. Cornish, "Modeling Offenders' Decisions: A Framework for Research and Policy," *Crime and Justice* 6 (1985): 147.

<sup>14</sup> John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 81.

<sup>15</sup> Disengagement is changing behavior by refraining from violence and withdrawing from the organization affiliated with that violence (Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 81). Deradicalization is the process of moderating one's belief (Audrey Kurth Cronan, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) 9–13.)

<sup>16</sup> Non-radicalization is defined as "those who have been exposed to radical ideologies and even flirted with radical mindsets, but ultimately have rejected violence" according to R. Kim Cragin's article "Resisting Violent Extremism."

<sup>17</sup> Robert Rielly, "The Inclination for War Crimes," *Military Review: The Professional Journal of the U.S. Army* LXXXIX, no. 3 (May-June 2003): 19.

they would most likely believe these actions immoral. Yet for whatever self-justifying reasons, the soldiers ended up behaving in ways they never would have condoned. It is this reason that deradicalization among terrorists may provide some useful insight in examining if and why the beliefs and morals of the participants of Abu Ghraib and My Lai changed, even though it does not explicitly address why people do not radicalize.

As for much of the remaining research regarding individual and group disengagement, there is useful material that will pertain to the case studies of Abu Ghraib and My Lai. These incidents did, after all, come to an end. One of the leading authors of terrorist disengagement is John Horgan who has written several works on this subject. A lot of his research discusses counterterrorism campaigns and their rate of success however, his most useful model that pertains to this thesis discusses individual disengagement, such as dissatisfaction with a group, which could apply to generic group situations and can certainly apply to isolated acts of abuse.<sup>18</sup> As with every body of literature thus far, this particular sub-category falls short of answering the research questions because it focuses on why people disengage once they are already engaged, not on the individuals that never engage in the first place.

Lastly, non-radicalization seems to be a relatively new term coined by Kim Cragin. Cragin's article "Resisting Violent Extremism: A Conceptual Model for Non-Radicalization" appears to be the only piece of literature that specifically addresses why not all people radicalize. Although specifically relating to terrorism, this particular work is possibly the closest to answering the thesis questions. Furthermore, Cragin's elements of non-radicalization are not simply the absence of radicalization elements. They are their own set of elements which, if inversed, would not necessarily result in radicalization.<sup>19</sup> Cragin's work, specifically her elements of non-radicalization will be tested against the My Lai and Abu Ghraib case studies later in this thesis.

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<sup>18</sup> Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan, ed., *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 17–29.

<sup>19</sup> R. Kim Cragin, "Resisting Violent Extremism: A Conceptual Model for Non-Radicalization," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 2 (2014): 338, doi:10.1080/09546553.2012.714820.

#### 4. Gangs

A fourth body of literature to consider is gang involvement. Similar to terrorist engagement, research exists regarding the circumstances of why individuals join gangs, taking into account economics, family dynamics, etc. For example, the article “Predictors of Gang Involvement: A Longitudinal Analysis of Data from the Mobile Youth Survey” determined that family cohesiveness typically reduces gang involvement.<sup>20</sup> This finding could be analogous to service members’ separation from family when they are deployed. Major incidents such as My Lai and Abu Ghraib, after all, occurred away from U.S. soil. Additionally, nearly half of American gang members are under the age of eighteen.<sup>21</sup> It may be of interest to look for correlation in age of leaders and age of members among gangs in relation to the age of the participators and “ring leaders” of Abu Ghraib and My Lai, as well as other elements. Still, literature regarding gang involvement, like the other bodies of literature, do not address why some U.S. military personnel participate in abuse, why some watch as bystanders, and why few actively object and stop the abuse.

#### 5. Primary Sources and Official Reports

Lastly, there is a collection of primary sources and other literature that provides a detailed account of Abu Ghraib and My Lai.<sup>22</sup> Although literature on these two case studies does not technically constitute its own body of literature, it is useful to examine the models formed from official investigations that explain why these incidents occurred. It is also beneficial to study first-hand accounts. In both case studies, first-hand accounts of the incidents are available in perspective of both offenders and objectors. Analyzing what each person’s perception is necessary in understanding the individual, situational, and institutional elements that led to the tragic outcomes. This understanding provides a

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<sup>20</sup> Jeremiah Jagers and others, “Predictors of Gang Involvement: A Longitudinal Analysis of Data From the Mobile Youth Survey,” *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* 4, no. 3 (2013): 277.

<sup>21</sup> National Youth Gang Survey Analysis, National Gang Center, accessed January 11, 2015, <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/survey-analysis/demographics>.

<sup>22</sup> Some examples include interviews with the participators of Abu Ghraib and My Lai, such as Lynndie England and William Calley, respectively. Other sources provide the findings of the investigative committees and reports, such as the “Fay Report” in *The Torture Papers*.

gateway for identifying situations conducive to abuse as well as potential preventative measures through understanding of why U.S. service members engage and refuse to engage. A couple of relevant first-hand accounts, for example, are interviews with some of the participators of My Lai. One can see what each person's predominate "excuse" was for killing innocent non-combatants. One man said Second Lieutenant (2LT) Calley threatened to kill him if he did not kill the My Lai villagers. Another clearly dehumanized the victims by explaining that "the Vietnamese are funny people...you can't understand what they are thinking. They don't care if they live or die."<sup>23</sup> Individual first-hand accounts of Abu Ghraib also reveal a lot about the situation, such as in Aiden Delgado's book, *Sutras of Abu Ghraib* where the author describes his experiences and how he saw boredom turn into loneliness and depression.<sup>24</sup> He also reveals the escalation of violence that took place, such as shooting stray dogs for sport.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned above, in addition to first-hand accounts are official reports and analysis specifically relating to My Lai and Abu Ghraib. The Peers Inquiry, for example, generates a handful of elements that LCOL Robert Rielly wrote of as useful measures of assessment in determining environments conducive to abuse, in which preemptive measures can be implemented. He fails, however, to describe what these preemptive measures should be. Additionally, Rielly's article, "The Inclination for War Crimes," summarizes Lieutenant General (LTG) Peers' findings and concludes that leaders should evaluate if their subordinates can question ambiguous or unclear orders and be aware that values can change in combat.<sup>26</sup> The problem with this conclusion is that not all abuses generate from unlawful orders. Furthermore, values do not change that easily. Most, if not all actions, even abusive ones, are self-justified in order to fit one's values. It is unlikely, for example, that any of the abusers of My Lai or Abu Ghraib changed their values to believe in inhumane violence and murder. Rather, their actions were self-

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<sup>23</sup>"Interviews With My Lai Veterans 002," YouTube video, 9:51, posted by "Ryan Plant," December 1, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDAd8i7dAWs>.

<sup>24</sup> Aiden Delgado, *Sutras of Abu Ghraib: Notes From a Conscientious Objector in Iraq* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 34–35.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Rielly, "Inclination for War Crimes," 21.

justified, such as believing a detainee at Abu Ghraib was a terrorist with key information, or that an old man killed in My Lai supported the Viet Cong and posed a threat if left alive. Additionally, Reilly's article simply fails to explain why some individuals did not participate in My Lai, or why CWO Thompson stopped the murders. Answering this question was likely absent from Reilly's intent; however, the point is that much of the analysis about My Lai and Abu Ghraib regards why and how the events happened, but does not answer why not everyone participated. The specific elements from the Peers Inquiry that Reilly discusses will be analyzed in later chapters.

Like the Peers Inquiry, which does not answer the research questions of this thesis, the reports from Abu Ghraib fail to provide answers as well. The report that most closely answers this question is the Schlesinger Report, specifically Appendix G, or "psychological stresses." This appendix heavily relies on the theoretical background of general psychology to explain the abuses at Abu Ghraib, including a synopsis of Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment. The closest the appendix comes to acknowledging the disparate behavior between participants and abusers is the attribution to "elements that can assist in predicting human aggression," specifically, personality traits, which the appendix describes as "certain traits among the totality of an individual's behavioral and emotional make-up predispose to be more aggressive than other individuals."<sup>27</sup> The only other elements in the report that relate to a difference in individual behavior are beliefs, attitudes, and values. These, however, are not substantial enough to answer the research questions. Simply attributing violence to the difference in individual disposition supports the "bad apple" notion that some people are inherently more evil than others. Perhaps this is true, but it proves a weak argument when the abusers are seemingly "good" people with religious roots, patriotic values, and positive attitudes.

With a synopsis of the various bodies of literature, one can see how the research questions of this thesis go unanswered; however, this is not to say each body of literature does not have anything to contribute. Several models in each body of literature are

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<sup>27</sup> "The Schlesinger Report," in *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib*, ed. Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 971.

discussed even further when specific elements are extracted for a comparative analysis against the Abu Ghraib and My Lai case studies.

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

With the various bodies of literature relating to this thesis, it seems as though a hybrid of elements from various models will assist in understanding why some U.S. military personnel participate in abuse while some individuals, at the opposite end of the spectrum, object. I expect to find that the elements explaining the difference in behavior derive from primarily the individual and his or her background, but also from the institution and policies of the institution as well. In these cases, the institution is the military.

For each case study, there is value in discovering the elements that led to the difference in behavior of the participators and objectors. I expect that the elements will be similar if not the same between each case. Why did William Calley order his subordinates to kill noncombatants in My Lai while Hugh Thompson demanded that they stop? Why did so many U.S. Soldiers at Abu Ghraib participate in prisoner abuse but only a few did something to stop it? I believe a hybrid of elements such as upbringing, roles within the institution, levels of isolation, age, oversight, and more will all prove influential in the variation of behavior. If the reasons for the disparate behaviors are identified, then the ability to prevent isolated acts of abuse by U.S. military personnel is enhanced.

#### **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis analyzes two case studies: the My Lai Massacre and Abu Ghraib prison scandal. From each body of literature, one or two prominent models are broken down into elements. Elements that are predicted to be applicable are aggregated into a table and applied to each case study with the intention of enhancing understanding of why some U.S. service members participate in abuse, why some observe, and why some object.

First and foremost, the case studies are limited to incidents involving abuse by U.S. military personnel. These incidents were unforeseen and relatively isolated events, meaning that “normal and good” people ended up in these situations and served as either an authority figure giving directions, a participator, a bystander, or an objector to abuse. Each case will include a comparison of individuals in these roles in an attempt to identify causal differences in behavior.

Additionally, there is intent to focus on case studies where the offenders, prior to entering the environment that relatively quickly developed into one of abuse, most likely had no foresight of themselves committing illegal and inhumane violence. One could reasonably question why Nazi Germany is not a case study. The reason for omission is because it was the entire state under the Nazi regime that conducted inhumane abuse and violence. One might find it doubtful that the U.S. would ever become something similar to Nazi Germany; however, isolated incidents such as My Lai and Abu Ghraib, even if few and far between, still have huge impacts and are worth analyzing rather than applying the “few bad apples” explanation.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Following the introduction of this thesis, Chapter II will provide background information on both the My Lai Massacre and the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Chapter III includes a description of select models from each body of literature including the models’ subcomponents, or elements. Chapter IV has two stages of analysis per element. The first stage is to determine which elements from which models are applicable to the case studies. The second stage is testing the elements that appear applicable against the case studies to determine if they can provide answers into why some U.S. service members participate in abuse while others actively object. Elements that are deemed unfit or inapplicable will have brief mention only to make the reader aware of their existence. Chapter V concludes the analysis from Chapter IV in the form of a model leaving the reader with an enhanced, even if slightly, insight and understand into why not all U.S. service members participate in abuse when under the same conditions, and why some actively stop the abuse. Chapter V will also offer potential preventative measures that

utilize the formulated model by identifying elements conducive to whistleblowing and deterrent of abuse.



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## II. THE CASE STUDIES

Prior to searching for and building an appropriate model to explain why some U.S. service members participate in abuse while others actively object, it is imperative to have a solid understanding of the case studies that are used to test various models. The details in this chapter will provide the reader with an adequate background of the complexity of the situation leading up to abuse, as well as the key participants in the case studies including both the abusers and whistleblowers. Without this background, one cannot fully understand the case studies and how they can help answer the research questions of this thesis.

### A. MY LAI

After WWII came to an end, the United States immediately jumped into a war of another kind: the Cold War. Although an ally with the United States throughout WWII, the Soviet Union quickly grew as a threat along with its aggressive spread of communism. The U.S. government adopted a foreign policy based on the “domino theory,” which supported that communism would spread via a chain reaction amongst neighboring states of communist nations.<sup>28</sup>

#### 1. Background: The Vietnam War and an Elusive Enemy

The domino theory along with the Northern Vietnamese proclamation of independence from France, the U.S. feared that the total loss of Vietnam to communism would serve as the gateway for communism to spread to Southeast Asia and Indochina.<sup>29</sup> The U.S. believed that action was critical if communism were to be contained, so beginning in 1962, U.S. advisors began to assist the South Vietnamese government in fighting the communist Viet Cong (VC).<sup>30</sup> By 1965, President Johnson (1963-1969)

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<sup>28</sup> “Domino Theory.” Cold-War. Accessed June 8, 2015. <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/domino-theory>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 25.

ordered for combat troops to deploy.<sup>31</sup> After hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops and billions of dollars were poured into the conflict, Americans were abruptly shocked to learn that victory was not so easy. Many questioned how one of the most powerful and advanced militaries could have such difficulty defeating a primitive group of people.<sup>32</sup> The VC were not a separate military entity like U.S. forces; rather, they were an extension of the villages they grew up in. In most cases, the entire village population knew of the complex system of underground tunnels and booby traps used to evade and fight Americans, respectively. The VC blended in with village life, severely blurring the line of distinction between combatants and non-combatants.<sup>33</sup> Those directly involved quickly realized that an end was far away and creating a policy to successfully defeat the VC would prove difficult and controversial.

## **2. Task Force Barker**

Quang Ngai, a province in northern South Vietnam, has a historical background of resistance to outside influence in which the surrounding areas were subject to.<sup>34</sup> This province was a known stronghold for the VC and an American victory there would provide a strategic advantage in the war against communism. Upon its arrival in December of 1967, the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade was assigned operational control of the Southeast sector of Quang Ngai.<sup>35</sup> Within its operational control, the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade divided its forces to further delegate control into areas of operation (AOR). Due to a lack of full manning, Colonel Oran Henderson, 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade Commander created an ad hoc task force under Lieutenant Colonel Frank Barker to control the Eastern subsector of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade area of operation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 25.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>34</sup> W.R. Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 37.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 39.

After several engagements between Task Force Barker (TFB) and the VC, the VC seemed to evade to the south of TFB's AOR. Permission was requested and granted for TFB to expand their operations south of their AOR, which was controlled by a South Vietnamese Division, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army of Vietnam Division (ARVN); here lay the hamlet of My Lai.<sup>37</sup> In mid-February of 1968, TFB conducted a 3-day operation into My Lai, resulting in the death of eighty VC and 3 Americans.<sup>38</sup> In late February 1968, another operation was launched in My Lai, ending with similar results: seventy-five VC and 3 Americans dead.<sup>39</sup> TFB would receive orders for one final assault into My Lai.

### **3. The Orders**

Ambiguous orders began from COL Henderson, encouraging LCOL Barker and his commanders to be aggressive and close rapidly on the enemy.<sup>40</sup> Charlie Company was to carry out the main assault prior to artillery preparation while Alpha Company provided a blockade to the North and Bravo Company would sweep through afterwards and later join with Charlie Company.<sup>41</sup> Intelligence indicated that the entire population in My Lai was VC or at least VC sympathizers.<sup>42</sup> At the time of the next day's operation, the villagers would be at Quang Ngai City at the markets, but the remaining VC would still out-number Charlie Company and provide a strong enemy resistance according to intelligence.<sup>43</sup> After the three companies of TFB received their orders, each broke off for further briefing. Captain Earnest Medina, Charlie Company commander gathered the entire company and described the search-and-destroy mission that would take place the following morning. First and second platoons would move through My Lai taking down the VC and destroying livestock, crops, and houses. Third platoon would

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<sup>37</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

follow through to “mop up.”<sup>44</sup> Because all civilians were expected to be at the markets, no instructions were given on how to deal with civilians if they were encountered. Any prisoners and VC suspects were to be turned over to the respective platoon commander for screening.<sup>45</sup> CAPT Medina’s brief concluded with a solemn reminder of the Charlie Company men who had been lost to the enemy in recent days; he ensured that tomorrow would be their chance to get revenge.<sup>46</sup>

#### **4. The Massacre**

Indiscriminate killing began first thing on the morning of March 16<sup>th</sup> when U.S. artillery troops blindly fired a barrage of artillery toward My Lai. The initial purpose was to clear a landing zone for the helicopters and insertion of Charlie Company; however, the careless demeanor resulted in artillery landing in the Son My village.<sup>47</sup> When Charlie Company of TFB landed they found a lack of enemy fire and a quiet land scarce of its frightened inhabitants; a scene quite contradictory to what they were expecting base on the previous day’s brief. The few Vietnamese that were around were immediately mowed down with machine gun fire, including a farmer who waved his arms in a non-threatening manner to show he was unarmed.<sup>48</sup> After an uneventful landing, CAPT Medina radioed a false report that 15 VC were killed.<sup>49</sup> The next task for Charlie Company was to spend the remainder of the morning destroying the Son My village in My Lai.<sup>50</sup>

As first and second platoons split into squads, which split into smaller groups, the soldiers began to destroy the village in an unorganized manner. What started as a calm and controlled environment quickly spiraled out of control. Patrolling for the enemy escalated to shooting anything and everything that moved, miraculously excluding each

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<sup>44</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 170.

<sup>45</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 110.

<sup>46</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 170.

<sup>47</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 105.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 108–109.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

other. Some soldiers later described how baffled they were that no friendly fire occurred amongst the chaotic killing spree.<sup>51</sup>

Contrary to intelligence, a large number of villagers were still present in My Lai. As some soldiers gathered up groups of women, old men, and children of all ages as prisoners, other soldiers shot them down with machine guns. Women were violently raped and many villagers were scalped, had their tongues cut out, or were inhumanely mutilated in other ways. Prior to burning down houses, some soldiers would attempt to remove any inhabitants while others would throw a grenade in regardless of the occupants. Likewise, a few soldiers tended to the wounded noncombatants while others followed behind shooting the wounded dead and wasting any previous first aid attempts.<sup>52</sup>

The actions of many soldiers in My Lai clearly indicated the free-for-all, unstructured nature of the operation. Ultimately, however, the behavior of the men of Charlie Company boiled down to individual choices and actions. Some soldiers opted not to kill anyone, while others violently tortured and killed unarmed noncombatants of all ages and genders. For some, the choice to not participate in the slaughter came at a price: during the long morning operation, a group of village men, women, and children were rounded up into an area by two soldiers from first platoon. Just prior to this, first platoon commander, Lieutenant William Calley, received a radio query from CAPT Medina, who was staying back with third platoon, waiting to conduct a final sweep after first and second platoons finished the initial offensive. CAPT Medina wanted to know what was taking so long. 2LT Calley, nervous and known for his weakness as a leader, reported that first platoon ran into a group of civilians. CAPT Medina ordered 2LT Calley to get rid of them, and in turn, 2LT Calley ordered the two men to “take care of them.”<sup>53</sup> The two soldiers interpreted this order to mean watch over the group, so as they stood there guarding, 2LT Calley, in an agitated manner, clarified he wanted the group of villagers killed. After one soldier initially refused, 2LT Calley, stressed and angry, aggressively

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<sup>51</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 98.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

ordered the soldier to shoot when he gives the command to fire. 2LT Calley and the two soldiers spent multiple magazines each, killing the group of villagers in a matter seconds.<sup>54</sup> Shortly later, 2LT Calley stumbled across another group of villagers gathered up by two other soldiers, who were keeping watch over the group and playing with the children. 2LT Calley ordered the two soldiers to kill them all. When one of the soldiers, Robert Maples, refused, LT Calley turned his rifle on Maples. After a few of the other soldiers came to Maples's defense by blocking him from 2LT Calley, 2LT Calley backed off and commenced killing the group of villagers with the help of another soldier.<sup>55</sup> 2LT Calley and his platoon continued on. A mere few hours after Charlie Company's arrival in My Lai, hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese men, women, and children were mutilated, tortured, and slaughtered; not one enemy bullet fired; and not one VC killed.

Meanwhile, Chief Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson began his reconnaissance mission tracking down two VC who were apprehended for interrogation.<sup>56</sup> After this initial stop, CWO Thompson continued his reconnaissance mission without seeing any more VC. Through thick smoke, CWO Thompson was able to drop green smoke markers near several wounded villagers. After returning from refueling, he began to question the operations on the ground as he saw that the wounded were now dead, in addition to many water buffalo and other livestock.<sup>57</sup> Dropping elevation for a closer look, CWO Thompson and his 2-man crew saw a wounded woman that he previously marked lay partially in a dike as a U.S. Captain walked up to her, nudged her with his foot, then killed her; CWO Thompson was astounded.<sup>58</sup> CWO Thompson then landed his helicopter, stepped out, and asked one of the ground soldiers what he could do to help the wounded. The soldier replied that the only way to help was to put the wounded out of their misery.<sup>59</sup> Just then, 2LT Calley approached CWO Thompson and CWO Thompson questioned what was going on. 2LT Calley replied that he was in charge of the ground

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<sup>54</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 120.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 138.

troops and what happened was not CWO Thompson's business.<sup>60</sup> Frustrated and upset, CWO Thompson got back into his helicopter and as he took off, witnessed the ground troops killing the remaining villagers in the dike.<sup>61</sup> CWO Thompson then came across a group of villagers, including children, running into a bunker followed by U.S. soldiers who were clearly set on killing them. CWO Thompson landed his helicopter between the ground soldiers and the bunker and ordered his crew to open fire on U.S. troops if they started shooting the villagers. CWO Thompson coaxed the villagers out of the bunker and had the "gunships," Huey helicopters, land and take the villagers to safety. One of CWO Thompson's crew members rescued a young child who lay in a dike clearly in shock. The gunships and CWO Thompson's helicopter took off. After flying the young child to the nearest hospital, CWO Thompson refueled and returned to LZ Dottie where he emotionally reported the atrocities. At this time, CAPT Medina and third platoon began their "mop up" operations through My Lai, continuing to kill surviving villagers and livestock in an inhumane manner. By the time the news of the senseless killing got to LCOL Barker, LCOL Barker ordered an inquiry to CAPT Medina, who requested the mission be changed from search and destroy to search and clear.<sup>62</sup> For the rest of the day, CAPT Medina ensured no more civilians were harmed as third platoon continued to make its way through My Lai. The massacre in My Lai finally ended, and so did any talk of it, that is, until Ron Ridenhour started asking questions.

Ron Ridenhour was a reconnaissance helicopter gunner, just like that of CWO Thompson's crew. Although he was not a member of Charlie Company, he flew a mission over My Lai days after the massacre and witnessed the morbid aftermath.<sup>63</sup> After talking with his friends from Charlie Company, Ron Ridenhour sensed that the tragedy was covered up and began to write letters to Congress upon his eventual return

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>63</sup> John H. Cushman, "Ron Ridenhour, 52, Veteran Who Reported My Lai Massacre," *International New York Times*, May 11, 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/11/us/ronald-ridenhour-52-veteran-who-reported-my-lai-massacre.html>.



home.<sup>64</sup> Finally, the tragic secrets of My Lai began to surface as information and photographs leaked to the media and as the Peers Commission formed to investigate.

## **B. ABU GHRAIB**

Abu Ghraib is another notorious incident of abuse by U.S. service members, causing wounds that the world has yet to heal from. Sadly, this abuse naturally followed in the wake of the largest terrorist attack on the United States: 9/11. A misunderstanding of 9/11 and the chaos that ensued for years to come is to misunderstand Abu Ghraib as well.

### **1. Background: September 11, 2001**

At 8:45 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 appeared as the beginning of a normal bustling day in New York City. At 8:46 a.m., the mundane morning drastically changed as American Airlines Flight 11 flew at high speed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. The next 18 minutes were filled with assumptions and reports of an accidental crash. Once United Airlines Flight 175 flew into the south tower of the World Trade Center, the world knew that the United States was under a full blown terrorist attack. Fighter jets were scrambled from multiple locations and given authority to shoot down passenger aircraft reported as hijacked.<sup>65</sup> Before the United States could muster up adequate air defense, American Airlines Flight 77 flew into the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a Pennsylvania field after a heroic attempt by its passengers to relinquish control from the hijackers.<sup>66</sup> Less than two hours later, both towers of the World Trade Center had completely collapsed ultimately ending the tragedy with a death toll of 2,977 lives.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cushman, "Ronald Ridenhour."

<sup>65</sup> Dana Milbank, "Cheney Authorized Shooting Down Planes," *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A50745-2004Jun17.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Flight 93, National Park Service, last modified May 8, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/flni/historyculture/index.htm>.

<sup>67</sup> "September 11<sup>th</sup> Fast Facts," CNN Library, CNN, last modified March 27, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/07/27/us/september-11-anniversary-fast-facts/>.

Even before the attack on the Pentagon, the Bush Administration had determined that the terrorist attacks were attributable to Al Qaeda,<sup>68</sup> an Islamic fundamental terrorist organization formed in the late 1980s with roots throughout the world, but predominately in Afghanistan.<sup>69</sup> As intelligence began to connect all of the dots in hindsight, fear of more attacks quickly spread around the world.

The pressure for the United States to react and impose sanctions on those involved was nearly immediate. NATO unanimously activated Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty, declaring the attack on the United States as an attack on all NATO members.<sup>70</sup> Most nations seemed to agree with the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, that the attacks were “a declaration of war against the civilized world.”<sup>71</sup> The civilized world was going to war and the United States was expected to be the vanguard of the affair.

## **2. The War on Terror**

On the evening of 9/11 and in the following days, President George W. Bush addressed the attacks on television. Most Americans had never heard of Al Qaeda and questioned why a group of people would inflict unthinkable violence on innocent lives. “Why do they hate us?” became the cliché question. President Bush answered that question, claiming “our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom” was attacked because it was “the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world.”<sup>72</sup> This answer implanted the notion that the only people that would attack innocent and free American lives were inherently evil and irrational beings, which only diminished the ability to effectively understand and create successful counterterrorism policy.

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<sup>68</sup> Jason Burke, *The 9/11 Wars* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 25.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Qaeda, Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/734613/al-Qaeda>.

<sup>70</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 27.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

This new war, a “monumental struggle of good versus evil,” as President Bush declared,<sup>73</sup> needed an official name. Several titles were considered, such as “a War on Radical Islam” and “a War on Islamic Extremism,” but ultimately what stuck was the “Global War on Terror.”<sup>74</sup> This title seemed generic enough for the elusive “evil” that the world was at war with: evil that was comprised of a complex nexus of ill-structured terrorist organizations and the states which, sometimes unofficially, supported them.<sup>75</sup>

Less than a month after 9/11, the first phase of the Global War on Terror began with Operation Enduring Freedom with the intent to defeat Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime of Afghanistan which strongly supported Al-Qaeda.<sup>76</sup> After things were reportedly going well, the United States pressed on to invade Iraq in March of 2003 for ambiguous reasons that would create controversy not only among the American population, but also elsewhere in the world. President Bush explained the reason for U.S. action in Iraq: “American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger.”<sup>77</sup> The reality was that the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that Iraq allegedly possessed was based on faulty intelligence,<sup>78</sup> leaving many to believe that access to oil was the real reason for the invasion.<sup>79</sup> The lack of support for U.S. policy strengthened the hatred of U.S. occupation in the Middle East. Middle Eastern animosity of a U.S. presence in Iraq was at an all-time high, adding to the stress and fervor of the War on Terror.

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<sup>73</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 45.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>77</sup> “March 19: This Day in History,” accessed June 08, 2015, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/war-in-iraq-begins>.

<sup>78</sup> Mark Mazzetti and Schott Shane, “Senate Panel Accuses Bush of Iraq Exaggerations,” *New York Times*, June 5, 2008, [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/05/washington/05cnd-intel.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/05/washington/05cnd-intel.html?_r=0).

<sup>79</sup> Nafeez Ahmed, “Iraq Invasion Was About Oil,” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/mar/20/iraq-war-oil-resources-energy-peak-scarcity-economy>

### 3. The Elusive Enemy and an Undefined Mission

The international community as well as the majority of U.S. citizens supported action against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Iraq was another story. To some, the U.S. invasion of Iraq seemed like a natural progression of the Global War on Terror, which was, after all, a war against evil, according to President Bush. To others, albeit the objectives of the Global War on Terror were generic and vague, invading Iraq because of suspected WMD did not seem appropriate for the agenda of fighting terrorism despite the statement from President Bush that “the terrorist threat to American and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed.”<sup>80</sup>

Upon arrival into Iraq, many U.S. troops did not know anything about the enemy, or even who the enemy was, only that someone had to pay for the atrocity of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, detainees in U.S. run prisons consisted of a mix of suspected terrorists, common criminals, and innocent people that were unfortunate enough to be in the wrong time and place during a dragnet raid.<sup>81</sup> One major issue of indiscriminate detainment is that common criminals and terrorist suspects are under disparate legal categories. Terrorists, in particular, were not state actors and therefore did not fall under Geneva Convention protection according to the Bush Administration.<sup>82</sup> With that said, suspected terrorist detainees were not afforded a POW status, furthermore blurring the line of how they should be treated. For example, a common conception was that some detainees were the “worst of the worst” and needed exposure to harsh interrogation techniques in order to extract information that would save lives.<sup>83</sup> With an unknown enemy, it was easier, and safer, to assume that an individual was a terrorist or at least a supporter and the war, after all, was promised to continue until “every terrorist group of global reach has been

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<sup>80</sup> “Ghosts of Abu Ghraib,” YouTube video, 78:16, directed by Rory Kennedy from the Sundance Film Festival premiered on January 19, 2007, posted by “causelofallah,” April 30, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcG Msfs5Kt4>.

<sup>81</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*.

<sup>82</sup> Statement by the Press Secretary on the Geneva Convention, U.S. Department of State, February 02, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/s/1/38727.htm>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcG Msfs5Kt4>.

found, stopped, and defeated.”<sup>84</sup> The ambiguous classification system of terrorists and definition of torture set the stage for an unstructured, chaotic, inefficient prison system with unorthodox interrogation methods. Some may see this environment as clearly conducive to the abuse that began to occur.

#### **4. The Prison System**

As with all conflicts with foreign entities, intelligence plays a vital role in developing and carrying out successful foreign policy. One major problem with the Global War on Terror was that the United States had underemphasized the threat in the Middle East.<sup>85</sup> With this problem came the issue of lacking HUMINT.<sup>86</sup> HUMINT is one of several means to gather intelligence, so without this capability, the U.S. had to rely heavily on SIGINT,<sup>87</sup> or technological means of collecting intelligence.

With an overreliance on SIGINT along with the complicated network of Al Qaeda and other supporting organizations, specific targets were difficult to identify and locate. This problem paved way for the solution of capturing “suspects” in a dragnet fashion.<sup>88</sup> U.S. troops would raid a village and detain locals on little or no basis of reasonable suspicion.<sup>89</sup> As one would imagine, the dragnet detainment of mass amounts of people created yet another problem of space. The response to this problem was to utilize a complex prison system to hold detainees.

Many prisons were established in Afghanistan and later Iraq as well as CIA secret prisons established in clandestine locations around the world; however, the manpower and resources to effectively run them was lacking.<sup>90</sup> The large influx of detainees

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<sup>84</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 47.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>86</sup> Cristiana Florina Matei, “Romania’s Intelligence Community: From an Instrument of Dictatorship to Serving Democracy,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 20, no. 4 (2007): 629–660.

<sup>87</sup> Anthony Lewis, “Introduction,” in *The Torture Papers: The Road To Abu Ghraib*, ed. Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005), xiii.

<sup>88</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 132.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 91.

contributed to the lack of detainee accountability; mixed with undermanned, stressed, fatigued, young soldiers with a lack of guidance, legal ambiguity and many other factors, the stage was set for prison abuse.

Prisoner abuse was by no means isolated to the Abu Ghraib case. Abuse in U.S. foreign prisons occurred years before in Afghanistan. One of the more published cases was the violent deaths of two Afghan inmates in the U.S. detention facility in Bagram, Afghanistan. Some of the interrogators at Bagram were reported to have redeployed to Iraq and served as interrogators at Abu Ghraib.<sup>91</sup> A couple of years into the Afghanistan campaign, the war in Iraq began without missing a beat, as did U.S.-run prison systems due to the same lack of HUMINT in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup>

## **5. Abu Ghraib**

Abu Ghraib had a reputation of its own long before U.S. occupation, as it was one of the most infamous torture compounds under Saddam Hussein's rule.<sup>93</sup> Located between Falluja, Ramadi, and the Sunni suburbs in Western Bagdad, Abu Ghraib was the most targeted U.S. occupied location in Iraq, frequently under mortar attack from locals.<sup>94</sup> This was one of many factors that put both Iraqi and U.S. occupants on edge. Additionally, the ramp up of U.S. raids to find terrorist suspects resulted in a large population of incoming detainees, further adding to the poor and stressful conditions that both the detainees and MP's lived with on a daily basis.<sup>95</sup>

The afternoon of November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003 marked the beginning of one of the worst abuses committed by U.S. service members. The conflict began with a small riot over food in the Camp Ganci compound where alleged common criminals resided.<sup>96</sup> These

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<sup>91</sup>“In U.S. Report, Brutal Details of 2 Afghan Inmates’ Deaths,” *New York Times*, May 20, 2005, [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/20/international/asia/20abuse.html?pagewanted=2&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/20/international/asia/20abuse.html?pagewanted=2&_r=0).

<sup>92</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 132.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>94</sup> *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcGMsfs5Kt4>.

<sup>95</sup> Burke, *9/11 Wars*, 132.

<sup>96</sup> Christopher Graveline and Michael Clemens, *The Secrets of Abu Ghraib Revealed: American Soldiers on Trial* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2010), 1.

small riots fueled other detainees and before long dozens of detainees were participating, throwing rocks and bricks, one of them hitting a female MP in the face.<sup>97</sup> The MP's were able to quell the riot and identify seven detainees as the instigating group.<sup>98</sup> That evening, the seven alleged instigators were taken to Tier1A, or the "hard-site"<sup>99</sup> – an isolated section of the prison compound where high value intelligence targets were detained and interrogated.

As the seven hooded and frightened detainees were relocated to Tier1A, a group of U.S. soldiers from the 372<sup>nd</sup> MP Company awaited their arrival. Among these soldiers were SSG Ivan Frederick, noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the hard-site; SPC Jeremy Sivits, one of the company's mechanics who offered to help SSG Frederick relocate the detainees; SPC Matthew Wisdom; CPL Charles Graner, the NCOIC of Tier1A and later infamously referred to as the ring leader of Abu Ghraib; SPC Sabrina Harman; SGT Javal Davis; SSG Robert Elliot; SFC Shannon Snider; SPC Megan Ambhul; and SPC Lynndie England, one of the company's file clerks who was not authorized to handle detainees, but had an extramarital relationship with CPL Graner and would frequently visit Tier1A during the night shift.<sup>100</sup> Some soldiers parted ways to carry on other duties while some stayed behind. Nearly immediately the abuse began as the detainees were pushed into a pile on the compound floor. After reviewing the information on the detainees, SPC Harman with CPL Graner's assistance ripped off the bottom half of one detainee's jumpsuit and wrote "I'm a rapeist" on the detainee, humoring the other soldiers at her misspelling.<sup>101</sup>

The abuse continued as SGT Davis and SPC England stomped on the detainees' bare fingers and feet, with 220 pound SGT Davis pausing to jump on the group of detainees. At this point, SPC Wisdom attempted to object questioning what would happen if the detainees were injured. SPC Wisdom's interjection was disregarded. CPL

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

Graner then posed for pictures as if he were about to punch one of the detainees in the head. SPC Harman and SPC England snapped away on their cameras and CPL Graner proceeded to punch a detainee in the temple, knocking him unconscious.<sup>102</sup> SSG Frederick then punched a detainee in the chest, leaving the man struggling to breathe.<sup>103</sup> At this point, SPC Wisdom was quite uncomfortable with the situation and left to report it to his team leader, SGT Robert Jones, who dismissed SPC Wisdom's testimony as a misunderstanding of interrogation procedures that he witnessed.<sup>104</sup>

Meanwhile in Tier1A, physical abuse escalated to sexual abuse as the detained men were stripped naked and forced to pose as though they were riding each other with SPC England jumping in the picture with a thumbs up. The next pose became internationally notorious as the detainees were forced to climb into a pyramid. After the soldiers had enough entertainment taking pictures of that pose, they then made the detainees stand against the wall and masturbate. It just turned midnight, marking SPC England's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Again, SPC England posed with the humiliated men and CPL Graner attributed the scene to SPC England: "Here's your birthday present" he said to her.<sup>105</sup> By this time the only remaining soldiers were CPL Graner, SSGT Frederick, and SPC England. The three soldiers took the abuse one final step further and forced the detainees into positions that appeared as though they were participating in oral sex.<sup>106</sup> SPC Wisdom returned to Tier1A and witnessed this last abusive action of the night before going back to talk to SGT Jones, who later went to Tier1A after the abuse had ended, confronting SSGT Frederick.

Months later, SGT Joseph Darby, another administrative person from the 372<sup>nd</sup> MP Company, asked CPL Graner for any pictures he had, intending to collect scenic photos and send them home. CPL Graner handed him two CD's and after initial assumption that the photos were U.S. troops joking around, SGT Darby was horrified

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<sup>102</sup> "Fay-Jones Report," in *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib*, ed. Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1079.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Graveline, *Secrets of Abu Ghraib*, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 7.



when he realized that the naked, hooded men were not his company-mates, but rather detainees. The seriousness of the abhorrent behavior depicted in the photographs caused SGT Darby to think long and hard about turning the CD's in. Ultimately, SGT Darby decided it was the right thing to do and turned the CD's over to the Army's Criminal Investigative Command (CID). CID quickly realized the gravity of the situation and launched an investigation, which uncovered incidents of abuse other than those on the night of November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003. In October 2003, for example, SPC England was photographed standing in Tier1A with a collar and leash on a detainee lying on the floor<sup>107</sup> – another infamous symbol of Abu Ghraib.

As the horrific images of physical and sexual abuse circulated the Internet and other forms of media, SPC England, CPL Graner, SPC Sabrina Harman, SSG Frederick, and others became icons of a new revolution against America; a revolution that would and will continue to radicalize people, creating a perpetual terrorist threat against the U.S. and its allies.

If one questions whether Abu Ghraib still mobilizes terrorists, then a look at recent news should provide an answer: one of the perpetrators of France's Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 admits to becoming radicalized after watching the Abu Ghraib scandal unfold on television.<sup>108</sup> Abu Ghraib created a long and bumpy road for those in the business of counterterrorism. Understanding why these abuses happened as well as how and why they were stopped is extremely beneficial to counterterrorism efforts as well as American foreign policy and diplomatic relationships with other nations.

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<sup>107</sup> "Fay-Jones Report," *Torture Papers*, 1078.

<sup>108</sup> Jason Burke, "Paris Attack Suspect Chérif Kouachi Had Been Jailed For Terror Offences," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/08/paris-attack-suspect-cherif-kouachi-jailed-terror-offences-2008-charlie-hebdo>.

### **III. A PRELIMINARY MODEL TO EXPLAIN PARTICIPATION IN ABUSE**

With the background of each case study explained, it is now time to develop a preliminary model to explain why some U.S. military personnel participate in atrocities and abuse, while others do not. This preliminary model is built from specific factors, or elements, derived from various models that already exist within several bodies of literature, and the first step in this process is to examine those models that already exist. This chapter reviews models from the field of psychology; from studies of terrorist engagement, and terrorist disengagement; from the study of gangs; and from official studies that examined the My Lai and Abu Ghraib incidents. Following this chapter, Chapter IV will draw out the factors and elements from each of these literatures that appear to be applicable and fundamental to this thesis, and will test those elements against the cases of My Lai and Abu Ghraib, resulting in a model which enhances the readers understanding of why some U.S. military personnel participate in abuse while others actively object.

#### **A. PSYCHOLOGY**

As briefly mentioned in Chapter I, two prominent experiments that led to breakthroughs in the field of psychology are Stanley Milgram's Shock Experiment and Philip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment. Milgram's experiment led to his model depicting the psychological elements of obedience and following orders and Zimbardo's experiment is practically the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal, only decades earlier. Because of the experiments' close correlation to the My Lai and Abu Ghraib case studies, Milgram and Zimbardo's models are the selected models from psychology literature and are broken down into elements to determine each one's applicability to the case studies.

##### **1. Stanley Milgram and the Shock Experiment**

In the 1960s, Stanley Milgram set up an experiment at Yale University regarding obedience and compliance. The experiment was advertised in a local newspaper and

volunteers from all walks of life responded. Per the advertisement, volunteers were to be paid \$4 for one hour of their time.<sup>109</sup> No contract was in place and no additional obligations were established. Volunteers were made to perceive the experiment as one involving memory improvement where the “teacher” would ask questions to a “learner” and if the learner did anything but answer right, the teacher was to administer a shock, each time progressively stronger. The experiment was rigged so the volunteer would always draw the straw to be the teacher.<sup>110</sup> The learner was an actor who would not actually receive shocks.

Milgram and other psychologists underestimated the power of obedience as the experiment revealed a surprisingly high number of participants who “shocked” the learner with shocks that not only appeared to caused the learner severe pain and discomfort, but ultimately resulted in the learner becoming unresponsive. As a result, Milgram authored a book called *Obedience to Authority* and built a model of what he called the “agentic state.” Milgram defines the agentic state as the state a person is in when he seems himself as an agent to carry out another person’s wishes.<sup>111</sup> Milgram’s model is split into three parts, each part with its own elements, totaling to 15 elements. The 3 parts of Milgram’s model are antecedent conditions causing someone to enter the agentic state, properties of the agentic state, and binding factors that keep someone in the agentic state. Since the research questions of this thesis are not concerned with resulting characteristics once an individual is already abusive, the portion of Milgram’s model “properties of the agentic state” are discarded in further analysis.<sup>112</sup> The remaining applicable parts of Milgram’s model, antecedent conditions and binding factors, leaves 10 elements to consider. These elements are: family, institutional setting, rewards,

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<sup>109</sup> Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: The Experiment That Challenged Human Nature* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 138.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Using the assumption that the abusers were in the agentic state at the time of abuse, it is useful to look at the antecedent conditions causing the abusers to enter the agentic state, and the binding factors which kept the individual in the agentic state, both of which may lead to explanations of why some U.S. military personnel abuse, why some did not, and why some actively objected to abuse. However, properties of the agentic state are irrelevant to answering the research questions because we are not interested in the resulting characteristics of abuse.

perception of authority, entry into the authority system, coordination of command with the function of authority, overarching ideology, sequential nature of the action, situational obligations, and anxiety. These 10 elements could offer potential answers to why some U.S. service members participated in abuse at My Lai and Abu Ghraib, and why some actively objected.

The first element of Milgram's model to consider is family. Family, Milgram explains, typically teaches the individual from a very young age the importance of both obedience and morals.<sup>113</sup>

The next element in Milgram's model is institutional setting. Humans are naturally social animals and we instinctively recognize the need to cooperate with a larger society in order to survive and thrive. This sense of being a part of something bigger than one's self is attributed to what Milgram calls the institutional setting. The institutional setting creates a phenomenon of conformity. An institution may be a job and the work place, or, in the case of My Lai and Abu Ghraib, the military.

Milgram's third element is rewards, such as promotions. Rewards not only provide individual motivation but also structural reinforcement of the institutional hierarchy.<sup>114</sup> Although there were no rewards in Milgram's experiment aside from a small cash reward that the participant could keep even if he stopped the experiment, the societal norm or rewards and incentive was still present. Specifically, society has instilled in individuals to "do what the man in charge says"<sup>115</sup> and good things will come; if one does not, then consequences can be expected. In Milgram's experiment, the experimenter was perceived to be the man in charge and some volunteers had satisfaction in pleasing the experimenter by following the experimenter's orders, others felt that there was no reward to gain.

The fourth element in Milgram's paradigm is the perception of authority. As shown in Milgram's experiment, the lab-coated experimenter with a serious demeanor

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<sup>113</sup> Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 138.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

seemed to have a powerful authoritative force over the volunteers,<sup>116</sup> even though there were no legal written or verbal oaths binding the volunteer to such obedience.

Entry into the authority system is Milgram's fifth element in his model, which relates to the previous element of perceiving authority. Along with the perception of a particular authority figure, is the perception of an authoritative system. The authority system is often correlated to physical space, as Milgram points out that his experiment was conducted in a laboratory; a space that was under the realm of the experimenter giving orders.<sup>117</sup> Milgram believed that if the experiment occurred outside of the laboratory, obedience would drastically decrease.<sup>118</sup>

The next element is what Milgram calls "coordination of command with the function of authority," meaning that the orders must appear to have a general link to the organization<sup>119</sup> and, from a military perspective, a link to the mission. Milgram identifies this phenomenon in his experiment when the volunteer considers the experimenter's orders within context of the experiment. Furthermore, this context gives the authority figure more legitimacy: "Because the experimenter issues orders in a context he is presumed to know something about, his power is increased."<sup>120</sup>

The seventh element, and final element of the antecedent conditions portion of Milgram's model, is overarching ideology that plays a vital role in justifying an individual's behavioral compliance. For example, in Milgram's experiment, the overarching ideology of the experiment is in the name of science and the volunteer's participation ultimately benefits this ideology.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> This is known as the Lucifer Effect, i.e., the metamorphosis of God's favorite angel, Lucifer, into Satan, captured by psychologist Zimbardo in his book *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. Zimbardo's reference to the Lucifer Effect, which is analogous to his model of how ordinary people do "evil" things, is depicted in further detail later in the chapter.

<sup>117</sup> Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 140.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>121</sup> Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 142.

The eighth element to examine in Milgram's model, also the first element his binding factors portion is sequential nature. Sequential nature has two facets to it: quantity and quality. Abuse occurs at the end of the cliché "slippery slope." It is much easier for individuals to continue what they are doing rather than to do something new,<sup>122</sup> which closely coincides with the cliché that humans are "creatures of habit." Additionally, humans naturally self-justify their actions. Self-image is diminished if one were to abruptly stop behaving a certain immoral way after behaving that way for so long. Instead, it is easier for one to continue through to the end, which provides easier justification for past behavior.<sup>123</sup> An example is found in Milgram's experiment where volunteers were hesitant to stop shocking the learner because disobeying would morally discredit the volunteer's behavior thus far.<sup>124</sup>

Milgram's ninth element to consider is situational obligations. Milgram emphasizes this element because in his experiment, he found it alarming that the volunteers felt so obligated to apply. Individuals acted as though they were bound by the law to continue with the shocking experiment, particularly when the experimenter said "you are required to continue on with the experiment" after any objection by the volunteer.<sup>125</sup> Milgram inferred that individuals are simply uncomfortable renegeing on their commitment, even if there are no binding conditions or repercussions.<sup>126</sup>

The final element that Milgram discusses is anxiety. Milgram defines anxiety as "vague apprehensions of the unknown," including fear.<sup>127</sup> The reader should note that the element of fear occurs in other models and will be grouped under the element of "anxiety." Milgram attributes anxiety, at least in the case of his shock experiment, to the strain between an individual's values or beliefs and the desire to maintain social order.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 152.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

Anxiety was clearly displayed among Milgram's volunteers as they exhibited trembling, anxious laughter, etc., when they were uncomfortable with the dilemma to stop harming the learner or to follow the orders of the experimenter.<sup>129</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, anxiety will include any and all aspects identified, such as fear of disobeying an authority figure, fear of social repercussions, fear of legal repercussions, etc.

## **2. Philip Zimbardo and the Stanford Prison Experiment**

In 1971, Philip Zimbardo, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, ran an experiment on prison abuse, ironically requested by the Department of Defense, specifically the Office of Naval Research.<sup>130</sup> The experiment involved a group of students, profiled as normal, healthy, middle-aged males, half of which were randomly selected to act as prison guards and the other half selected as prisoners.<sup>131</sup> What was supposed to be a several week long experiment came to an end after just five days; prisoner abuse from the guards escalated so quickly that prisoners began to display real and serious pathological distress.<sup>132</sup> The shocking results of this experiment that seemed to engulf the participants including Zimbardo himself led to ground breaking discoveries situational forces, especially those in a prison setting. Decades later, Zimbardo was asked to serve as an expert witness on behalf of SSGT Ivan Frederick as SSGT Frederick was put to trial at a military court-martial. The ironic parallels between Abu Ghraib and the Stanford Prison Experiment influenced Zimbardo to create a model of situational forces that explain "how good people turn evil"; a model with psychological elements that are a perfect selection in helping to discover why some people engage in abuse while others at the other end of the spectrum, actively object to the abuse.

In his book, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, Zimbardo's model contains six elements, or social dynamics as he calls them, which can lead to "good people turning evil," several of which overlap with Milgram's elements

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Zimbardo, <http://www.prisonexp.org>.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

because they are relatively broad. Zimbardo's first element is power, which equates to the perception of authority and will not be part of future analysis. The second element is conformity, specifically individual discomfort with going against group norms. This element is more thoroughly covered by Milgram's elements of sequential nature, situational obligations, and even anxiety. Conformity will not be mentioned as a separate element. Third is obedience, which again, is more thoroughly covered by Milgram's entire model and is excluded from further analysis. Zimbardo even discusses Milgram's shock experiment and outlines Milgram's elements in this section.

Zimbardo's fourth element is deindividuation, or anonymity. Deindividuation is an aspect not tested or mentioned in Milgram's shock experiment. Zimbardo discusses several experiments in which anonymity strongly correlates with a reduction of personal accountability.<sup>133</sup> One compelling experiment that Zimbardo ran mirrored Milgram's shock experiment, but introduced the concept of anonymity. Zimbardo had a group of women who would shock another group of women to study "creativity under stress." Half of the women that were administering shocks were dressed in lab coats with hoods and given numbers. The other half wore name tags without concealing clothing. As predicted, the group of anonymous women shocked the "subject" women much more often and for longer periods of time.<sup>134</sup> In Zimbardo's famous Stanford Prison Experiment, the prison guards frequently wore reflective sunglasses that partially masked their identities.<sup>135</sup> Zimbardo discusses, among other examples, the affect of anonymity on warriors and soldiers. Physical appearance that contributes to anonymity, such as uniforms, painted faces, etc., correlates to more violent and abusive behavior.<sup>136</sup>

The next element in Zimbardo's list of social dynamics is dehumanization. Ultimately, dehumanization serves to vindicate what would normally be considered immoral behavior. It allows individuals the tool to act inhumanely while keeping their

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<sup>133</sup> Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007), 301.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 299–300.

<sup>135</sup> Zimbardo, <http://www.prisonexp.org>.

<sup>136</sup> Zimbardo, *Lucifer Effect*, 303–305.



self image as one of a moral agent. Sometimes dehumanization forms in the way of blaming victims for “getting what they deserve,” sometimes it is simply labeling them as beings less than human and not deserving of humane treatment, and sometimes it may come in another form. Eitherway, dehumanization is a critical tool in paving way for abuse. Dehumanization contributed to the SPE spiraling out of control so quickly. Right from the beginning of the experiment, the prisoners were blindfolded when they were arrested and upon arrival at the “prison,” the prisoners were strip searched and “then deloused with a spray, to convey our belief that he may have germs or lice.”<sup>137</sup>

The last of Zimbardo’s elements is inaction. Zimbardo explains the tendency toward bystander inaction when certain circumstances exist, such as the diffusion of responsibility among large groups and the reduced sense of Good Samaritan responsibilities when an individual is in a time crunch.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, Zimbardo discusses the enabling power of inaction in his own Stanford Prison Experiment when the “good guards,” even though they did not participate in abusive behavior, never intervened to stop the abuse. Furthermore, Zimbardo himself realized his own inaction as he was infatuated with the experiment until an outsider reigned him in, causing him to realize how out of control his experiment became.<sup>139</sup>

## **B. TERRORIST ENGAGEMENT**

In an effort to counter the seemingly growing threat of terrorism after 9/11 there was a large push to identify a terrorist profile. Researchers quickly discovered that terrorists were typically psychologically sound individuals and that there was no one particular personality profile that fit even a majority of terrorists. Furthermore, it is just as difficult to form an all inclusive model for terrorist engagement. As the National Research Council stated regarding terrorist engagement: “It is evident that joining a

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<sup>137</sup> Zimbardo, <http://www.prisonexp.org>.

<sup>138</sup> Zimbardo, *Lucifer Effect*, 315–316.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

terrorist group is not related uniquely to any given motivational profile.”<sup>140</sup> Even so, researchers still attempt to identify factors that might assist in identifying individuals conducive to joining terrorist organizations.

### **1. John Horgan’s Model of Predisposing Factors for Terrorist Engagement**

John Horgan, who is noted later in this chapter for his model regarding terrorist disengagement, also formed a model with elements that, if predisposed to, could possibly indicate a desire to join a terrorist network. Horgan’s 6-element model is purely based on limited individual accounts, which Horgan admits is inadequate in relation to systematic empirical research.<sup>141</sup> Horgan’s model has “little to do with inferring personality traits and more to do with attempts at identifying similarities across processes that may indicate a sense of development via engagement in a terrorist group.”<sup>142</sup> Although Horgan’s model only includes 6 elements, he discusses that a catalyst event is often responsible for the final decision to engage in terrorism.<sup>143</sup> This “catalysts event” is considered a separate element outside of Horgan’s model and is discussed later in this section. The 6 elements of Horgan’s model of predisposing factors are previous relevant engagement, early experiences, nature of the community context, extent of adult socialization, dissatisfaction or disillusionment with individual’s current persona or activity, and range of competing alternatives and opportunities.

Horgan’s first element, previous relevant engagement, relates to behavior and/or knowledge already relating to the conflict situation. Horgan gives an example of someone that previously threw stones at security forces, participated in protests, or in some other ways was involved in the conflict, even if minimally.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> National Research Council, *Terrorism: Perspectives From the Behavioral and Social Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2002), 32.

<sup>141</sup> Horgan, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 101.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 85–86.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>144</sup> Horgan, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 102.

The second element is early experiences, which Horgan relates specifically to victimization, such as victimization by security forces or a particular group.<sup>145</sup>

Horgan's third element is community context. In Horgan's research, he found that the community's elevated status of militants was an influential factor in participating in terrorist organizations,<sup>146</sup> especially among ethno-nationalistic terrorist groups, such as the IRA.

The fourth element in Horgan's model is adult socialization. Horgan's "adult socialization" element is the equivalent to Kim Cragin's "family" element discussed later in this chapter. Horgan provides evidence that sometimes being single with no family responsibilities is a more attractive feature for recruiting suicide bombers, yet in other cases, having a family to care for also meant having well-needed support.<sup>147</sup>

The fifth element of Horgan's model is dissatisfaction with one's current persona or activity. Horgan describes dissatisfaction as an avenue that makes an individual more "open to influence."<sup>148</sup> For example, if peaceful protesting does not change anything, then one might consider a more active way to protest. Horgan attributes this as not only a possible cause for people to join terrorist organizations, but for terrorists to move up to higher positions within the organization if the individual is not satisfied that enough action is taken.<sup>149</sup>

The last element of Horgan's model is competing alternatives and opportunities, which Horgan simply describes as consequences, such as losing a job, fear of recrimination from security forces, etc.<sup>150</sup> Although fear is discussed as a separate element later in this chapter, Horgan's element extends to a simple question of whether joining a terrorist organization is worth it.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Horgan, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 103.

## **2. John Horgan's Catalyst Event for Involvement**

As mentioned earlier, Horgan discusses an additional factor that appears present in many individual accounts of engaging in terrorism. This element is a catalyst event and is not included in his model, but is included in the preliminary model created at the end of this chapter. A catalyst event, notes Horgan, often serves as an influential, deciding factor for someone to join a terrorist organization.<sup>151</sup> Horgan admits that there exists a possibility that individuals overemphasize the personal significance of particular events to push responsibility to outside factors.<sup>152</sup>

## **C. TERRORIST DERADICALIZATION, DISENGAGEMENT, AND NON-RADICALIZATION**

Less common than radicalization and engagement in terrorism is deradicalization, disengagement, and non-radicalization. The idea that research in these three areas further enhances our understanding of terrorism beyond who becomes a terrorist and why is conceptually parallel to the intent of answering the research questions of this thesis. Exploring why former terrorists' beliefs and behavior changes, and why people never become terrorists in the first place likely gives us an interesting insight into why U.S. service members opted not to participate in abuse at My Lai and Abu Ghraib, and why some actively objected.

### **1. John Horgan's Model for Psychological Disengagement from Terrorism**

Before John Horgan presents his model of psychological disengagement in his book *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, he ensures the reader is clear that in terrorism, extremist beliefs do not always equate to extremist behavior and vice versa.<sup>153</sup> With that said, Horgan's model specifically looks at the psychological reasons for leaving a terrorist

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>153</sup> Tore Bjorgo and Jon Horgan, "Introduction," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

organization and its associated behavior behind. This model includes 5 factors: disillusionment arising from incongruence between the initial group ideals and fantasies that influenced an individual to join, and reality; disillusionment from disagreement over tactical issues; disillusionment from strategic, political, or ideological differences; becoming burned out; and changing personal priorities.

Horgan's first element, disillusionment from incongruence between ideals/fantasies that influenced an individual to join and reality, which is referred to as "disillusionment: perception vs. reality" for simplicity, is founded in the idea that many terrorist organizations rely on myths and ideology to promote recruitment and maintain credibility.<sup>154</sup> For many, the realistic and sometimes hidden agenda proves disappointing if it does not fall into place with the perception of the organization that influenced the individual to join in the first place. Although this element is very similar to Milgram's "overarching ideology" element, enough differences exist where the two elements cannot be combined. Specifically, there may be a difference in overarching ideology among the whistleblowers and abusers of the case studies, but Horgan's element takes this a step further and compares the discrepancies between ideology and reality among various individuals.

The second element in Horgan's model is disillusionment from disagreement over tactics. Horgan uses an example of the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah, operating in South East Asia and Mohammed Nasir Bin Abbas, the leader of military training of the organization.<sup>155</sup> Although Abbas agreed with the ideology and strategic objectives of Jemaah Islamiyah, Abbas strongly disagreed with the tactic of intentionally targeting civilian non-combatants, which influenced him to leave the organization and later testify in court against another member of the terrorist organization.<sup>156</sup>

The third element of Horgan's model is extremely close to his first. The third element is disillusionment from strategic, political, or ideological differences. This

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>155</sup> Bjorgo, "Introduction."

<sup>156</sup> John Horgan, "Individual Disengagement," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York, Routledge, 2009), 23.

element does not necessarily mean that an individual joined an organization with a perception of it that was different from reality, like his first element does. This third element relates to situations where organizations evolve and change, such as the IRA, which one member noted started as a sectarian war, but turned into a war against Britain, in which killing a British pregnant woman would be considered a victory.<sup>157</sup>

Horgan's fourth element is burn-out. Horgan defines this as "abandonment...linked to the stress of a commitment which is too demanding in terms of time or emotional investment."<sup>158</sup> This element is supported by accounts of terrorists, such as one former member of the Red Brigades who claimed that after devoting long hours to the organization, it was a relief to be imprisoned and be able to finally rest.<sup>159</sup> Factors such as long working hours and fatigue that contribute to Horgan's burn-out element are the same contributors to Milgram's anxiety/fear element.

The fifth and final element of Horgan's model is changing personal priorities. Some terrorists come to a realization that their conflict will likely end and when it ends, they will in many cases have to start a new life.

## **2. Kim Cragin's Conceptual Model for Non-radicalization**

As little research exists on leaving terrorist organizations, even less exists on why not everyone becomes a terrorist. Cragin provides a 4-element model that offers factors that deter individuals from joining terrorist organizations, noting that the opposite of these factors does not necessarily equate to factors that influence an individual to engage in terrorism. Cragin's model of non-radicalization closely parallels the quest of this thesis to find out why some U.S. service members participate in abuse while some actively object at the opposite end of the spectrum. The 4 elements of Cragin's model for non-radicalization include family, logistical costs, financing, and fear.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>158</sup> Donatella della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York, Routledge, 2009), 80.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 81.

The first element of this model is family obligation. Cragin's element of family refers not to the obedience to authority taught to us by our family in early childhood, like Milgram's element, but rather to the responsibility of a family. In her studies, Cragin found that although it was not always a stand-alone deterring factor, family responsibility was a considerable reason why some individuals decided not to get involved with terrorist organizations.<sup>160</sup> Cragin's element is evidenced by an Al Qaeda recruiting handbook, which recognizes that family obligations may discourage individuals from joining and therefore encourages recruiters not to push recruits away from their families in the early stages of the recruits' involvement.<sup>161</sup>

Cragin's second element is logistics, which she simply explains that "logistical costs pose somewhat of a barrier to potential recruits, especially if they are required to travel beyond their immediate residence."<sup>162</sup>

The third element of Cragin's model is financing, which stems from the simple fact that terrorist organizations need financing to function, financing that often comes from its own members.<sup>163</sup>

Fear is the fourth element of Cragin's model for non-radicalization. Cragin relates fear specifically to a fear of security forces.

#### **D. GANG INVOLVEMENT**

Increasing gang violence, like terrorism, resulted in a need to look at possible ways to prevent gang activity in the first place; specifically prevention of initial gang involvement. To reduce recruitment, law enforcement officials must look at who joins gangs and why. This following section reviews several models for gang involvement; however, this body of literature in it of itself may not answer the research questions of this thesis. Considering this thesis is regarding U.S. service members only, the research in

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<sup>160</sup> Cragin, "Resisting Violent Extremism," 344.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

this section is limited to general gang information or Central Americans and American gangs. Additionally, one might reasonably argue that joining a gang is not a direct correlation to abuse and violence, however, research supports that “gang-involved youth are more likely to engage in extreme acts of violence than their delinquent peers who are not gang involved.”<sup>164</sup>

### **1. Martin Sanchez Jankowski’s Model of Reasons to Join a Gang**

Martin Sanchez Janowski’s book, *Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society*, includes his model on reasons why individuals join already existing gangs. His model is comprised of 6 elements: material incentives, recreation, a place of refuge and camouflage, physical protection, a time to resist, and commitment to community.

Janowski’s first element, material incentives, specifically relates to money. His studies found that the most given reason for joining a gang was the notion that gang membership would provide a relatively steady stream of income.<sup>165</sup> Additionally, individuals believed the notion that the more members involved in a gang, the more people to help secure money. If a member or a member’s family ended up in financial need, the other members of a gang could assist.<sup>166</sup> Lastly, many individuals in gangs saw their membership as a way to connect to other individuals that could financially help them out if they struggled in the future.<sup>167</sup>

The second element in Janowski’s model is recreation. Janowski interestingly compares the entertainment of gang involvement with that of a fraternity of college students.<sup>168</sup> Gangs are a social organization and if socializing through a gang is the best form of entertainment in a neighborhood or town, then one can expect people to join.

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<sup>164</sup> Jagers, “Predictors of Gang Involvement,” 277.

<sup>165</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 41.

<sup>166</sup>Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*, 41.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 42.



Janowski's element of recreation as a reason for gang involvement includes not only entertainment such as games, but also access to drugs, alcohol, and women.<sup>169</sup> Craig Palmer and Christopher Tilley's research supported Janowski's findings, especially regarding sexual access to females as a motivation for joining gangs. Their research found that this motivator was even used as a recruiting tool.<sup>170</sup>

Janowski's third element is "a place of refuge and camouflage," which is simply anonymity. Janowski states "They see the gang as offering them anonymity, which may relieve the stresses associated with having to be personally accountable for all their actions in an intensely competitive environment."<sup>171</sup> To spare the reader redundancy, "a place of refuge and camouflage" is considered the same as the "deindividuation" element discussed earlier in the psychology section of this chapter.

The fourth element in Janowski's model is physical protection. He states that individuals desiring physical protection are not necessarily the weakest members of the gang, but would prefer not to be on alert as much or would like to secure more time to make more money.<sup>172</sup> One could reasonably argue that this element is synonymous with our preliminary model's anxiety/fear element; however, as Janowski explains in his model, the desire for physical protection does not always derive from fear.

"A time to resist" is Janowski's fifth element. Janowski's research showed that many gang members wanted to avoid the life that their parents live,<sup>173</sup> which is often associated with a life of poverty.<sup>174</sup> Joining a gang can serve as a statement to society or a simple delay in getting a job.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>170</sup> Craig T. Palmer and Christopher F. Tilley, "Sexual Access to Females as a Motivation for Joining Gangs: An Evolutionary Approach," *The Journal of Sex Research* 32, no. 3 (1995): 214.

<sup>171</sup> Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*, 44.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*, 45.

<sup>174</sup> Sarah Levene, *Taking Action Against Gangs* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group Inc., 2010), 21.

<sup>175</sup> Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*, 45.

Janowski's final element is commitment to community. Contrary to the element of resistance, or joining a gang to live a different life than one's parents, a commitment to community, specifically family tradition of gang membership, is a motivating factor for some individuals to join. Some gangs exist for generations where it is a family tradition to earn membership.<sup>176</sup>

## **2. Predictors of Gang Involvement from Mobile Youth Survey Data**

In 2013, a 14 year study concluded, revealing supporting evidence of predictors of gang involvement. Although this study is extremely small scale considering it only relates to data from Mobile, Alabama, its compelling results are likely applicable to many gangs in general and possible to the My Lai and Abu Ghraib case studies as well. This model, which is referred to as "Mobile Gang Involvement" for simplicity, contains three elements: peer influence, family cohesion, and self-worth.

The first element, peer influence, is simply supported with correlating evidence that an individual is more likely to join a gang when others in the community are already involved in gangs.<sup>177</sup> Additionally, "delinquent peer relationships are among the strongest predictors of delinquent activity."<sup>178</sup> Peer influence differs only slightly from the anxiety Stanley Milgram discusses in his model, specifically when an individual has an internal desire to fit in to his/her hierarchical role. Still, behavior driven from peer pressure is not completely the same as behavior driven from obedience.

The second element in this model is family cohesion. The Mobile Gang Involvement model provides evidence that the more cohesive a family unit is and the more involved parents are in their children's lives, the less likely children are to join a gang.<sup>179</sup> This concept has existed for decades. A study was conducted in the 1950s that revealed "That the harm done when the young boy lacks a father to love can be

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>177</sup> Jagers, "Predictors of Gang Involvement," 278.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Jagers, "Predictors of Gang Involvement," 278.

overcome if he forms an affectionate attachment to an older male by the time is he 14 years old.”<sup>180</sup>

The third and final element in the Mobile Gang Involvement model is self-worth. The study notes the correlation that self-esteem is a critical factor of psychological stability<sup>181</sup> and low self-esteem is correlated to behavior such as aggression and delinquency, therefore increasing the chance for gang involvement.<sup>182</sup> Furthermore, Hal Marcovitz in his book, *Gangs*, attributes poor performance in school, and thus lower self worth to higher gang involvement.<sup>183</sup>

### **3. The Additional Element of Age**

Although it is not an element of the models above that explain gang involvement, young age is a widely known demographic of gangs, considering nearly half of gang members are under the age of 18, according to the National Gang Center.<sup>184</sup> Additionally, age relates to several other factors. For example, one study correlates the young age of new gang members with the emerging desire, and therefore competition, for sexual access to females.<sup>185</sup>

## **E. OFFICIAL REPORTS ON CASE STUDIES**

After substantial amounts of negative publicity after My Lai and Abu Ghraib came to light, multiple investigations were launched into the horrible abuse that severely deteriorated the reputation of the U.S. Armed Forces. The intent of these investigations, of course, was to answer the questions of “what went wrong and why did this happen?”

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<sup>180</sup> “Boys Join Gangs Because Love for Father Lacking,” *The Science News-Letter* 68, no. 21 (November 19, 1955): 326.

<sup>181</sup> Michael H. Kernis, “Measuring Self-Esteem in Context: The Importance of Stability of Self-Esteem in Psychological Functioning,” *Journal of Personality* 73, no. 6 (2005): 1569–1605, doi:10.1111/j.14676494.2005.00359.x.

<sup>182</sup> M. B. Donnellan and others, “Low Self-Esteem Is Related to Aggression, Antisocial Behavior, and Delinquency,” *Psychological Science* 16, no. 4 (2005): 328–335.

<sup>183</sup> Hal Marcovitz, *Gangs* (Edina, Minn.: ABDO Pub., 2010), 38.

<sup>184</sup> National Youth Gang Analysis, <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/survey-analysis/demographics>.

<sup>185</sup> Palmer, “Sexual Access to Females,” 214.

Considering that the research questions ask not “why did this happen” but rather “why did only some individuals participate in the abuse while others actively objected,” it is paramount to look at what these investigative reports have to say about the very case studies under examination in this thesis, as multiple investigations include their own models specific to explaining abuse at My Lai and Abu Ghraib.

### **1. Peers Inquiry Model on the My Lai Massacre**

In November 1969, Lieutenant General William Peers was selected by the Army Chief of Staff to run an inquiry into the March 1968 My Lai massacre. The Peers inquiry provided a detailed report of the massacre as well as a model for explaining how My Lai happened. Peers’ model originally contained 13 elements, but eventually downsized it to 9 elements.<sup>186</sup> The 9 elements in Peers’ model are: lack of proper training, attitude toward the Vietnamese, permissive attitude, psychological factors, organizational problems, nature of the enemy, plans and orders, attitude of government officials and leaders, and leadership.

Lack of training is the first element in the model formed by Peers. The Peers Inquiry reported that training on topics such as rules of engagement, protecting noncombatants, law of war, etc., severely lacked and contributed to the events of the My Lai massacre.<sup>187</sup> Some individuals reported that they received training, but did not remember it, and others claimed no training at all.<sup>188</sup> This issue surfaced again when investigations began at Abu Ghraib.

The next element is attitude toward the Vietnamese. Peers noted that derogatory terms such as “gooks,” “dinks,” and “slopes,” etc., were regularly used terms by Americans to describe the Vietnamese, both combatants and non-combatants alike.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Rielly, *Inclination for War Crimes*, 53.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>188</sup> Rielly, *Inclination for War Crimes*, 54.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

The third element is permissive attitude. After concluding the investigation, Peers noted evidence that abuse of non-combatants including rape, unnecessary killings, etc., had occurred long before the My Lai incident.<sup>190</sup> This long term abuse that both continued and escalated is equivalent to Milgram's element of sequential nature discussed earlier in the chapter.

The fourth element of the Peers Inquiry model is leadership. Peers found leadership one of the leading factors attributed to My Lai. Various violations were discovered during the Peers Inquiry, including:

Failure to follow established division policy and lack of enforcement of that policy, failure to control the situation on the ground along with a lack of personal checking to determine the true nature of the operation, failure to issue appropriate and positive instructions for an investigation, lack of follow up on leads indicating that a massacre had occurred, and many others.<sup>191</sup>

Psychological factors are the fifth element of the Peers Inquiry model. Peers describes the psychological factors in several ways, all of which are previously covered in this chapter, therefore this element is not included as a separate element in the preliminary model. One of the psychological factors that Peers describes is fear and anxiety. Charlie Company was subject to multiple casualties due to mines, booby traps, etc., which left the soldiers on edge and fearful for their lives.<sup>192</sup> Additionally, added stress formed along with the pressure to seek revenge for the recent death of SSgt Cox.<sup>193</sup> Another psychological factor was the pressure to engage in combat and kill Vietnamese. Moral was affected from the competitive attitude between company commanders to "achieve the highest body count."<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Peers, *My Lai Inquiry*, 232.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>193</sup> Peers, *My Lai Inquiry*, 234.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

The sixth element is organizational problems. Peers found Task Force Barker, along with most U.S. units deployed to Vietnam to be severely undermanned resulting in frequent rotations, over tasking, and ad hoc organizations.<sup>195</sup>

The seventh element is nature of the enemy. The Vietcong had a large advantage of knowing the local land and population. They were an extremely illusive enemy with a complex system of caves and tunnels in which they would disappear into hiding.<sup>196</sup> The local women and children would often give them fair warning when sightings of U.S., South Vietnamese, or South Korean forces occurred.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, the Vietcong, after retreating, would quickly change out of their combat attire and blend in with the local villagers, making it even more difficult to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants.<sup>198</sup>

Plans and orders is the eighth element of the Peers Inquiry model. After various testimonies from multiple witnesses, Peers concluded that the plans and orders given to Charlie Company by the chain of command all the way up to Lieutenant Colonel Barker, leader of the ad hoc Task Force Barker, were vague and unclear. Instruction on how to interact with civilians was gravely lacking and the terminology used, such as “search and destroy” and “revenge” left many soldiers to assume all Vietnamese villagers that they came across, including the villagers’ livestock and crops, were “fair game” to destroy.<sup>199</sup>

The final element of the Peers inquiry model is government officials’ attitude of the Vietnamese. Peers acknowledge that the derogatory, dehumanizing perception of the Vietnamese was not just present among the lower ranks. Peers found that local Vietnamese authorities considered all of its inhabitants to have loyalties to the Vietcong if they were not actually Vietcong soldiers.<sup>200</sup> This attitude was shared among American

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Peers, *My Lai Inquiry*, 237.

officials as well, and little preventative action was taken to minimize noncombatant casualties.<sup>201</sup>

## **2. Schlesinger Report's Model of Abusive Treatment at Abu Ghraib**

In the case of Abu Ghraib, multiple investigations and multiple official reports were released looking into the infamous abuses. Although the consensus is that a large variety of factors contributed to abuse at Abu Ghraib including the presidential administration's vague and loose policy on torture, the Schlesinger Report contains a separate section on psychological stresses and offers a model explaining specifically why abuse occurred. The 5-element model of abusive treatment at Abu Ghraib is unsurprisingly similar to Zimbardo's model considering the Schlesinger Report notes the Stanford Prison Experiment and the uncanny similarities to the abuse that occurred at Abu Ghraib. The 5 elements of the Schlesinger Report model are: deindividuation, groupthink, dehumanization, enemy image, and moral exclusion. Although the model does not provide a detailed link to specific incidents at Abu Ghraib, it provides generic definitions of its elements which are considered for inclusion in the preliminary model formed at the end of this chapter.

The Schlesinger Report model's first element is deindividuation, which the report defines where the "anonymity, suggestibility, and contagion provided in a crowd allows individuals to participate in behavior marked by the temporary suspension of customary rules and inhibitions."<sup>202</sup> Additionally, the report attributes reduced self-awareness to abusive behavior.<sup>203</sup> Without subjecting the reader to redundancy, deindividuation is not explained further, as it is already a part of Zimbardo's model.

The next element is groupthink. A group setting often provides a false sense of invulnerability and unanimity, and is usually conducive to peer pressure.<sup>204</sup> Although

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> "The Schlesinger Report," *Torture Papers*, 972.

<sup>203</sup> "The Schlesinger Report," *Torture Papers*, 972.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

similar to some of the other elements previously discussed, group think brings up a dynamic yet to be discussed: the powerful influence of a group.

The third element is dehumanization; when individuals or groups are considered inferior and less than human, resulting in their exclusion of the humanity that would normally be extended to other human beings.<sup>205</sup> Like deindividuation, this element is already considered in Zimbardo's model.

Enemy image is the fourth element. The Schlesinger Report describes enemy image as the phenomenon when both belligerents of a conflict consider themselves good and moral, while the other is evil and wrong.<sup>206</sup>

The final element of the Schlesinger Report's model for abusive treatment is moral exclusion. Moral exclusion occurs when one group views another as disparate from themselves and therefore moral rules do not apply to the other group.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

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#### **IV. A PRELIMINARY MODEL TO EXPLAIN PARTICIPATION IN ABUSE**

With the background of each case study explained in adequate depth, and an understanding of multiple models that explain the psychology of obedience, terrorist engagement, terrorist disengagement and non-radicalization, and gang involvement, it is now time to discuss the preliminary model and test it against the Abu Ghraib and My Lai case study. This preliminary model is built from specific factors, or elements, derived from the various models explained in chapter 3. Elements that were deemed appropriate and suitable to include in the preliminary model are given brief explanation of their importance prior to testing against the case studies. Unfortunately, explaining in detail why elements from preexisting models were excluded from the preliminary model is beyond the scope of this thesis;<sup>208</sup> however, perhaps it would prove useful for further research to test all elements, not just the elements in the preliminary model of this thesis, which were chosen based on the author's discretion. The structure of this chapter will include a table of the preliminary model showing which original models each element was derived from, followed a brief re-explanation of the element and finally, a test of each element against each case study, leaving the reader with a refined model, discussed in Chapter V, which indeed explains, even if partially, why some U.S. service members participate in abuse while others refuse, and few actively object.

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<sup>208</sup> Reasons for excluding elements from the preliminary model include: inapplicability (monetary rewards, for example, do not apply to either case study as the soldiers were on a fixed, predetermined income); and immeasurability (measuring elements like self-worth is impractical without directly interviewing the individuals involved).

Table 1. The 7-Element Preliminary Model.

ELEMENT	ORIGINATING AUTHOR/MODEL
Sequential nature	1. Stanley Milgram’s Obedience Paradigm 2. Peers Inquiry
Anxiety/Fear	1. Stanley Milgram’s Obedience Paradigm 2. Cragin’s Model of Non-radicalization 3. Peers Inquiry
Deindividuation	1. Philip Zimbardo’s Social Dynamics 2. Janowski’s Model 3. Schlesinger Report
Family obligation	1. Cragin’s Model of Non-radicalization 2. Horgan’s Model of Terrorist Engagement
Recreation	1. Janowski’s Model
Age	1. Various models from literature on gangs
Group think/peer influence	1. Schlesinger Report 2. Janowski’s Model

**A. SEQUENTIAL NATURE**

As discussed earlier, Milgram and Peers refer to sequential nature, which occur in both quality and quantity. The idea behind this concept is that abuse or obedience, for that matter does not typically occur at maximum levels without a build up over time. In other words, “isolated” incidents such as My Lai and Abu Ghraib do not just happen; they are a systemic result of a sequence of conditions which allowed abuse to get to the point that it did.

**1. Testing Sequential Nature against the My Lai Case Study**

After concluding the investigation, Peers noted evidence that abuse of non-combatants including rape, torture, unnecessary killings, etc., had occurred long before the My Lai incident.<sup>209</sup> Prior to My Lai, Major General Samuel Koster, commander of the Americal Division in which Task Force Barker and Charlie Company were a part of, issued a memorandum to the officers, “Acts of Discourtesy Toward Vietnamese People,” which discouraged abuse, inhumane treatment, and derogatory behavior toward the

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<sup>209</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 232.

Vietnamese people.<sup>210</sup> Despite this instruction, U.S. ground troops continued to act in accordance with current practice and as new units rotated in, they did the same.<sup>211</sup>

What started as physical violence, such as injuring prisoners with rifle butts and cutting off hair and beards, an extreme act of disrespect in the Vietnamese culture, escalated to torturing and killing prisoners, and raping the women of the village.<sup>212</sup> Within Charlie Company in particular, group raping was a “normal tactic” that many of the men regularly participated in well before the My Lai massacre; one group of men would search a village questioning people and searching hooches while another group would all participate in the raping of one or more of the village women, and then the groups would switch.<sup>213</sup> Another abusive custom that developed well before My Lai was collecting body parts as trophies; U.S. soldiers would hack off the ears of the “enemy” and display them like trophies, for example, stringing them on radio antennas.<sup>214</sup>

The repeated and escalating abuse caused desensitization even among individuals who initially were disturbed by the behavior of their fellow soldiers. One soldier in My Lai describes this desensitization perfectly:

I remember seeing people butted in the head with rifles. But you start losing your sense of what’s normal. You don’t give up your morals, but you become a lot more tolerant. We believed this behavior was pretty commonplace. I didn’t think we were doing anything different from any other unit. You really do lose your sense...not of right or wrong, but your degree of wrong changes.<sup>215</sup>

Regarding the whistleblowers of My Lai, CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour, it is imperative to look at whether they, too, were subject to the same long term, escalating abusive environment. As mentioned later in this chapter, the type of aircraft that CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour flew on required a return to a landing zone for refueling

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<sup>210</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 75.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>212</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 75–81.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

approximately every two hours.<sup>216</sup> The relatively short duration of reconnaissance missions due to logistical limitations served as an interruption in the sequential nature of abuse that CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour might have experienced. Essentially, CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour were not witness to or a part of the repeated and escalating scale of violence as were the ground troops of Charlie Company; instead, they were exposed to the abuse at a very late stage when their morals were still in check with the majority of Americans. This late exposure left them shocked and disapproving, just as it would if any other American were instantaneously step into My Lai. It is impossible to determine that CWO Thompson or Ridenhour would or would not have reported abuse earlier if they learned about it earlier; however, the overall lack of gradual exposure caused them to escape the desensitization that most of Charlie Company experienced on the ground.

## **2. Testing Sequential Nature against the Abu Ghraib Case Study**

Prison abuse in U.S. run-prisons in the Middle East occurred long before the Abu Ghraib prison scandal came to light,<sup>217</sup> the most infamous example being the death of two wrongly-accused detainees at the hands of U.S. personnel in the Bagram prison in Afghanistan in 2002.<sup>218</sup> Just as abuse happened often and escalated overtime systemically, the same pattern occurred on the individual level as well. One soldier with an MP unit at Abu Ghraib, Aiden Delgado, wrote a memoir *The Sutras of Abu Ghraib*, describing the abusive behavior that occurred often, and slowly escalated over time:

The games we soldiers play are innocuous at first: drawing murals, playing stickball, building desks and chairs and collecting pinup girls from Maxim. They grow in intensity and stake. One moment we're in our room catching flies and the next we're crowded around a cinder block watching two camel spiders hiss and goad each other to the inevitable bloody finish. Hunting rats becomes hunting dogs. Driving outside Tallil, someone throws a piece of garbage at an Iraqi from his Humvee window and they make a

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<sup>216</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 67.

<sup>217</sup> Burke, *The 9/11 Wars*, 89.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

game of it down the road...it escalates. Time skips forward, and suddenly we're at Abu Ghraib and there are no more spiders to play with, so people invent new games...<sup>219</sup>

Another soldier at Abu Ghraib recalls the escalation of abuse: "you forget what you saw that day because the next day you see something worse"<sup>220</sup> To support these accounts, one can see the long list of "incidents" documented in the Fay-Jones Report.<sup>221</sup> This list only covers incidents from September 15, 2003 to January 08, 2004; however, there are likely many other incidents of abuse that are out of this time range or undocumented. For example, SGT Darby notes that abuse of detainees was not a new thing; the very first day the 372<sup>nd</sup> MP Company arrived at Abu Ghraib, the soldiers witnessed the current unit enforcing detainees to wear women's underwear.<sup>222</sup>

An additional aspect worth mentioning, although somewhat debated, is CPL Graner's history of abuse in his civilian capacity, ranging from domestic abuse to his wife, to allegations of abusing prisoners as a prison guard in the state prison he worked at.<sup>223</sup> Although CPL Graner was exculpated from charges of prisoner abuse as a civilian correctional officer, if the allegations were true, then his violent history is noteworthy. Abusing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib would naturally be the next sequential step after abusing American prisoners in a state prison.

Now it is time to look at the whistleblowers and if they were subject to the same "slippery slope" affect of abuse. First of all, had SGT Darby broken protocol and socialized with the MP's in Tier 1A like SPC England did, he, too, may have become desensitized to the buildup of abuse which regularly happened, although one cannot assume this. Regardless, SGT Darby became aware of the abuse at its peak when CPL Graner turned over a CD of incriminating photographs. SGT Darby was in disbelief over

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<sup>219</sup> Delgado, *Sutras of Abu Ghraib*, 34–35.

<sup>220</sup> *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcGMsfs5Kt4>.

<sup>221</sup> "The Fay-Jones Report," *Torture Papers*, 1096–1104.

<sup>222</sup> "Abu Ghraib Whistleblower Feared Retaliation," accessed April, 06, 2015, <http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,109519,00.html>.

<sup>223</sup> Dennis Cauchon, "Former Guard Has a History of Complaints," *USA Today*, May 16, 2004, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-05-16-guard-abuse\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-05-16-guard-abuse_x.htm).

the levels of abuse; he knew it was clearly wrong and that the abusers would go to jail.<sup>224</sup> Just like CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour at My Lai, he was exposed to the later stages of abuse and because his sense of morals was not desensitized, he was able to report the abuse. With this said, one might question why SPC Wisdom reported the abuse initially to his team leader when he, like most of the abusers, was an MP. A lack of evidence exists to show whether or not SPC Wisdom witnessed other abuse in the prison; however, one very interesting fact, is that SPC Wisdom just returned from a two-week R&R, or “rest and recovery” period back in the United States.<sup>225</sup> Even more interesting, is that SGT Darby had also returned from leave back in the United States prior to asking CPL Graner for pictures.<sup>226</sup> This indicates that even if SPC Wisdom and SGT Darby had begun to become desensitized if they were exposed to early stages of abuse, their sense of wrong was possibly “normalized” once they were back home around people that likely share similar morals and beliefs. Contrarily, none of the abusers are on record to have recently taken leave stateside prior to the abuse.

## **B. ANXIETY AND FEAR**

Anxiety and fear covers a broad spectrum of situations, ranging from the fear of one’s life that most likely all of the individuals in the case studies felt at one point or another, to the anxiety felt when an individual had internal conflict between following orders and personal morals. When testing this element against the case studies, several situations where anxiety and fear is different between abusers and whistleblowers were prevalent enough to consider for discussion, specifically fear of one’s physical safety, anxiety from leadership pressuring performance, anxiety from the social conflict of following orders versus acting immoral, and lastly, fear of repercussion felt by the whistleblowers.

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<sup>224</sup>Joseph Darby, interview by Anderson Cooper, *60 Minutes: Exposing the Truth of Abu Ghraib*, CBS News, December 10, 2006, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/exposing-the-truth-of-abu-ghraib/>.

<sup>225</sup> Graveline, *Secrets of Abu Ghraib*, 5.

<sup>226</sup> Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure: Inside Abu Ghraib* (London, Penguin Books, 2008) 232.

## 1. Testing Anxiety and Fear against the My Lai Case Study

It is not intended to underestimate the dangers and fears of reconnaissance pilots in the Vietnam War; however, there were differences in physical security between the abusers and whistleblowers that are noteworthy. First, CWO Thompson's OH-23 reconnaissance helicopter, although lightly armed, was always covered by two "gunships,"<sup>227</sup> UH-1 Huey helicopters with much heavier firepower. Additionally, the OH-23 observation helicopter was equipped to stay on station for approximately 2 hours at a time before CWO Thompson would return to LZ Dottie to refuel.<sup>228</sup> Contrary to the logistics of CWO Thompson's mission as a reconnaissance pilot which required his return to the relatively protected and fortified safety of a landing zone, the men of Charlie Company were in the field for weeks on end,<sup>229</sup> with no immediate physical protection other than the weapons they carried. Although Charlie Company did not encounter many casualties or much enemy resistance until a month before My Lai, the long days of patrolling and anxiously waiting to encounter the elusive enemy likely took a toll on the soldiers' moral<sup>230</sup> and certainly increased fatigue and stress. The reader should remember that Ron Ridenhour was a helicopter gunner in an observation helicopter, flying the same types of missions that CWO Thompson flew,<sup>231</sup> therefore, the logistical differences between CWO Thompson and the ground troops of Charlie Company also are present when comparing whistleblower Ron Ridenhour to the ground troops of Charlie Company that committed the abuse.

In February, 1968, casualties in Charlie Company ramped up.<sup>232</sup> The casualties were caused by land mines and booby traps, but Charlie Company had yet to have any face-to-face combat with the Viet Cong.<sup>233</sup> Not only was there competitive attitude

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<sup>227</sup> David L. Anderson, *Facing My Lai: Moving Beyond the Massacre* (Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 1998), 28.

<sup>228</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 67.

<sup>229</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 70.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Anderson, *Facing My Lai*, 33.

<sup>232</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 71.

<sup>233</sup> Anderson, *Facing My Lai*, 6.



between company commanders to “achieve the highest body count,”<sup>234</sup> a competition in which Charlie Company was failing at, but there also was an increasing pressure immediately before My Lai for Charlie Company to seek revenge for the recent death of SSG Cox, one of Charlie Company’s men who had died from a booby trap days before.<sup>235</sup> This pressure dynamic was realistically not the same among CWO Thompson, Ron Ridenhour, and the other reconnaissance pilots and aircrew.

Furthermore, the internal anxiety, introduced by Milgram, in which an individual feels when the orders from an authority figure conflict with personal morals, is present among the ground troops of Charlie Company, but not necessarily applicable to CWO Thompson or Ron Ridenhour. Unlike the men of Charlie Company who were in direct and physical contact with their immediate chain of command, CWO Thompson was obviously not in physical proximity of his commander or the leadership on the ground that he was supporting. This dynamic is understandable considering the nature of being in a helicopter providing ground support; however, what complicated matters further was poor communication means. CWO Thompson did not have communication with the ground commander he was supporting, the task force commander’s helicopter, or his high gunship; his only means of communication was through radio communication with his low gunship.<sup>236</sup> This is not to assume that CWO Thompson would have participated in abuse, had he communications with an authority figure on the ground that was telling him to murder noncombatants, rather, CWO Thompson may have stopped the abuse earlier if he had available means to report the abuse over radio communications. Regardless, CWO Thompson was not standing on the ground, ordered to shoot non-combatants. As mentioned before, in one soldier’s case, 2LT Calley went as far to point his rifle at one of his own platoon members when he refused to kill a group of unarmed Vietnamese villagers. Again, one cannot assume that CWO Thompson would blindly kill noncombatants if he was on the ground and ordered to do so by his immediate chain of command; however, the disparate structure of authority between CWO Thompson and his

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<sup>234</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 234.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 66–67.

chain of command, and the Charlie Company soldiers and 2LT Calley, cannot be ignored. This same analysis would apply to Ron Ridenhour, had he been present at My Lai.

Lastly, there exists a possible fear among whistleblowers that is not present among abusers, and that is fear of repercussion from reporting abuse. CWO Thompson seems to lack fear of repercussion, or at least accept possible consequences, as he recalls returning to LZ Dottie extremely mad and reporting the abuse to his commander, adding “if this damn stuff is what’s happening here, you can take these wing right now ‘cause they’re only sewn on with thread.”<sup>237</sup> CWO Thompson’s account indicates that the worst repercussion he would receive is losing his pilot’s wings. In the case of Ron Ridenhour, however, Ridenhour had flown over My Lai a few days after the massacre and witnessed the aftermath, but decided not to take action immediately because he feared for his life.<sup>238</sup> Ridenhour was not the only one fearful of repercussion. Individuals of Charlie Company who disagreed with the operation at My Lai were not only threatened but blatantly placed in more dangerous positions. One Charlie Company soldier, Michael Bernhardt, who later discussed My Lai with Ridenhour, recalled that CAPT Medina forced him to stay out in the field and in the front of the line every time the company thought they were entering a high ambush area.<sup>239</sup> Despite Bernhardt’s pleas to transfer and requests for medical attention because of jungle rot, he was denied.<sup>240</sup> Ultimately, Bernhardt left, unauthorized, by jumping on a supply helicopter and getting a ride to a hospital where he finally received proper treatment severe jungle rot.<sup>241</sup> Based on Bernhardt’s account, there were likely other individuals of Charlie Company that feared their lives if they did not participate in the massacre at My Lai, and certainly if they had actively objected to the horrible abuse.

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<sup>237</sup> Anderson, *Facing My Lai*, 31.

<sup>238</sup> “Ronald Ridenhour,” <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/11/us/ronald-ridenhour-52-veteran-who-reported-my-lai-massacre.html>

<sup>239</sup> Anderson, *Facing My Lai*, 39.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2. Testing Anxiety and Fear against the Abu Ghraib Case Study

Abu Ghraib was the most heavily targeted U.S. occupied compounds, subject to approximately 20 mortar attacks per week.<sup>242</sup> Despite this violence that left Abu Ghraib's occupants living in fear, there were additional facets of physical fear that the MP's typically experienced on the job, in which whistleblower SGT Darby did not. First of all the prisoners took any and every opportunity to build makeshift weapons out of everyday material, such as broken glass, sharpened toothbrushes, etc.<sup>243</sup> As if this was not threatening enough, the Iraqi guards frequently proved corrupt, smuggling weapons in and letters out for a small fee.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, the prisoners attempted frequent assaults on MP's, which added to the fear and anxiety, especially with the ever-growing population of detainees.<sup>245</sup> All of these fears for physical safety were simply not as risky for file clerk, SGT Darby. One can argue that SPC England was also a file clerk; however, her relationship with CPL Graner, discussed later in this chapter, influenced her to breach protocol and "hang out" with the MP's in the prisoner tiers. Although the extremely poor living conditions extended to all parties at Abu Ghraib, including headquarters, the nature of the file clerk did not call for SGT Darby to quell riots or handle detainees, as was required by the MP's.

The next aspect of anxiety and fear is anxiety from leadership pressuring performance. The natural reaction of 9/11 was to demand "actionable intelligence" and Tier 1A in Abu Ghraib was an interrogation center, specifically formed by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>246</sup> This overall ideology created pressure, specifically upon the MP's to soften the prisoners enough so OGA's could successfully interrogate them and receive useful intelligence. Although the MP's never received direct orders to specifically abuse the prisoners, the environment became one where the MP's ultimately served unidentified

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<sup>242</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 334.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>244</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 350.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

individuals from OGA's and even received performance feedback from them.<sup>247</sup> SGT Darby was simply not under the same pressure demands to effectively get intelligence from detainees, although neither was SPC England.

Anxiety resulting from a conflict between following orders and one's morals does not initially appear to apply to the Abu Ghraib case because the abusers were not following specific orders, other than their own interpretation of what it meant to "soften" the detainees. However, one MP's account of a conversation with CPL Graner indicated otherwise. CPL Graner reportedly told the other soldier "I'm havin' to yell, and do other things to detainees that I feel are morally and ethically wrong...every time a bomb goes off outside the wire, or outside the fence, they come in, and they tell me, that's another American losin' their life. And unless you help us, their blood's on your hands as well."<sup>248</sup>

The last factor to consider when analyzing the element of anxiety and fear is whistleblower fear of retribution. After receiving the CD documenting prisoner abuse, SGT Darby's fear of retribution kept him from turning in the evidence right away. Once SGT Darby did turn in the CD's to CID, he was so fearful of retribution if his friends found out, that he slept with a loaded pistol under his pillow.<sup>249</sup> Unfortunately, for SGT Darby, his fear was justified: upon the release of his identity on national television, he and his family received death threats and could not return to his home when he was sent back stateside.<sup>250</sup>

### **C. DEINDIVIDUATION**

As shown in the field of psychology as well as gang involvement, deindividuation, or anonymity, have a strong effect on one's willingness to partake in violence. The unconscious strategies for achieving deindividuation are reducing social accountability and reducing self-evaluation. Going into slightly more detail than in

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>248</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 362.

<sup>249</sup> Darby interview, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/exposing-the-truth-of-abu-ghraib/2/>.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

Chapter III, reducing social accountability happens when an individual feels anonymous, and reducing self-evaluation happens essentially when an individual uses an excuse to stop monitoring his or her own behavior.<sup>251</sup> This second strategy occurs by drug or alcohol use, arousing strong emotions, engaging in hyperintense actions, giving up concern for the past or present, or pawning off responsibility.<sup>252</sup> Although some form of deindividuation typically exists in incidents like My Lai and Abu Ghraib, levels of deindividuation must be different between abusers and whistleblowers if this element is to have a place in the final model which helps answer the research questions of this thesis.

### **1. Testing Deindividuation against the My Lai Case Study**

One should begin by looking at the first strategy to achieve deindividuation, which is reducing social accountability through anonymity. In what ways, if any, did the abusers of My Lai resign social accountability through anonymity when the whistleblowers did not? As Zimbardo notes, changing one's external appearance to conduct war has a compelling effect on an individual's willingness to partake in extreme violence.<sup>253</sup> This indeed is true of the men of Charlie Company who wore the same uniform and were personally unknown to the My Lai villagers; however, it is also true of CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour, who were also wearing the same uniform and whose identity was unknown among the My Lai villagers. Reducing accountability through anonymity, therefore, is not a sufficient indicator in different levels of deindividuation.

Using Zimbardo's second strategy for accomplishing deindividuation, reducing self-evaluation, one can start to see differences between abusers and whistleblowers in nearly all aspects. First, although not substantial enough to attribute it a significant role in My Lai, Peers did find evidence of drugs and alcohol among the men of Charlie Company; specifically evident of drinking late the night before the operation, and

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<sup>251</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 305.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 304.

smoking Marijuana.<sup>254</sup> The abusers of Charlie Company also had charged emotions that internally excused them of their actions; emotions that CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour did not seem to possess: revenge. As mentioned under the element of anxiety and fear, the previous day's briefing by CAPT Medina was filled with vague, but suggestive orders to seek revenge for the recent casualties suffered within Charlie Company.<sup>255</sup> As far as engaging in hyperintense activities, it goes without doubt that the soldiers of Charlie Company engaged in the most extreme forms of violent, such as rape and torture. This extreme behavior was both a product of deindividuation, as well as contributor to deindividuation, considering the violent abuse went by largely unpunished.<sup>256</sup> CWO Thompson contrarily was precise in his mission when identifying targets. CWO Thompson had clear guidelines that a weapon should be positively identified before a suspect was shot, even if the individual was suspiciously running away.<sup>257</sup> A disregard for the past or present also became relevant among the abusers of My Lai. As mentioned before, the casualties suffered by Charlie Company consisted of booby traps and mines:<sup>258</sup> enemies which could not be seen or killed. This frustration of an elusive enemy, a constantly looming threat of death, and the perception of a never-ending war contributed to a lack of concern for the future. One could say the pessimistic view of when the war would end, or not end, was also applicable to CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour. This may hold true; however, CWO Thompson and Ridenhour, as discussed under the anxiety and fear element, were not subject to the same stresses that the soldiers of Charlie Company experienced. Lastly, the diffusion of responsibility aspect that Zimbardo discusses certainly occurred within Charlie Company, but not necessarily with CWO Thompson or Ridenhour. The abusers of Charlie Company had the backing of their platoon commanders, and in the case of first platoon, were even ordered at gunpoint to shoot unarmed civilians. If this was not enough reason to follow orders, one should again refer to CAPT Medina's brief the day before. Perhaps some

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<sup>254</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 235.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>256</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 79.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>258</sup> Anderson, *Facing My Lai*, 6.

individuals in Charlie Company still felt culpable for their actions; however, personal responsibility lacked enough to result in the death of over 500 unarmed civilians.

## **2. Testing Deindividuation against the Abu Ghraib Case Study**

To test the element of deindividuation against Abu Ghraib, the same structure will be used as the previous section; specifically comparing Zimbardo's "strategies" for deindividuation, which are reducing social accountability and reducing self-evaluation. As a reminder, social accountability is reduced when anonymity is increased. Multiple conditions which reduced anonymity were found to exist in Tier 1A, which were not necessarily present in other locations, specifically in headquarters, where SGT Darby worked. First, it became acceptable for the MP's, at least in Tier 1A, to stop wearing their full uniforms.<sup>259</sup> This was in part due to lax standards, but also protocol within Tier1A: "It is recommended that all military personnel in the segregation area reduce knowledge of their true identities to these specialized detainees. The use of sterilized uniforms [cleansed of all identification] is highly suggested and personnel should NOT address each other by true name and rank in the segregation area."<sup>260</sup> This same protocol applied to individuals from OGA's, who, with no questions asked, came in without military uniforms or any sort of identification, conducted interrogations, and left.<sup>261</sup> The only interface between these mysterious individuals and Abu Ghraib seemed to be the "softening" of detainees by the MP's prior to interrogations. These indicators of anonymity that reduced social accountability were unique to Tier 1A and its U.S. incumbents, even if some individuals were not authorized to be there, such as SPC England.

There also exist differences in deindividuation, specifically self-evaluation, between the whistleblowers and the abusers of Abu Ghraib. Although no drug or alcohol use was suspected in the abuse at Abu Ghraib, other aspects of reducing self-evaluation were evident; the first being the arousal of strong emotions. Without repeating pieces

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<sup>259</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 351.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

from the anxiety and fear element, there were other strong emotions that happened in Tier 1A and not elsewhere, specifically in correlation to the abuse which occurred the evening of November 7<sup>th</sup>, resulting in the majority of the infamous photographs associated with the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. The riot that occurred earlier in the day, discussed in Chapter II, riled up a mix of emotions among the MP's: fear, anger, revenge, etc.<sup>262</sup>; emotions that likely passed over the rest of the compound not involved in the riot, such as where SGT Darby worked. The problem with this assumption; however, is that it does not explain why SPC Wisdom, an MP, spoke up to his team leader against the abuse, or why file clerk SPC England participated in the abuse while she was not involved with the riot earlier in the day. What does apply to all the abusers in Tier 1A, is engaging in hyperintense actions and giving up concern for the past or present. Zimbardo sums up these behaviors at Abu Ghraib: "Actors become immersed in their high-intensity physical actions without rational planning or regard for consequences. The past and future give way to an immediate-present, hedonistic time perspective. It is a mind space in which emotion rules reason, and constraints on passion are loosened."<sup>263</sup> Furthermore, the poor living conditions and long, monotonous days caused many guards to lose moral. One MP officer at Abu Ghraib stated: "I feel, and my soldiers feel, that we're just sitting out there, waiting to die."<sup>264</sup> Lastly, pawning off responsibility was easy to do when the environment lacked accountability. As SSG Frederick described, "No one was listening to my position. It was clear there was no accountability."<sup>265</sup> It is difficult to prove that there was more accountability elsewhere in the Abu Ghraib compound; however, Tier 1A was notorious for its secrecy and mysterious comings and goings of OGA agents.

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>263</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 367.

<sup>264</sup> Osha Gray Davidson, "The Secret Files of Abu Ghraib," Duckdaotsu, accessed February 24, 2015, <http://www.duckdaotsu.org/080504-abughraib.html>.

<sup>265</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 351.



## **D. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS**

Having family responsibilities has proven to have a profound impact on both why some individuals join terrorist organizations, and why some specifically do not, as evidenced by Horgan and Cragin's work. With that said, one might conclude that when looking at family obligations of the abusers and whistleblowers, the results may conclude that family obligation either promotes or deters abuse.

### **1. Testing Family Obligations against the My Lai Case Study**

It is difficult to find biographies on many of the men involved in My Lai since there were so many; however, information on the personal lives of 2LT Calley and CAPT Medina are more readily available. At the time of My Lai, 2LT Calley was not married, nor had children; at the time of prosecution, 2LT Calley had a girlfriend, a dog, and a fish,<sup>266</sup> but did not marry or have children until years later. CAPT Medina, however, was married, but with no accounts of children.<sup>267</sup> CWO Thompson, at the time of My Lai, was married with two young sons.<sup>268</sup> A lack of information exists on Ron Ridenhour's family life.

### **2. Testing Family Obligations against the Abu Ghraib Case Study**

Although CPL Graner did have 2 children, he was divorced years before Abu Ghraib and at the time of the scandal,<sup>269</sup> was having an extramarital affair with PFC England, who was married.<sup>270</sup> PFC England ended up divorced from her marriage and pregnant with CPL Graner's child.<sup>271</sup> SGT Frederick was also married.<sup>272</sup> No record

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<sup>266</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 2.

<sup>267</sup> "Selected Men Involved with My Lai," American Experience, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/mylai-biographies/#Medina>.

<sup>268</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 135.

<sup>269</sup> Michael A. Fuoco, Ed Blazina and Cindi Lash, "Suspect in Prisoner Abuse has a History of Troubles," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 08, 2004, <http://old.post-gazette.com/pg/04129/313195.stm>.

<sup>270</sup> Tara McKelvey, "A Soldier's Tale: Lynndie England," *Marie Claire*, May 18, 2009, <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/news/a170/lyndie-england-1/>.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 337.

was found to indicate whether or not SPC Wisdom was married; however, primary whistleblower SGT Darby was.<sup>273</sup>

## **E. RECREATION**

The idea of recreation as an influential factor in ultimately engaging in violence is prevalent in gang violence, yet evidenced in both case studies of My Lai and Abu Ghraib. Humans are active beings and boredom seems to naturally drive individuals to seek some sort of form of recreation.

### **1. Testing Recreation against the My Lai Case Study**

For the majority of Charlie Company, the weeks leading up to My Lai proved disappointing. Charlie Company had a key role in the planned mission to hunt down the VC 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion, but as weeks went by, the heavy combat that Charlie Company was anticipating proved absent. Charlie Company's soldiers began to feel isolated, as one member stated: "to be honest, we felt abandoned by anyone above us."<sup>274</sup> It is impossible to say for sure that the long days and weeks in the field with no enemy resistance created an environment of boredom; however, one could reasonably assume such. Boredom was a likely contributor to why the men participated in rapes and even early abuse; however, the stress and revengeful emotions of Charlie Company due to casualties the month before My Lai, seemed to have a larger influence at My Lai.

If boredom possibly contributed to some of the early abuse, mainly sexual abuse, committed by Charlie Company, at least leading up to My Lai, then one must look at CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour's situation to determine if they, too, were subject to boredom; however, there is a lack of evidence on either stance to show if the whistleblowers' lives as aerial reconnaissance crew were as long and monotonous as the soldiers of Charlie Company. The only substantial fact against boredom is that, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the missions of CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour were short, two-hour missions before they had to return to a landing zone for

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<sup>273</sup> Darby interview, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/exposing-the-truth-of-abu-ghraib/3/>.

<sup>274</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 70.

refueling.<sup>275</sup> Additionally, CWO Thompson possibly had mandatory crew rest as a pilot, another factor that might contrast the long, uneventful days of patrolling that Charlie Company was subject too; a factor that is also not substantial enough to validate the element of recreation.

## 2. Testing Recreation against the Abu Ghraib Case Study

Days and nights at Abu Ghraib were particularly monotonous for the MP's. When working on SSG Frederick's legal case, Zimbardo discovered SSG Frederick once worked 12-hour shifts for forty days straight.<sup>276</sup> When SSG Frederick's shift ended, he would sleep during most of his time before his next shift.<sup>277</sup> This blasé daily routine was typical. Zimbardo attributed the nightly boredom of having everything under control, to a desire for excitement.<sup>278</sup>

So is this to say that SGT Darby's job as a file clerk on the Abu Ghraib compound was exciting enough that he did feel the need to abuse prisoners for entertainment? The answer is no and is supported by several pieces of evidence. First of all, one should remember that SPC England was also a file clerk, which contradicts the inference that a lack of boredom is why the whistleblowers reported abuse. One file reportedly alleged that for SPC England, "the evening was a break from the tedium of her job processing prisoners."<sup>279</sup> SGT Darby very well could have sought out the same entertainment. Furthermore, other accounts of life at Abu Ghraib reveal that boredom from long, monotonous days were not limited to the MP's, such as Aiden Delgado's recollection that "boredom is a constant menace, for with boredom comes loneliness and depression"<sup>280</sup> which supplements his account earlier in this chapter of his peer soldiers entertaining themselves by watching camel spiders fight, hunting rats and dogs, etc. Analysis of this

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<sup>275</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 67.

<sup>276</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 347.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 352.

<sup>279</sup> "The Secret Files of Abu Ghraib," <http://www.duckdaotsu.org/080504-abughraib.html>.

<sup>280</sup> Delgado, *Sutras of Abu Ghraib*, 35.

element also fails to explain why SPC Wisdom, who was an MP, opted to report the abuse to his team leader instead of participating in it.

## **F. AGE**

As shown in Chapter III, age proves to be a powerful factor in gang involvement and at first glance, may serve as a candidate in explaining the disparate behavior between abusers and whistleblowers in cases such as My Lai and Abu Ghraib. The possible outcomes of the following analysis were that the whistleblowers were older than abusers, the abusers older than the whistleblowers, or a mix of ages. The reader should note that age does not necessarily correlate to experience, so perhaps experience is another element that should be tested in further research.

### **1. Testing Age against the My Lai Case Study**

In 1970, the Army Chief of Staff ordered an investigation into the demographics of Charlie Company. The age of the men, including the abusers, averaged only 20 years old.<sup>281</sup> After initial rejection for military service, 2LT Calley was re-evaluated and accepted,<sup>282</sup> joining the service at relatively older age of 24.<sup>283</sup> CAPT Medina, as a prior-enlisted man, was even older at the time of My Lai: 31 years old to be exact.<sup>284</sup> As a reminder, 2LT Calley and CAPT Medina were unarguably the most influential people when it came to abuse in My Lai, even though CAPT Medina was acquitted of all charges. This shows a clear case of age discrepancy between the “ring leaders” of abuse and those that followed along, or even chose inaction. Now it is time to look at the age of the whistleblowers.

CWO Thompson, the reconnaissance pilot whom managed to stop some of the murders at the tail end of the My Lai massacre, was 25 years old; also older than the

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<sup>281</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 3.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>283</sup> Jules Loh, “Average Guy Calley Found Niche in Army,” 25<sup>th</sup> Aviation Battalion, accessed February 2, 2015, <http://25thaviation.org/id299.htm>.

<sup>284</sup> “Ernest Medina,” *Trial*, accessed May 05, 2015, <http://www.trial-ch.org/en/ressources/trial-watch/trial-watch/profils/profile/144/action/show/controller/Profile.html>.

average age.<sup>285</sup> Ron Ridenhour, the helicopter gunner who wrote to Congress encouraging an investigation, was 22 years old at the time of My Lai.<sup>286</sup>

## **2. Testing Age against the Abu Ghraib Case Study**

According to the National Council of Disability, the average age of U.S. reserve troops deployed to Iraq was 33 years old.<sup>287</sup> Interestingly, the age of the nine soldiers initially convicted in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal averages 27. Furthermore, the highest ranking soldier of the group charged, SSGT Frederick and the “ringleader” of abuse, CPL Graner, are 37<sup>288</sup> and 34 years old respectively;<sup>289</sup> both higher than the average group of the convicted soldiers as well as the average age of reserve soldiers deployed to Iraq.

Regarding the whistleblowers, SPC Wisdom, whom initially reported the abuse he witnessed to his team leader, was 20 years old at the time,<sup>290</sup> and SGT Darby was 24 years old when he turned in the CD of photographs to CID.<sup>291</sup>

## **G. PEER INFLUENCE**

Similar to the diffusion of responsibility caused by deindividuation, diffusion of responsibility often grows from a group setting as well. Involvement in a group, especially a close-knit group which is engaged in war, has a strong affect on an individual not just to conform, but specifically not to go against the majority. One can see this

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<sup>285</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 135.

<sup>286</sup>“Ronald Ridenhour,” <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/11/us/ronald-ridenhour-52-veteran-who-reported-my-lai-massacre.html>.

<sup>287</sup> “Characteristics of Deployed Forces,” Publications and Policy Briefs, National Council on Disability, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2009/March042009/section2>.

<sup>288</sup> Jamie Wilson, “Eight Years for U.S. Soldier Who Abused Prisoners,” *The Guardian*, October 22, 2004, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/22/usa.iraq>.

<sup>289</sup> CNN Wire Staff, “Notorious Abu Ghraib Guard Released From Prison,” *CNN*, August 6, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/08/06/abu.ghraib.release/>.

<sup>290</sup> Graveline, *Secrets of Abu Ghraib*, 4.

<sup>291</sup> “Most Inspiring Person of the Year 2004,” Belief Net, accessed February 13, 2015, <http://www.beliefnet.com/Inspiration/Most-Inspiring-Person-Of-The-Year/2004/Most-Inspiring-Person-of-the-Year-2004.aspx>.

abnormally strong social dynamic when looking at psychology, engagement in terrorism, gang involvement, etc.

### **1. Testing Peer Influence against the My Lai Case Study**

Although 2LT Calley was the only individual charged in the case of My Lai, it is widely known that he was not a single actor who orchestrated a mass murder of hundreds of civilians. It is no secret that many soldiers murdered that day in My Lai. My Lai is often described as a “killing spree,” or a “massacre,” as in its notorious name.

Without a doubt, the group dynamic of Charlie Company created an environment that allowed abuse to escalate to the point of rape, torture, and murder. Countless accounts of soldiers from Charlie Company recall the tight knit group. One soldier said “We were all close, the whole company—I had to depend on them and they had to depend on me... This is all we had; this was all the people in the company felt they were answerable to. They felt they were answerable to the company commander and the other people around—and nobody else.”<sup>292</sup> Soldiers, who were later horrified of their behavior, remembered being a part of the group frenzy which left so many people dead: “I cut their throats, cut off their hands, cut out their tongue, their hair, scalped them. I did it. A lot of people were doing it and I just followed. I just lost all sense of direction.”<sup>293</sup> Even the photographer with the company felt the strong sense of the group: “I was part of it, everyone who was there was part of it, and that includes the General and the Colonel flying above in their helicopters. They’re all part of it. We all were. Just one big group.”<sup>294</sup> Endless accounts of this murderous group mentality exist among the soldiers of Charlie Company; however, was this the case with the whistleblowers as well?

CWO Thompson and Ron Ridenhour were each part of a small three-man team on their respective helicopters. CWO Thompson, although he had an external chain of command, was the senior person in his helicopter as the pilot. As mentioned before, even with his chain of command back at LZ Dottie and the leadership that he supported

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<sup>292</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 130.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

for the group troops, CWO Thompson only had communications through one of his gunships which provided him cover.<sup>295</sup> With this set up, CWO Thompson, or Ron Ridenhour for that matter, were not subject to the external forces of peer pressure from a group. Perhaps it is unfair to say that Thompson or Ridenhour would have participated in the abuse at Abu Ghraib if they were infantry soldiers at My Lai; however, one cannot assume that they would have stopped the massacre either. Regardless, a strong peer influence existed among the soldiers of Charlie Company which was not present among CWO Thompson or Ron Ridenhour.

## **2. Testing Peer Influence against the Abu Ghraib Case Study**

Not surprisingly, peer influence appears to have a profound influence on the abusers at Abu Ghraib. As the “ring leader” of abuse at Abu Ghraib, CPL Graner did not, nor did anyone else, order the other soldiers to participate in abuse of detainees; however, he seemed to take pride in what he could make others do, specifically SPC England. The infamous photograph of SPC England holding a makeshift leash which is around a detainee’s neck was taken by CPL Graner and sent home with his family, with a caption that read “Look at what I made Lynndie do.”<sup>296</sup> His personality created a desire for many to want to follow CPL Graner’s lead, and to be a part of his group.

Now, one should consider the whistleblowers. SPC Wisdom had every opportunity to jump in and participate in the abuse when he walked in Tier 1A, but he did not. In this case, other element(s) overpowered any peer influence to join the other soldiers in abuse. Not only was SPC Wisdom compelled to not to participate, but he felt he should report the abuse to his team leader. SGT Darby, on the other hand, was simply not exposed to the peer influence of abuse like those in Tier 1A were. He acted as an individual.

With select elements tested against each case study, one can begin to see how some, but not all of the elements help formulate an answer to why some individuals participate in abuse, while some actively object by reporting it. From the final model

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<sup>295</sup> Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry*, 67.

<sup>296</sup>“A Soldier’s Tale,” <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/news/a170/lynndie-england-1/>.

formed by these elements, measures of abuse prevention and encouragement of reporting is determined in the next chapter.



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## **V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

This thesis investigated various models from multiple bodies of literature, including psychology; terrorist engagement; terrorist disengagement, deradicalization, and non-radicalization; and gang involvement. There were many elements from many models to analyze and this thesis found 4 elements that provided substantial support in answering the research questions. Now that each element in the preliminary model is tested against the My Lai and Abu Ghraib case studies, an explanation of how each element fared starts off this chapter, followed by the final model of elements which “passed” the test, and lastly, possible preventative measures derived from the final model, ideally leaving the reader with an enhanced understanding of why some U.S. service members commit abuse while others report and stop the abuse.

### **A. ELEMENTS THAT FAILED THE TEST**

#### **1. Age**

The age discrepancy between the “ringleaders” of abuse and the remaining abusers that seem to have followed orders appears consistent in both case studies; however, one of the main purposes of this thesis is to look into the disparate behaviors of the whistleblowers as well. In My Lai, the whistleblowers, like the ringleaders of abuse, were older than the average age of those that participated in abuse. In contrast, the whistleblowers of Abu Ghraib were significantly younger. The correlation that those leading the abuse are older may stand fast in other case studies, but the mixed results with the relative age of whistleblowers leads to the conclusion that the element of age fails the test and is excluded from the final model.

#### **2. Family Obligations**

As one can see from the analysis in Chapter IV, the absence of family obligations does not mean a U.S. service member will participate in abuse. Furthermore, even though analysis does show that the primary whistleblowers, CWO Thompson and SGT Darby did have family obligations, namely spouses; it is unknown about the other

whistleblowers, Ron Ridenhour and SPC Wisdom. This element does not help distinguish those more prone to abuse, nor does it indicate individuals more prone to stopping abuse. At first look, one might infer that having family obligations may keep an individual's moral standards "in-check"; however, as shown in the Abu Ghraib case study, CPL Graner emailed pictures of the abuse home to his family. This element does not provide strong enough support to differentiate and explain the difference between the behavior of the abusers and the behavior of the whistleblowers.

### **3. Recreation**

Although the need for recreation seems a possible contributor to early abuse leading up to My Lai and Abu Ghraib, it is not substantiated enough with evidence to infer that the abusers had boring, monotonous lives that caused them to abuse for the sake of entertainment, while the lack of boredom influenced the whistleblowers to report abuse.

## **B. ELEMENTS THAT PASSED THE TEST**

### **1. Sequential Nature**

The stark difference in exposure levels between abusers and whistleblowers is profound and perhaps the most influential element in answering the research questions of this thesis. One soldier in My Lai made a statement that subtly and probably unintentionally points us to a possible solution when it comes to the danger of desensitization from the sequential nature of an abusive environment. He states:

When I saw American soldiers committing acts that would be called atrocities if someone else had done them, I began to think that maybe I'd been just too naïve all my life, that this was the way things really were. Little by little, I began to see that this group of men was getting out of control. Discipline was beginning to wear off. Without military discipline they were there alone in the country with no point of reference. The things that they had brought from their families and schools were far away and beginning to disappear.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Bilton, *Four Hours*, 80.

This statement is exemplary when showing how desensitization occurs when the sequential nature of abuse escalates in both quantity and quality. The moral standards we learn and develop in childhood can diminish over time when we are in an isolated environment which pushes our tolerance of immoral actions in small increments. As evidenced by both case studies, a break in these isolated environments has critical impact in stopping the increase of tolerance for immoral behavior.

## **2. Anxiety and Fear**

Based on analysis of the element of anxiety and fear, it is clear that the abusers of My Lai and Abu Ghraib faced higher levels and more types of stress than whistleblowers; with the exception of fear of retribution that the whistleblowers experienced. Even so, fear of retribution ultimately did not keep the whistleblowers from reporting abuse, which is why they are considered whistleblowers.

## **3. Deindividuation**

Although reduced social-accountability did not seem to be notably different between the abusers and whistleblowers of My Lai, a difference existed among those involved in Abu Ghraib. Furthermore, reduced self-evaluation proved largely different between abusers and whistleblowers of both case studies, leaving this element a strong indicator of why individuals participated in abuse, while the whistleblowers actively objected. Strong emotions from a catalyst event, a blasé view of the future and the mission, and engagement in hyperintense action all were characteristic among the abusers of My Lai and Abu Ghraib.

## **4. Peer Influence**

With the exception of SPC Wisdom, who seemed more influenced by the lack of sequential nature of abuse from his R&R leave, than by peer influence, the abusers acted in groups while the whistleblowers acted either as individuals or as a part of extremely small teams, such as the reconnaissance air crews of My Lai. This is not to assume that an individual cannot act alone in abuse; however, participation in abuse seems to be exasperated by the peer influence of others. Logically, this makes sense considering

group dynamics often lead to a diffusion of responsibility. Zimbardo describes this effect; known as the “Mardi Gras effect,” which involves “temporarily giving up the traditional cognitive and moral constraints on personal behavior when part of a group of like-minded revelers bent on having fun now without concern for subsequent consequences and liabilities.”<sup>298</sup> In My Lai and Abu Ghraib, group dynamics largely influenced the abusers while acting alone or in small groups enabled the whistleblowers to report abuse.

### C. THE FINAL MODEL

The final model is of little use if potential abuse prevention is not derived from it. With that said, some of the elements are inherent by nature and their conduciveness to abuse cannot be mitigated. In these cases, leaders can enhance awareness of their existence and maintain strong oversight. As for the remaining elements, there are things that, if implemented or improved, can reduce the potential for abuse and encourage reporting abuse.

Table 2. The 4-Element Final Model.

ELEMENT	ORIGINATING AUTHOR/MODEL
Sequential Nature	1. Stanley Milgram’s Obedience Paradigm 2. Peers Inquiry
Anxiety and Fear	1. Stanley Milgram’s Obedience Paradigm 2. Cragin’s Model of Non-Radicalization 3. Peers Inquiry
Deindividuation	1. Philip Zimbardo’s Social Dynamics 2. Janowski’s Model 3. Schlesinger Report
Peer Influence	1. Schlesinger Report 2. Janowski’s Model

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<sup>298</sup> Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 306–307.

## **D. MEASURES THAT POTENTIALLY DETER ABUSE AND ENCOURAGE REPORTING DERIVED FROM THE FINAL MODEL**

### **1. Shorter Time in Theater**

The concept of R&R, or “rest and recuperation,” is not a new concept, nor is other efforts to increase the moral of U.S. service members on deployment. Recently, the Department of Defense has established programs, including R&R sites in major operational areas, to provide service members the opportunity to “unwind” in a relatively safe recreation environment.<sup>299</sup> This program was established to supplement the Non-Chargeable Rest and Recuperation (NCR&R) program, where service members were authorized 15 days of leave back to the United States, but only if they already had 270 days out of at least 365 days in country.<sup>300</sup> While attempts at improving moral of U.S. service members are admirable and indeed important, NCR&R has a more subtle, but equally as important effect on service members and that is allowing them to return to an environment where they can recalibrate their moral standards back to that of society. As we have seen in the case studies, this is a critical component that largely defined the disparate behavior between abusers and whistleblowers.

To send U.S. service members home more frequently or even to shorten deployments and rotate units more quickly would indeed be taxing on U.S. resources; however, if it means preventing another My Lai or Abu Ghraib, then efforts would be worthwhile. Setting up R&R sites in operational areas may be great for morale, but it does not allow individuals to return to society and undo the desensitization that often occurs from isolated environments conducive to abuse. Although it may seem innocuous, as abuse as large scale as My Lai and Abu Ghriab does not occur often, less time in a stressful operational environment is a break in the sequential nature that nearly always accompanies abusive environments.

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<sup>299</sup> Matthew M. Burke, “Military’s New R&R Plan Doesn’t Include Leaving Afghanistan,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.stripes.com/news/military-s-new-r-r-plan-doesn-t-include-leaving-afghanistan-1.180662>.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

## **2. Mandatory Defuse Time after Catalyst Event**

As we have seen with the above analysis of My Lai and Abu Ghraib, over charged emotions induces deindividuation, which masks all moral reasoning and enables individuals to partake in extreme abuse without regard of consequence. My Lai and Abu Ghraib have shown us that these over charged emotions occur after catalyst events, such as a death of a fellow service member, or an incident in which fellow service members were injured or nearly injured. Currently, offering trips to the Chaplain seem the normal protocol after a tragic or frightening event; however, this is usually option, as not all service members are religious and for the most part, individuals are allowed to grieve in their own way.

Although it would be difficult to measure who was affected by injury or death of a fellow service member, or even a close call where one's self was in harm's way, establishing a mandatory time away from the operational setting would help defuse hyper emotions which are conducive to abusing the enemy out of revenge, fear, or other strong feelings. It is clearly unreasonable to send an entire unit home after the death or serious injury of a fellow service member; however, perhaps enforcing down time at an R&R site with both individual and group counseling would be beneficial, if the mission permitted it.

## **3. Encourage Knowledge and Use of Ways to Anonymously Report Abuse**

Anonymous outlets for reporting abuse within the U.S. Government have come a long way. As the reader saw in analysis of My Lai and Abu Ghraib, bystanders that witnessed abuse were often too scared to confront the group and stop the abuse, and most of those who did report the abuse expected or were fearful of some sort of repercussion. Analysis of the peer influence element showed the strong social conformity that individuals are subject to within a group. Providing a safe, anonymous way to report abuse is imperative to encouraging individuals to speak up. Many U.S. Government entities, such as Department of Navy, mandates annual training to raise awareness of

anonymous reporting hotlines and grievance procedures to report abuse.<sup>301</sup> This training and awareness of abuse reporting should certainly continue.

## **E. FINAL CONCLUSION**

The measures above, of course, cannot be substituted for training, good leadership, command climate, and many other factors which strongly influence whether or not a military environment is one conducive to abuse. Procedures and training are in place to attempt to prevent environments conducive to abuse, yet they still occasionally occur, which is why identifying factors that may encourage whistleblowers to stop abuse at its early stages is another imperative approach that should supplement the methods already in place to prevent abusive environments.

The potential measures of abuse prevention, and likewise, encouragement of reporting, in this chapter are not ground-breaking discoveries; however, analysis in this thesis has shown that these means are potential ways to close the gap between abusers and whistleblowers by not just identifying factors which are conducive to abuse, but factors which encourage reporting abuse. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of the measures already in place is counterfactual. One will never know of the situation which was stopped at its early stages, but if allowed to continue, would have turned into a scandal as notorious and damaging as My Lai or Abu Ghraib. In the meantime, the U.S. Government can only hope that situations conducive to abuse are identified and quelled at their early stages, whether that is due to stopping abuse before it begins, or reporting abuse at its earliest stages before it evolves into something worth grabbing the attention of world media. On a closing note, even though the measures in this chapter are not always feasible or efficient, one hopefully has at least a better understanding of not just what factors lead to abuse, but even more so what conditions are conducive to whistle blowing. We can tell ourselves all day long that we are too moral to commit the atrocities of My Lai and Abu Ghraib; however, this thesis hopefully leaves the reader with a better

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<sup>301</sup> “NAVADMIN 202/14,” NAVADMIN’s, Reference Library, Navy Personnel Command, last modified May 26, 2015, <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/messages/documents/navadmins/nav2014/nav14202.txt>.



understanding of elements of abuse and whistle blowing, and the realization that someday one might end up in a situation with a very powerful choice to participate or stop abuse.

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