As soon as men decide that all means are permitted to fight an evil, then their good becomes indistinguishable from the evil that they set out to destroy.

- Christopher Dawson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Sivits</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Miller</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Darby</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Analysis and Discussion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Zimbardo and Colonel James</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defusing the <em>Bad Barrel</em></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source material</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmography</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1 – List of Participants</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2 - Pictures</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract
This project wishes to explain why people perform acts which would normally go against their own morals. The project will examine the “Bad Barrel” theory by Dr. Philip Zimbardo in relation to the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal. The theory will be extracted from Dr. Zimbardo’s own book called “The Lucifer Effect” and there will be an account of the 6 days of the “Stanford Prison Experiment”, on which the theory is based. To relate it to Abu Ghraib and the abuses, there will be a profile of the most important people. Finally there will be made use of the article “Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity” by Haslam and Reicher, to question and criticize the theory of Dr. Zimbardo.

The project will conclude that the “Bad Barrel” theory is a stepping stone towards explaining why people turn towards malignant behavior, but there are other factors to be taken into account.

Introduction
During the course of life, as most of us shuffle about in quiet dignified anonymity, we are endlessly confronted by tragedy upon tragedy that we humans inflict upon one another. However every time we are confronted with such affronts, be they war crimes, abuses of power or just plain violence, we always comfort ourselves with the fact that the kind of people who commit such heinous acts are clearly deranged or suffer from some form of mental disorder and that we ourselves would never stoop to such brutal and unacceptable behavior.

But maybe that is not exactly the way it works. Maybe evil isn’t born but created, shaped by external forces to such a degree that even good, normal
and sensible human beings can be corrupted and influenced to such a
degree that acts of malignancy no longer seem wrong and that the cruel and
heartless suddenly seems plausible and right.

There are many different theories dealing with the issue of evil and one of
the most prevalent and commonly known theories is that of Zimbardo, who
is known as an expert on the subject of evil. But many questions spring to
mind when one considers the acts of cruelty committed by the few against
the inaction of the many.

In chapter 1, which explains Dr. Philip Zimbardo and his “Stanford Prison
Experiment”, there will be an account for the 6 days the experiment lasted
and an account for the theory Zimbardo extracted from it. Chapter 2
profiles the Abu Ghraib prison and of the most important people involved in
the abuses. It will also include chosen pictures of the abuse, which were
leaked to the press in 2004.

Chapter 3 compares the cases of the “Stanford Prison Experiment” and the
Abu Ghraib scandal, and gives an account of the differences and similarities.
Finally there is a comparison and discussion of Dr. Zimbardo’s “Bad Barrel”-
theory and the theory of Dr. Haslam and Dr. Reicher, with use of their
article “Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity.”

Finally it will be concluded, that the theory of Zimbardo, which is based on
the idea of the environment and conditions being the main reason to moral
decay, does not explain why people turn towards cruel behavior and there
are other factors to be taken into account.
**Problem Formulation**

How does Philip Zimbardo’s theory of the *Bad Barrel* hold up in a different setting, specifically when looking at the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, and can the theory be accepted as gospel or are there other factors to take into account?

**Research questions**

What happened during the *Stanford Prison Experiment*?

What does the theory that Zimbardo developed on the basis of the experiment entail?

What transpired at Abu Ghraib and how can it relate to Zimbardo’s experiment?

How is the Zimbardo theory applicable to Abu Ghraib and what other theoretical explanations for what happened might there be?

**Reflections on Project Technique and Method**

**Case choice**

We have chosen to look at the cases of the *Stanford Prison Experiment* and the abuses at Abu Ghraib. These two cases seemed to us to have strikingly many similarities and the similarities produced a curiosity for whether or not a comparison of the two would shed more light on what actually happened during the experiment at Stanford, and how the events there might lead to an understanding of what went wrong at the prison of Abu Ghraib.
Literature on the *Stanford Prison Experiment*, by Zimbardo himself, was used to give the necessary insight to the thoughts behind the experiment, the conditions under which the participants acted and the events that unfolded. Chapter 1 of our project, where the experiment is described in detail, is written as to be close to the description Dr. Zimbardo makes in *The Lucifer Effect*. This was chosen to give a detailed look into the experiment and the reasoning behind the conclusions that Zimbardo arrives at.

The experiment itself and the conclusions drawn from it were applied to the case of Abu Ghraib, in order to try and give a psychological explanation for the deeds done there. Another point of view is introduced in the essay *Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity*. This essay is used to contest Zimbardo’s *Bad Barrel* theory and to bring another perspective to his experiment. In order to give as truthful a description of the events as possible, and the motives instigating it, we have found it necessary to acquire more than just the one point of view; therefore including not only Zimbardo’s own theories and findings but also contesting opinions and experiments.

To produce an understanding of the conditions in, and the decisions made at, Abu Ghraib the documentary film and book both titled *Standard Operating Procedure*, the book *Fixing Hell* and Dr. Zimbardo’s conclusions, derived from the *Stanford Prison Experiment*, have been analyzed and compared. We chose to use these materials to give the project a varied picture of what, how and why things happened as they did. We used Zimbardo’s conclusions, the book *Fixing Hell* and the article *Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity* in order to discuss the validity of the theories used in the respective sources.
Evolution of the Project

The project started as a project about the banality of evil with a focus on how groups could corrupt individuals to reject their own moral guidelines in exchange for those of the group. As our work on the project continued we found it more interesting to look at how external stress-inducing stimuli could make an entire group of otherwise well-adjusted people turn evil. We then decided that it would be the purpose of this project to use Zimbardo’s theory, derived from his previous work with the Stanford Prison Experiment, on the case of Abu Ghraib and use this theory to explain the prisoner abuses that were common at the facility. We then moved on to wanting to use Zimbardo’s Bad Barrel theory to explain a situation where people resisted similar external influences, did not succumb to the pressure of the group and were able to fight back and have a positive influence on the situation, in other words a good case. On this note we looked into the Sophie Scholl-case¹ from WWII, where a group of people tried to defy the regime, and also at the genocide in Rwanda, which is why we watched the film Hotel Rwanda² as it portrays a group of people not succumbing to the evil of their situation. This so-called good chapter was continuously pushed back and we finally decided to not include this part, even though it would have been interesting to bring into the discussion, in order to focus more on the discussion between the different theories concerning what induces this aberrant behavior. The primary reasons for this decision were the pressing deadline and that we were not able to find a fitting good case. We decided that our discussion would now be focused more on a comparison between different theories concerning evil and use them to explain the reasoning of

the people involved in the cruel behavior towards detainees at Abu Ghraib. To give a more nuanced discussion, *Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity* was brought in to give us yet another perspective on the catalyst for the corruption of a group’s morals.

**Use of Supervisor**

The use of the supervisor has been vitally important to our work on this project. It has been a great help to us to have him follow up on our ideas and suggestions and continuously comment on them, thus polishing, helping, guiding and showing us the way back on track if it seemed necessary. We have repeatedly, during our work on the project, sent bits of the report for him to read and criticize as he saw fit. He has been quick to reply and give constructive feedback, often within a day, which has been of great importance since this has allowed us to proceed rapidly. Our supervisor has also been able to give us a nudge and get us going with the writing process.

**Evolution of the Groups Working Methods**

In the beginning of the project we did a lot of information seeking over a broad spectrum all to do with the topic of evil. As our information-gathering bore fruit and we began to narrow it down to something that might be a basis for a project. For a significant period of time after having decided upon our focus, we found that we had some serious trouble getting started with the writing process and continuously fuddled around trying to come up with a perfect outline, almost expecting to have a perfect project before we had even started. When we finally got started, it was not by our own initiative, but rather thanks to the efforts of our supervisor who spurred us on by setting a deadline for handing over a first draft if the first two
chapters. As soon as we got started writing we quickly distributed the work among us and continued to work in groups of two and three. We continued this form of work, meeting up after a weekend of intense writing, to get started on putting our two chapters together. When we reached a point where we felt secure enough in the contents of these two chapters we once again united and began to collectively write a discussion and comparison between the cases studied in the two chapters. As this comparison was written we started to divide the work amongst ourselves and once more split up into teams of two and three to deal with the formalities required in an academic project.

What we would do differently

If presented with a chance to work together again we will try to be more organized during the early days of the project work. We would also like to have begun the writing process earlier than we did and thus be finished with sections of the project earlier, and maybe avoid the long days of writing that we had to endure in order to get the project in the direction we wanted it to go. We would also have decided on some minor formalities, for instance how to make references. Also we would have liked to discover some of our source material earlier, as it has come to be a vital part of the project, and because of the late discovery we might not feel as well acquainted with the material as would have been preferable. We are aware, though, that it will probably always be the case with some sources because as you get on with the project, and the process, it becomes more evident what is needed in order to argue a better case. You simply know your project better further in the process and thus become more able to pinpoint relevant literature. For example we have
now found an article by S. H. Lovibond, Mithiran and W. G. Adams\(^3\) where they build on the theories proposed by Zimbardo, in much the same way as Haslam and Reicher, and examine the possible changes in the social organization of a prison and the effects hereof.

**Dimensions**

**Science and Philosophy**

There are many theories as to what makes a person commit evil. Some argue that there has to be some predisposition for corruption of a person’s morals to occur, while others tend to say that it is not the person but the situation that is liable to create evil. While this project might take a mainly psychological approach to discussing these differences of opinion, the data that the opinions are based on are still unclear and inconclusive to a point where rendering any attempt to claim one viewpoint truer than the other purely speculative. This places our problem firmly within the field of philosophy. Furthermore this project is dealing with a very important ethical question, in the sense that we discuss how the morals of an individual changes and whether or not the blame lies with the individual or the situation.

**Subjectivity and Learning**

In our project we are looking into how individuals react and might alter their personalities when becoming a part of a group. Groups tend to form their own set of social rules, norms and views. The project also delves into how, and indeed if, people can be influenced not only by the group but also

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by external factors and thus be driven towards cruel or malignant acts if placed in a suitable environment. Also discussed in this project is the possibility of being driven towards a decay of personal morals by having it justified and thus be coerced to do acts of evil. Since the processes involved are actively changing a person’s views on acts such as physical abuse and degradation of ones fellow man, this falls under the dimension of Subjectivity and Learning.

Chapter 1: The Stanford Prison Experiment

The premise of the Stanford Prison Experiment was simple enough. Take some perfectly healthy, young, normal and mentally stable people with no previous prison experience and randomly assign them roles as either guards or prisoners and place them in a prison setting, with few directives on how to behave and only a few vague rules to follow and see if these young people change their behavior according to the roles and settings or if they act like the intelligent and perfectly normal people they are. In short: to see whether it takes a cruel person to be cruel. During the course of the experiment all the participants changed more than anyone anticipated, to such a degree that even the professor in charge of the experiment, Dr. Philip Zimbardo, who played the dual roles of prison superintendent and chief researcher of the experiment, was completely sucked in by the setting, so much that he became blind to what quickly turned into severe abuses and the systematic breakdown of the prisoners’ identities.

But how could the situation deteriorate so quickly? How could these people transform into the roles they had been assigned in such short time? To try to explain this sudden change and the quick surfacing of aberrant and
violent behavior one must look closely into the process that these people were exposed to and the events that led to the sudden escalation of cruelty that surfaced in the *Stanford Prison Experiment*. Here follows a description of what happened during the days of this experiment. The primary source for this chapter is Zimbardo’s *The Lucifer Effect*.

**Day 1**

On the first day of the experiment the people who had been assigned the role of prisoners were, without warning, picked up and taken through the booking process by real police officers in a real police station and then brought to a basement at Stanford University. This place had been modified with iron barred doors, a place for solitary confinement, The Hole, which consisted of a large closet. The entire facility was outfitted with surveillance equipment, so that the researchers could follow what happened.

The guards were waiting for the prisoners who upon arriving were blindfolded, stripped of their personal effects and clothes, forced to stand with their hands against the walls with their legs spread and to hold this uncomfortable position, while the guards packed away their personal belongings. After this they were sprayed with white powder that was, according to the guards, a form of delousing powder. Then they were given a smock, a pair of rubber clogs and part of a stocking to cover their hair, instead of the traditional head shave that is often a part of the protocol in standard prisons.

After this, the prisoners had their blindfolds removed and were subjected to the first show of power by the guards, who quickly asserted their position as the ruling cadre in this unfamiliar setting by carrying a billy club, wearing uniforms and reflecting sunglasses. One of the guards, Arnett,
started reciting the rules that the guards and researchers had agreed on at a staff meeting they had held the day before. The rules were as follows:

1. Prisoners must remain silent during rest periods, after lights out, during meals, and whenever they are outside the prison yard.

2. Prisoners must eat at mealtimes and only at mealtimes.

3. Prisoners must participate in all prison activities.

4. Prisoners must keep their cell clean at all times. Beds must be made and personal effects must be neat and orderly. Floors must be spotless.

5. Prisoners must not move, tamper with, deface, or damage walls, ceilings, windows, doors, or any prison property.

6. Prisoners must never operate cell lighting.

7. Prisoners must address each other by number only.

8. Prisoners must always address the guards as “Mr. Correctional Officer” and the Warden as “Mr. Chief Correctional Officer.”

9. Prisoners must never refer to their condition as an “experiment” or “simulation.” They are imprisoned until paroled.

10. Prisoners will be allowed 5 minutes in the lavatory. No prisoner will be allowed to return to the lavatory within 1 hour after a scheduled lavatory period. Lavatory visitations are controlled by the guards.

11. Smoking is a privilege. Smoking will be allowed after meals or at the discretion of the guard. Prisoners must never smoke in the cells. Abuse of the smoking privilege will result in permanent revocation of the smoking privilege.

12. Mail is a privilege. All mail flowing in and out of the prison will be inspected and censored.

13. Visitors are a privilege. Prisoners who are allowed a visitor must meet him or her at the door to The Yard. The visit will be supervised by a guard, and the guard may terminate the visit at his discretion.

14. All prisoners in each cell will stand whenever the warden, the prison superintendent, or any other visitors arrive on the premises. Prisoners will wait on orders to be seated or to resume activities.
15. Prisoners must obey all orders issued by guards at all times. A guard’s order supersedes any written order. A warden’s order supersedes both the guard’s orders and the written rules. Orders of the superintendent of the prison are supreme.

16. Prisoners must report all rule violations to the guards. [...]

17. Failure to obey any of the above rules may result in punishment.”

During this recitation Arnett continuously reminds the prisoners that they will do well to learn the rules, which they will regularly be quizzed on and are expected to know by heart.

On the prisoner smocks an arbitrary 3-4 digit number has been sewn on the front. This number is the prisoners’ identity and will take the place of their name for the duration of their stay. Following the plan that was agreed upon at the staff meeting the day before, the guards make the prisoners say their numbers out loud. This serves the dual purpose of familiarizing the prisoners with their numbers and also helps the guards quickly assert their dominance over the newly imprisoned young men. The prisoners are then shown to their randomly assigned cells and get some time to acquaint themselves with their surroundings.

After some time the night shift guards take over and the day shift leaves the premises. They serve dinner at 7 PM but since The Yard, the area right outside the individual cells, is rather small and the table only has room for 6 of the 9 prisoners, the guards determine that six prisoners will be allowed to eat first and, when they’re done, the remaining three can come and “eat what is left”. One of the prisoners finds this to be unacceptable and suggests a nonviolent protest but fail to rally the other prisoners to his cause and in the end he too joins the meal.

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4 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 3 P. 44 L. 4 – P. 45 L. 3
5 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 3 P. 48 L. 5
After eating, the prisoners are taken back to their cells where, as stated earlier in the rules, they are to refrain from talking. However prisoner 819 and 8612 disobey and talk joyfully and laugh heartily. This breach of the rules goes unpunished.

After a short period of inactivity one of the guards, Hellmann, initiates another count and tells the prisoners that until they do it flawlessly, they will not get to go to bed. Even though the prisoners perform admirably, Hellmann, now joined by another guard called Landry, make them do it again and again in ever more difficult and imaginative ways, all the while initiating punishments for imagined faults in their execution of said counts.

It quickly becomes apparent that Hellmann and Landry are having a power struggle where they constantly try to one-up each other with continuously more creative counts and punishments which, for now, are limited to physical exercise, much as it would be in an army boot camp. Some of the prisoners catch on to this and begin snickering and laughing at this somewhat childish power struggle, but the guards quickly identify and punish these shows of frivolity with even more physical exercises. Especially 819 gets singled out and punished because he is not taking it very serious. Hellmann then somewhat revolutionizes the count by forcing the prisoners to sing their numbers and, even though this exercise is obviously silly and a little funny, the guards make it clear that there is nothing funny about it and once again punish those who disagree with more physical workouts.

The remaining guards enter The Yard, including Burdan who had to step in because of a last minute cancelation.
The guards shift from having the prisoners recite their number from 1 to 9 in the order they are lined up, to making them recite their prisoner ID numbers. Burdan quickly assumes the role of being a guard and takes it a step further by being more physical, pulling prisoners out of the line and having them do solos.

When prisoner 8612 denies having enjoyed the counts, when asked by the guard Hellmann, he is placed in The Hole all the while shouting freedom slogans.

**Day 2**

The day starts at 6 AM. When all the prisoners are out their cells guard Ceros starts out by physically adjusting the prisoners’ sloppy posture. Before breakfast is served, the prisoners have to have a lesson on the rules and do the morning’s exercise. Guard Vandy starts the lesson and quickly Ceros is in a scrutinizing mood, walking past the prisoners again and again playing with his billy club and making threatening gestures, bashing the club in his palm, whilst yelling at the prisoners when they are too slow at repeating the rules. At one point prisoner 819 laughs at the situation and the guard suggests that “Maybe we’ll have something special for 819.” Despite of this warning 819 continues to attract focus by quitting the exercise and refuses to continue, making the rest of the prisoners stop until he re-enters. Eventually he plays along as not to cause trouble for his fellow inmates. But his disobedience has already earned him a seat in The Hole.

After having placed 819 in The Hole the guards carry on. Varnish decides to display his dominance over the prisoners, by telling them what to think.

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6 Zimbardo, P G *The Lucifer Effect* Ch. 4 P. 57 L. 22
“[…] 4325, what kind of day is this?”
“It’s a good day, Mr. Correctional Officer—”
“No. It’s a wonderful day!”
“Yes sir, Mr. Correctional Officer.”

They begin to chant, “It’s a wonderful day, Mr. Correctional Officer.”
“4325, what kind of day is it?”
“It’s a good day.”

Vandy: “Wrong. It’s a wonderful day!”
“Yes sir. It’s a wonderful day.”

After this, Vandy sends the prisoners to their cells to tidy up and prepare it for the inspection three minutes later.

Still tired from the night and frustrated with the guards, the prisoners have their cells inspected. The guards are not content with what the prisoners have achieved. Having expressed his malcontent with 8612’s bed, Vandy grabs sheets and blankets and throws them to the ground. Obviously angered by Vandy’s action, 8612 leaps at him. Vandy fights him off, strikes him in the chest, even though physical violence is prohibited, and calls out to the other guards for help. The guards get a hold of 8612 and throw him in The Hole without much concern for his wellbeing.

In The Hole the two disobedient prisoners, 819 and 8612, start to plan a revolt but since the toilet schedule is so tight, and both of them need to go, they decide to postpone the revolt. While they sit in The Hole the rest of the prisoners are served breakfast. This is in no way going according to the rules as the prisoners are sitting on the floor and not obeying the rule of keeping quiet during meal-time. The prisoners are discussing a hunger strike in solidarity with their comrades in The Hole, which the guards do not approve of. At the same time they figure that they should demand to get

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7 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 58 L. 18 – L. 27
some of their things back e.g. spectacles, medication and books. When breakfast is over with, prisoners 5486 and 7258 continue this disorderly behavior by not complying with the guards’ orders to return to their cells, forcing the guards having to push them into the cells, but as The Hole is already filled with rebellious prisoners, this punishment is not an option. Prisoners in cell 3 volunteer to do the dishes but, despite their best intentions, this sentiment goes against their fellow prisoners’ plan of rebellion.

The guards, thinking this eagerness to create a prisoner uprising must come from a lack of strictness in their behavior, instate a morning work period, today consisting of scrubbing the walls and floors. Another aspect of the higher level of strictness is that the guards grab all the blankets in both cell 2 and 3, go outside and drag them through the bushes, so that small burrs or stickers, as the guards insist on calling it, get stuck, before handing them back to the prisoners. They now have to pull out these pointy seedpods if they don’t want to get stung when using them. This senseless work gets to prisoner 5704, who starts yelling about how stupid it is and refuses to do any of it. Being addicted to cigarettes, he now thinks that refusing to do as he is told might not be wise if he wants to smoke, so after this little fit he starts picking the stickers from the blanket. This is the point of these kinds of chores. It is a way for the guards to show the prisoners who is in charge of this circus and who makes the calls. The guards didn’t find anything wrong with these mindless chores, on the contrary, they wanted to punish the rebellious prisoners. The last thing to happen during the morning shift is that a group of three prisoners tries to win some power by ripping their numbers off and complaining about the conditions under which they are held captive. To control them, the guards rush in and strip them naked.
They remain naked as long as the numbers are off. But an uprising is under way.

As the day shift arrives and goes on duty, the rebellion is on. The day shift keeps the morning shift on duty to help get this riot under control. The new head of the rebellion, prisoner 5704, convince his cell mates to barricade themselves in their cell using the beds to block the only door, covering it with their blankets. Because they cannot get into cell 1 the guards turn to cell 2. They rush in and handcuff prisoners 8612, 819 and 1037 in their cell, while removing their beds to The Yard. The prisoners struggle and 819 screams: “No, no, no! This is an experiment! Leave me alone! Shit, let go of me, fucker! You’re not going to take our fucking beds!” Arnett says that they can get back their things when cell 1 stops rebelling. Confused, 8612 utters that they don’t take away prisoners’ clothes and beds in real prisons to which another prisoner states that they actually do. This is somewhat surprising, since none of the participants has previous experience with regular prisons.

8612 signals that he wants to get his stuff back. Ceros choose to show his refusal by bashing the bars with his club, almost hitting 8612’s fingers. As the guards move towards cell 3, 8612 and 1037 warn the prisoners in the cell and tell them to barricade themselves as cell 1 did. 1037 even encourages violent resistance. Trying to cool down cell 2, Landry grabs a fire extinguisher and fires it into the cell, yelling at them to get away from the door and calm down. The prisoners from cell 2 feel as if they got stabbed in the back when they see the beds from cell 3 being yanked out, as one from the cell yells “What kind of solidarity is that? Was it the ‘sergeant’? ‘Sergeant’ (2093), if it was your fault, that’s all right because we all

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8 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 61 L. 11 – L. 12
“understand that you’re impossible.”) “Sarge” will also prove to be the most obedient of all the prisoners. Seeing that the nine prisoners could be a handful to a usual three guard shift, Arnett starts on the divide-and-conquer tactic that will prove useful for the guards throughout the experiment. Cell 3 will from now on be used as the cell for the “good” prisoners. The guards tell the good prisoners to make the others “straighten up” but 8612 will have none of that and backs up cell 1 in their revolt. 8612 ends in The Hole and after refusing to leave the cell, 1037 is shackled then dragged to The Yard. To calm the situation the guards start a count and strangely all of the prisoners perform the count though 8612 is mocking it from his position in The Hole.

Some of the prisoners are already beginning to feel the effect of the lack of sleep during this night. During the day both 5704 and 3401 have naps and wake up thinking a lot of time has passed despite it only having been a short while. This is a consequence of being deprived of sleep.

Because of the rebellion, lunch is served only to the prisoners of cell 3 but, in solidarity with their fellow inmates, they refuse to eat it. When the work period is on they once again submit to the will of the guards and pick stickers from their blankets. At the same time, in the still barricaded cell 1, the prisoners are starting an escape they have just planned. 5704, who plays guitar and therefore has strong fingernails, loosens the screws of the power outlet faceplate, which they reshape to unscrew the door lock. The plan is:

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9 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 62 L. 1 – L. 2
“One will pretend to be sick and, when the guard is taking him to the toilet, will open the main entrance door down the hall. Signaled by a whistle, the other cellmate will burst out. They will knock the guard down and run away to freedom!”

A creative plan indeed, but it is foiled by any form of planner’s worst nightmare: coincidence. On a routine round, Landry decides to turn the handle to cell 1. As it falls to the ground he yells out for help. Arnett and Markus run in and chain the prisoners together and again 8612 is sent to The Hole.

Landry, imposing authority on the prisoners, makes the next count into a singing lesson. From now on, this is being used to demean the prisoners. He himself takes the role as the teacher.

Because of the early descend into this volatile situation, the Prisoner Grievance Committee is formed with Dr. Zimbardo, who listens to their complaints e.g. about the guards, the food and wanting their books, glasses and medication, back. The doctor, acting in the role of superintendent, promises to take it up with the staff and has succeeded in pacifying the rebelling prisoners, for a while at least.

At this time 8612 shows symptoms of not handling the stress and the dominance of the guards well. He is insisting on seeing Zimbardo, complaining that the contract has been violated, and that the guards are hassling him unnecessarily. Basically, he wants out of the experiment. Dr. Zimbardo says that he has imposed the guards’ rage on himself by behaving as he did. Zimbardo eventually convinces 8612 to stay a bit longer, but this

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10 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 64 L. 3 – L. 6
turns out to be more influential than he might have thought. As 8612 returns to The Yard, he tells the other prisoners that they are trapped in this prison and can’t get out despite of what their contract might have said. Even though they can actually leave at any point they now have a feeling of being trapped in this prison, which makes the experience all the more intense.

During the evening count, Hellman and the other night shift guards again feel the urge to show their power e.g. by pushing the prisoners down while they are doing pushups and taking away pillows. 8612 is again placed in The Hole. After having been in Zimbardo’s office earlier, complaining, and not seeing any improvement now gets to him. Even though he was one of the strong leaders of the revolution he is now at a breaking point. He is having a meltdown, throwing a fit, screaming, out of his mind about not being able to take it anymore and wanting out.

“You’re messing up my head, man, my head! This is an experiment; that contract is not serfdom! You have no right to fuck with my head!”

He threatens to do anything necessary to get out, even to slit his wrists!

“I’ll do anything to get out! I’ll wreck your cameras, and I’ll hurt the guards!”

He is finally “set free” and picked up by his girlfriend.

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11 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 77 L. 9 – L. 10
12 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 4 P. 77 L. 11 – L. 12
Day 3

During the night shift on the previous night, some guards have revoked the prisoners’ rights to toilet visits and have placed buckets in the cells for the prisoners to use when necessary. This has made The Yard smell like a toilet. Many prisoners complain amongst themselves that they can’t take the increasing harassment of the guards and that they are having trouble coping with the situation in general. Ever since 8612’s breakdown, dissent has been spreading among the prisoners and many are talking about not being able to last much longer and, as if this wasn’t enough, rumors have been spreading about a supposed breakout that is to be orchestrated by now released prisoner 8612 and some of his friends. Zimbardo himself has now been drawn in by the role of superintendent to such a degree that he is worrying more about the breakout than he is worrying about the poor sanitation and rising possibility of infections this lack of sanitation provides.

Some of the guards, namely Burdan and Ceros, are becoming more aggressive and even more physical in their abuse of the prisoners and have been known to trip prisoners on their way to the bathroom, during which they are blindfolded, and pushing them into the urinals hanging on the wall, when in the bathroom. These two are also the guards primarily responsible for getting prisoners into The Hole.

At 2.30 AM the guards issue yet another count, even though the prisoners have only had a couple of hours sleep and they are, obviously, unable to do the count properly, thereby giving the guards even more chances to punish the prisoners. After having done the count a couple of times, a guard called Varnish get the prisoners to recite the rules again and again while guards
Vandy, Ceros and Burdan search the cells for the keys to the handcuffs, which had mysteriously vanished.

The rumors of a breakout orchestrated by former prisoner 8612 have been getting to Zimbardo and he has devoted most of his energy to come up with different ways to address the issue. After a failed attempt at getting permission to move the prisoners to the old county jail, Zimbardo decided that the best idea would be to move the prisoners to an upstairs storage room. He also feels that they need more accurate information and resolves to plant an informant, under the pretense of being a replacement for 8612. He chooses not to inform the guards about the informant.

When he, David, arrives, the guards spare no time in showing him who is in charge and treat him just like the other prisoners. He quickly becomes irritated by the bathroom routine, but is advised against rebellious action by fellow prisoner 1037, who David quickly befriends and by whom he is told that: “the prisoners play along with the guards so that we can get them at their weak spot”.13

While Zimbardo is busy trying to figure out what to do in case of a breakout, one of the other researchers has had to take over temporarily and meets with the Prisoner Grievance Committee. Chief among their complaints are the unsanitary conditions of the prison and Curt listens but promises nothing, yet the committee seems happier having vented their complaints to some sort of authority figure.

Later the prisoners get to have their first visits from family and friends. The visits are conducted one at a time and with a guard present within listening

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13 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 5 P. 89 L. 23 – L. 24
range at all times. The prisoners are ordered not to speak about the guards’ punishments or be overtly honest about their conditions.

Prior to the arrival of the visitors, the prisoners are told to clean their cells. The Hole-sign is taken down and the prison is sprayed with a perfumed disinfectant to counter any remaining stench from the previously removed shit-buckets. Then, for the first time during the experiment, the prisoners are served a large and quality meal. Meanwhile the visitors have arrived and are waiting somewhat impatiently to visit their recently incarcerated loved ones. While the visitors are waiting they are introduced to the rules and, when some of these rules don’t sit well with some of the visitors, they are told that their imprisoned relative should have informed them about these rules, even though the prisoners had at no point been asked to do so.

After the visits are over and done with, Zimbardo initiates the aforementioned plan to foil 8612’s supposed plan to free his still incarcerated mates. They blindfold the prisoners and lead them up into the upstairs storage room. They then hastily dismantle the prison and, when they’re done, Zimbardo sits himself down on a chair in the middle of the room and gleefully awaits the arrival of the supposed mob that will try to spring the other prisoners free.

After a substantial amount of waiting it dawns on Zimbardo that the rioters aren’t coming and that the whole thing has been nothing but a rumor. They rebuild the prison and lead the prisoners back down to their cells.
Day 4

On day 4 a priest became a participant in the experiment. His presence had earlier been requested by the Prisoner Grievance Committee for the purpose of having a confidant. Having been a prison chaplain in an East Coast prison, he could provide some feedback on how realistic Zimbardo’s prison setting is and how authentic the prisoners’ reactions were to the environment. In addition, this pastoral visit had the added effect of making the entire setting seem even more real than it already did.

The prisoners now had the opportunity to visit and talk to the chaplain and voice their feelings and complaints about their current situation. When introducing themselves to the priest, half of the prisoners introduced themselves by number and not by name. The priest started asking them questions, to which a real prisoner in a real prison would have no problem answering but to which these fake prisoners had no possibility of answering, such as if they had informed their family about the charges against them, whether or not anyone had posted bail for them and if they had sought legal counsel. During the meetings with the prisoners, the chaplain promised to contact the parents of one of the prisoners. When he ended his visit Zimbardo jokingly asked whether he would really follow through on his promise and the priest replied that:

“Of course I am, I must. It is my duty.”

During his visit with the priest, 819 broke down in tears, and Zimbardo, advised by the priest, decided that it was best to pull him out of the experiment. This idea was hindered by the intervention of the guards, who

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14 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 105 L. 11
had deemed it fitting to give 819 a proper send-off by making the other prisoners repeatedly chant:

"Prisoner 819 did a bad thing."\(^{15}\)

Followed by:

"Because of what Prisoner 819 did, my cell is a mess."\(^{16}\)

This distresses 819 so much that he initially states that he has to go back and Zimbardo has to thoroughly convince him that it is just an experiment but in the end manages to convince him, once more, to leave the experiment.

During this day, the informant that Zimbardo had placed among the prisoners finds the situation so disgusting, that he tries to instill a form of spirit of resistance among his fellow inmates, the same inmates that he had been put there to spy on.

Later that same day a new prisoner is introduced to the prison to replenish the somewhat diluted number of prisoners. He gets the number 416 and will become a nuisance to the guards. This prisoner will not experience the escalation of the prisoner abuse, but is subjected to it right from the start. Just as the other prisoners, he is stripped naked and “deloused” but more thoroughly than the others were at the start of the experiment.

Not long after, some trouble breaks out as 1037 screams that he has a weapon, a needle. The guards are handling it with a cool attitude, two of them smacking their clubs on the cell door and guard Landry spraying the cell with one of the fire extinguishers. They poke at the prisoners through

\(^{15}\) Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 105 L. 34
\(^{16}\) Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 106 L. 5
the prison bars with their clubs but end up losing one of the clubs to the prisoners. A new short rebellion breaks out due to the prisoners’ mocking of the guards. Even though they get the situation under control, lunch is taken away from all prisoners including 416, who didn’t partake in the rebellion on this, his first day.

In the afternoon a cameraman from KRON, a local TV-station, comes to the prison again, but Dr. Zimbardo restricts his filming, only allowing him access behind the observation covers and limits the interviews to only the warden and Zimbardo himself, excusing his decision with the fact that he didn't want too much intervention in the experiment.

Later in the evening, the night shift comes in but just before leaving, Arnett of the day shift spits out one final remark:

“*I’ve had enough of this, go back to your cage. Clean up your cells so when visitors come, they won’t be nauseated by the sight of it.*”

At dinner, 416 decides to go on a hunger strike. As 416 refuses to eat his dinner, Hellman explained that refusing to eat is a violation of the rules and that he will be punished for his disobedience. His punishment for not wanting to eat is time in The Hole and not only did he have to spend time in The Hole, he had to take the dinner with him during his punishment. Afterwards, he has to sit and stare at his food but continues the hunger strike despite being yelled at by Hellmann:

“You don’t want to eat two stinking sausages? You want me to take those sausages and cram them up your ass? Is that what you want? Do you want me to take that and cram that up your ass?”

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17 Zimbardo, P G “*The Lucifer Effect*” Ch. 6 P. 114 L. 22 – L. 23
Because he, in this quiet way, rebels against the authority of the guards, he poses a threat to their position of power. To counter this threat, Hellmann engages in the *divide-and-conquer strategy* once more by threatening to take away visiting rights for all of the prisoners, not only 416. The guards use the other prisoners to punish 416. They force 7258 to try and convince 416 to quit the hunger strike but without any effect, therefore sending him to The Hole, but not before 416 tries to remind people that it is all an experiment and that the guards are violating the contract, signed by every participant upon entering the experiment, to which Burdan reacts:

“*I don’t give a damn about any contract!* Burdan yells. ‘You’re in here because you deserve it, 416. That’s how you got in here in the first place, you broke the law. This ain’t no nursery school. I still don’t understand why you don’t eat those damn sausages. Did you expect this to be a nursery school, 416? Do you expect to go around breaking the law and wind up in a nursery school?’”

In The Hole, 416 can now hear the other prisoners banging on the door, strongly encouraged by the guards, and “thanking” him for getting them in trouble and getting their visitation rights taken away. This is not going to happen though, as Dr. Zimbardo makes sure that this right that cannot be denied.

After the visits, the guards have time to spend with the prisoners. They make up some activities. Hellmann takes control and tells prisoner 7258 to play Frankenstein and the prisoner called Sarge to play the bride of Frankenstein, making them get so close that their bodies touch, still only

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18 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 115 L. 16 – L. 18
19 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 116 L. 12 – L. 15
wearing the prison smocks and no underwear, and making 7258 tell Sarge that he loves him. Hellmann keeps hassling the prisoners and at one point he makes the prisoners play leap frog. The prisoners have to jump over their cellmates, while their smocks are too short for this and creep up as they play the game. Later on, Hellmann dictates that only Sarge and 5704 should play on. As they play he remarks:

“That’s the way dogs do it, isn’t it? Isn’t that the way dogs do it? He’s all ready, ain’t he, standing behind you, doggy style? Why don’t you make like a dog?”

At the end of the day 416 is sitting in The Hole again. The guards make a small activity out of this situation as they call a vote on whether or not he should spend the night in The Hole or be let out now. If he is to be let out the other prisoners will have to give up their blankets. The result of the vote ends in favor of the prisoners keeping their blankets and leaving 416 in The Hole overnight.

**Day 5**

At 2.30 AM Thursday the prisoners are woken for a count. At 7 AM the prisoners are subjected to yet another count, but prisoner 5704 has had enough. He refuses to submit to the guards’ punishment and when the guards initiate their *divide-and-conquer tactics*, he is indifferent to the plight of his fellow prisoners. After some time the guards get enough of his insubordination and when he is about to be put in The Hole, guard Ceros grabs him and pushes him against the wall. This evolves into a short wrestling match, during which 5704 hurts his foot. He wants to see a doctor but the guards ignore his requests and put him in The Hole. He is left there until breakfast and when he is let out he tries to hit Ceros.

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20 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 6 P. 120 L. 1 – L. 2
When the morning shift takes over they continue to punish 5704 by chaining him to the bed. Arnett makes the other prisoners do 70 push-ups as punishment for 5704’s attack on a guard. After the punishment, Arnett makes the prisoners sing “Oh What a Beautiful Morning”, “Amazing Grace” and “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” but during these exercises 5704 continues his verbal insubordination and is, once again, placed in solitary confinement where he kicks down the partition between the two parts of The Hole. In response to this, the guards pull him out of The Hole, chain his ankles together, handcuff him and drag him into cell 2. He escapes and is dragged back into The Hole once more to await a disciplinary hearing by the parole board.

To the fury of the guards, prisoner 416 continues his hunger strike.

1037 was in such a bad shape that Zimbardo himself notes that he “ [...] displayed symptoms of extreme stress to such an extent that I had him taken to the quiet room outside the prison yard and told him that it would be best if he were paroled at this time.”

When 1037 was picked up by his parents another prisoner began to crack. Prisoner 4325 broke down when 1037 was released and had to be released as well.

The last chance of the day to use the lavatory is at 10 PM. Christina, Zimbardo’s love interest and a social psychologist, is present and briefly watches the events but is appalled by what she is witness to. The situation ends with Zimbardo and her having a heated discussion during which Zimbardo realizes that the experiment has gone well beyond the

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21 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 8 P. 161 L. 20 – L. 22
boundaries of the morally defensible and thus he resolves to terminate it the following day.

The Bad Barrel theory

As Dr. Zimbardo processed his experiences with the Stanford Prison Experiment he could arrive at a conclusion. He had these perfectly normal students, who did not differ from each other in any remarkable way, even though most of those chosen as guards acted awful towards the prisoners. He sought to explain the transformation of these normal young men by looking at the circumstances under which they had to perform. He found that we, in western society, have become too obsessed with the individual’s opportunity to make enlightened choices, infused with moral.

“*We want to believe in the essential, unchanging goodness of people, in their power to resist external pressures, in their rational appraisal and then rejection of situational temptations. We invest human nature with God-like qualities, with moral and rational faculties that make us both just and wise.*

*We simplify the complexity of human experience by erecting a seemingly impermeable boundary between Good and Evil. On one side are Us, Our Kin, and Our Kind; on the other side of that line we cast Them, Their Different Kin, and Other Kind. Paradoxically, by creating this myth of our invulnerability to situational forces, we set ourselves up for a fall by not being sufficiently vigilant to situational forces.*”

He is of the persuasion that we need to change the focus when looking at evil actions from looking at the internal dynamics of the people involved to the whole situation around the “incidents” and those involved. The

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22 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 10 P. 211 L. 6 – L. 14
circumstances, according to Zimbardo, are in most cases the determining factor that turns good people bad.

“Therefore, whenever we are trying to understand the cause of any puzzling, unusual behavior, our own or that of others, we should start out with a situational analysis. We should yield to dispositional analyses (genes, personality traits, personal pathologies, and so on) only when the situationally based detective work fails to make sense of the puzzle. My colleague Lee Ross adds that such an approach invites us to practice “attributional charity.” That means we start not by blaming the actor for the deed but rather, being charitable, we first investigate the scene for situational determinants of the act.”

He foremost blames bad situations for horrible incidents unfolding. Increasing the rate of environmental deterioration, factors such as dehumanization and anonymity are some of the things to take notice of when studying, and trying to avoid, situations where different types of inhumane behavior occurred. The dehumanization makes it easier for people to treat others worse than they normally would. Since it could be hard to hurt another fellow human being, seeing them as lesser beings removes most of the doubt, whether or not one might be able to maltreat others. Anonymity helps in the way that it makes people more willing to do things that they might not do under normal circumstances. Without the fear of being recognized, many of the repercussions of the acts they are about to commit disappear. A study conducted using children has shown that this is highly plausible. The study showed that the children were more likely to

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23 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 10 P. 212 L. 10 – L. 17
play “aggressive” games when they were dressed up in costumes that hid their identity.

Another of his conclusions of the experiment is that a bad system can help a bad situation escalate into mayhem because of the lack of guidelines to lean on. Vague guidelines seem to be fatal when going into a potentially bad situation. In the *Stanford Prison Experiment* Zimbardo saw this in the behavior of the guards who found continuously more creative ways and excuses to punish the prisoners.

“Our guards could justify most of the harm they did to the prisoners by referencing “the Rules.” Recall, for example, the agony the prisoners had to endure to memorize the set of seventeen arbitrary rules that the guards and the warden had invented. Consider also the misuse of Rule 2 about eating at mealtimes to punish Clay-416 for refusing to eat his filthy sausages.”

This is an example of how loopholes in the system can be exploited by those creative enough. If these loopholes are not closed and sanctions are not enforced towards those exploiting them, they will continue to take advantage of the situation. In the case of the *Stanford Prison Experiment* they also became more creative with their interpretation of the rules. There was no consequence of their actions and that led them to believe that it was acceptable behavior. It goes to show that if bad behavior is not “punished” it can evolve to become the norm and even, as in Stanford, escalate out of control to a point where no one questions the moral righteousness of their actions.

If bad actions go unchecked, it creates a platform for bad actions to thrive. In the *Stanford Prison Experiment* it is seen in some of the guards who do

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24 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 10 P. 212 L. 37 – L. 41
not, to as high a degree, actively partake in the humiliation of the prisoners. They seem not to like the situation and the degrading of the prisoners happening but chose not to do anything to stop it. By not preventing evil around the world, people in general allow evil to exist and sometimes even flourish.

“We must learn that passively to accept an unjust system is to cooperate with that system, and thereby to become a participant in its evil.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.25

Chapter 2: Abu Ghraib

The sources for this chapter are Col. James’ Fixing Hell, Errol Morris’ book and film Standard Operating Procedure and press kit thereof, the website GlobalSecurity.org and Antonio M. Taguba’s Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade.

Introduction to the Abu Ghraib prison

The Abu Ghraib prison took its name from the neighboring city of Abu Ghraib. The word ‘Abu’ is Arabic for ‘father’ while ‘Ghraib’ means ‘strange’, and so Abu Ghraib could be loosely translated to house of strange fathers. It was built in the 1950’s by the British and then served the purpose of an insane asylum. During the Saddam Hussein regime it was used as a maximum-security prison where murderers and rapists, the hardcore criminals, were incarcerated. It was considered a living hell, where torture and executions were carried out on a daily basis. It is said to have housed up to 15,000 prisoners at one point, many of them Iraqi dissidents but also Kurds who happened to “disappear” during the Iraq-Iran war of the early

1980’s. There are conflicting numbers due to the lack of recordkeeping, but as many as 20,000 prisoners may have been executed during Saddam’s rule, most of them buried on the prison grounds or incinerated.

Soon after securing re-election by 100% of the vote, Saddam Hussein chose to grant amnesty to almost every incarcerated Iraqi citizen on Sunday, October 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2002 - including those at the Abu Ghraib prison. Once there were no prisoners, there was no longer any need for guards to patrol the perimeters of the encampment, and so in the wake of the releases, chaos soon erupted and the buildings of the Abu Ghraib facility were left in even worse conditions than the former inmates had lived under during their stay.

The Abu Ghraib prison compound occupied 280 acres (about 1.1 KM\textsuperscript{2}) of space, located inside the Sunni Triangle, 32 kilometers west of Baghdad. During the American occupation of Iraq, the city of Fallujah became a hotspot for the Iraqi insurgency, and with Abu Ghraib sitting comfortably in between Baghdad and Fallujah, getting to and from the compound became a potentially life-threatening journey as transports traveling those particular roads were frequently subjected to ambushes and bombings.

“We seen a sign saying ‘Fallujah’—right there, next town over— and we’re like, ‘Yo, we’re right in the heart of it now,’ ” Sergeant Javal Davis said. “Downtown Baghdad is right to the back wall. Al Ramadi, the other hot-spot town, is right up to the west of us, not too far. We’re right in the heart of the insurgency.”\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{26} Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 6 P. 78 L. 12 – L. 16
By the time the American forces took over the facility, the prison had been vandalized and looted of everything of value, every floor tile had been rooted up, wiring had been ripped from the walls and many of the buildings had been subjected to arson and were in need of serious repair. In the interim between the abandonment by the Iraqis and the takeover by American forces, the prison grounds were used as a city trash dump. The average yearly temperature in Baghdad is about 30 degrees Celsius; during the summer months the temperature can reach as high as 40 degrees Celsius. Apart from the watchtowers along the outer perimeter and a few buildings scattered around the encampment, the vast portion of the waste-filled grounds were left exposed to the scorching sun. Many of the interviewed military personnel, who had been stationed there at one point or another, comment on the stench of Abu Ghraib. When the officers who were to later oversee the Abu Ghraib operation first arrived, they noted that wild dogs were found roaming the grounds, searching for food that might be scattered among the litter and waste, digging up old bones from the mass graves of Abu Ghraib’s horrible past.

“It was very, very hot. The heat index in direct sunlight was 130 (degrees Fahrenheit, about 54 degrees Celsius) and the odor was... I will never forget the smell of Abu Ghraib. The smell of sweat and trash and feces and urine waifing through the air, it just... I will never forget the smell of Abu Ghraib.” – Israel Rivera, U.S Army Reserves

27 Kennedy, R “Ghosts Of Abu Ghraib” h00m16s49
During the American occupation of Iraq, Abu Ghraib consisted of Camps Ganci and Vigilant, LSA’s (Life Support Area) for the military personnel, an area for processing new prisoners, The CPA Prison (CPA, Coalition Provisional Authority) which hosts the now infamous hard site and Tiers 1A and 1B of Abu Ghraib, the ECP (Entry Control Point – the only entrance/exit at Abu Ghraib) and a TOC (Tactical Operations Center) for the 320th MP Battalion.

Every important area that served a specific task on the lot was enclosed by large blocks of concrete set next to each other, forming walls, serving as protection for the detainees and military personnel but at the same time also having rectangular, triple-strand concertina-wire wrapped around them to make it harder for detainees to escape. The enclosures were

28 http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/iraq/images/040825-d-6570c-007.jpg
constructed appropriately far apart so that the MPs (military police) could patrol the prison camp. The MPs were also stationed in 24 guard towers that stood along outer perimeter walls of the compound.

Camp Ganci and Camp Vigilant were enclosed camps on the Abu Ghraib prison compound with cellblocks consisting of tents protected by concrete pillars and stacked sandbags to protect the detainees from incoming mortar attacks. Camp Ganci was the larger of the two camps with a prisoner capacity of 4,800. Ganci was used for detaining civilians suspected of committing civilian crimes, much to the function of a regular jail. Vigilant, a much smaller tented encampment, could hold up to 600 detainees and was only to house those of "genuine military concern". The detainees deemed to have the slightest amount of value to the military intelligence officers were moved to Tier 1A/B of the hard site, while Tier 2A/B held detainees suspected of civilian crimes that could not function properly among other detainees, most notably the mentally ill.

The operations of the Abu Ghraib prison were set up so that the MPs were responsible for housing, managing and protecting the prisoners who would then be handed over to the MI (military intelligence) for interrogations. The personnel immediately responsible for the Abu Ghraib prison were Brigadier General Janis Karpinski of the 800th Military Police Brigade, who also oversaw 15 other prisons administrated by the U.S Forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom and the highest-ranking officer to later face consequences because of the events at Abu Ghraib; Colonel Thomas Pappas of the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade who was the highest-ranking officer on-site most of the time and Major David DiNenna of the 320th
Military Police Battalion who ran MP operations out of the tactical operations center.

October 2003 saw the arrival of the 372nd MP Company, which was a unit in the 800th MP Brigade that would later become highly involved in the prison scandal. The conditions the 372nd found when they arrived were very unsatisfactory compared to regular army standards. The Life Support Area was supposed to be a slice of home away from home, where soldiers could enjoy some of the modern conveniences they were used to: Internet cafés, satellite TV, phones, a gym and even fast-food restaurants. Such was not at all the case at Abu Ghraib, where even the basic modern commodities like running hot water or a functioning field kitchen were nowhere to be found. Instead, the soldiers showered in wooden booths with drums of cold water tucked overhead, while breakfast, lunch and dinner came out of combat ration packets, so called MREs – meals ready to eat. Women could not purchase feminine hygiene items and even though sex and sexual exploitation were common, condoms were not available. The conditions of the LSA combined with the fact that insurgency mortar attacks struck somewhere on the vast compound every single night for the duration of the occupation. If a guard patrolling the compound could see a van pull up with an Iraqi male jumping out and preparing a mortar strike, the soldier was not allowed to immediately engage this threat with deadly force, he first had to call the “ops shop”, the operations base in Baghdad to receive permission to engage, while hoping that the attacker during this time, had not already fired off a shell in his direction. This type of environment would over time wear you down and as a result morale was understandably subpar. The detainees also lacked basic, humane conditions. No one, neither US forces or detainees, wanted to be there.
“The encampment they were in when we saw it at first looked like one of those Hitler things almost,” Davis said. “They’re there, in their little jumpsuits, outside in the mud. Their restrooms was running over. It was just disgusting. You didn’t want to touch anything. Whatever the worst thing that comes to your mind, that was it—the place you would never, ever, ever, ever send your worst enemy.”

“Within my first five steps after disembarking from the helicopter, the smell of raw sewage overwhelmed my senses and nearly made me retch. This was a barren wasteland interrupted only by garbage and filth. My God. I’ve never seen anything like this. I can’t believe our people have to work in this.”

Joe Darby, Specialist with the 372nd MP Company, was the whistleblower on the abusive treatment that occurred at the Abu Ghraib prison between October and December 2003.

Darby had been on home leave during the first weeks of November. Upon his return to Abu Ghraib, he heard of a particularly brutal incident, involving a detainee getting wounded by gunfire on November 24th 2003, when he was not present on site, and found out that Corporal Charles Graner, who was assigned to the night shift on Tier 1A, had taken photographs of what happened. Out of interest he asked to see them, and was given 2 full CDs consisting of photographs taken by several of the 372nd MP guards. He found parts of the content disturbing. After a period of considering how to deal with the subject matter, he chose to hand in the CDs to special agent Tyler Pieron of the Criminal Investigation Command (CID). In a “60 Minutes”-interview with Anderson Cooper he explains his reasons for doing so:

29 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 6 P. 78 L. 24 – L. 29
30 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A “Fixing Hell” Ch. 1 P. 2 L. 25 – L. 30
“Ignorance is bliss they say, but to actually know what they were doing... You can’t stand by and let that happen. [...] We are Americans. [...] We hold ourselves to a higher standard; our soldiers hold themselves to a higher standard. [...] They broke the law and they had to be punished. [...] It’s that simple.”21

CID reacted quickly, and on January 24th 2004 the Chief of Staff of US Central Command directed that the Lieutenant General David D. McKiernan conduct an investigation into the 800th MP Brigade’s detention and internment operations from November 1st 2003 till March 2004. McKiernan appointed Major General Antonio M. Taguba to head the investigation. On February 2nd 2004 Taguba and his investigation team, including army psychologist Harry Nelson, went to Abu Ghraib tasked with looking into the specific allegations of detainee abuse allegedly committed by the soldiers of the 372nd MP Company. Throughout the month of February, Taguba and his team took witness statements and gathered information on the running of the detention facilities in order to conclude whether or not the allegations were true.

The following is an excerpt from Major General Taguba’s Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade, henceforth titled the Taguba Report:

“[…] between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility (BCCF), numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees.”32

31 60 Minutes http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=2972689n h00m11s14
32 Taguba, A M "Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade" P. 16 L. 14 – L. 16
These were the findings Major General Taguba made during his investigation of the Abu Ghraib prison. He was asked to conduct this enquiry based on pictures leaked from the prison portraying detainees in degrading and abusive positions along with guards, soldiers of the US Army, posing in shocking ways.

Events of the Abu Ghraib Prison – The Taguba Report

To create an understanding of what happened at the Abu Ghraib prison, here follows an account of the most important events that happened:

October 18, 2003: A prisoner is shackled to his bed with underwear on his head. Sabrina Harman snaps a photo. Why this detainee, called ‘Taxi Cab Driver’, was shackled in the first place is unclear. Nothing points toward this man having any relation to anything that could be of value to the Americans, he was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. A point expressed explicit in the documentary from 2007 ‘Taxi to the Dark Side’. Picture no. 1, Annex 2

October 24, 2003: Lynndie England is photographed holding a detainee named ‘Gus’, by the guards of Tier 1A, on a leash. ‘Gus’ is on the floor naked. Megan Ambuhl states the reason for putting a detainee on a leash like this:

“It [the picture] made it look like we were just fooling around with a detainee for our own pleasure,” she said. “That wasn’t the case. That was an uncooperative detainee who needed to get out of that cell—a guy with sores and stuff. You’re not going to touch him. You get him out, and it may have been unorthodox, but he didn’t hurt anybody and he didn’t get hurt.”

Picture no. 2, Annex 2

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33 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 12 P. 142 L. 7 – L. 12
**October 25, 2003:** The photograph shows several US soldiers standing casually around next to three naked and handcuffed detainees on the ground. Corporal Graner squats next to the pile, clearly interacting with the detainees. These detainees were alleged rapists suspected of having raped another detainee, only 15 years of age.

Picture no. 3, Annex 2

**November 4-5, 2003:** The detainee nicknamed ‘Gilligan’ is here placed on a box, wires are attached to his hands and around his throat to simulate a risk of electrocution if he moves e.g. lowers his arms or fall off the box.

“[…I tied a loop knot on the end, put it on, I believe, his index finger, and left it there.” Frederick said that Javal Davis and Harman came into the shower while he was doing this, and somebody then tied a wire to Gilligan’s other hand, and draped another below his throat.”

Picture no. 4, Annex 2

**November 7, 2003:** The infamous ‘naked human pyramid’, which was very discussed in the media. Graner and England are here posing with the detainees Graner had ordered stripped and piled up.

Picture no. 5, Annex 2

“[… then he told us that he was piling them in a pyramid. We’re like, ‘OK, why?’ He’s like, ‘To control them, so they’re all in one area.’” Of course, the prisoners were already entirely at Graner’s mercy, naked and hooded and unresisting, and he kept them in the pyramid—with the seventh man on top—for less than ten minutes. As far as Sivits could tell the objective was humiliation […]”

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34 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 15 P. 176 L. 28 – L. 32
35 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 16 P. 194 L. 6 – L. 11
The 7th of November was a very eventful day at Tier 1A. The hooded prisoners, who were first piled up, were also forced to simulate fellatio and other degrading acts.

“They [the pictures] were shot on Tier 1A, he focused on the images of “sexual stuff” from the night of the pyramid, and it occurred to him that what he was looking at was evidence of prisoner abuse.”

November 24, 2003: A shootout with a Syrian detainee takes place because of rumors stating he, with the help of an Iraqi guard, has managed to get a hold of a pistol. The intelligence proves right as the detainee opens fire during the cell-search conducted in order to locate any hidden weapon.

December 12, 2003: Military working dogs were often used in the process of breaking down detainees. In this particular incident the dogs are used in order to intimidate the naked detainee, the situation escalates as the handling soldier loosens his grip on the leash just enough for the dog to be able to bite the detainee in the leg.

On March 9th 2004 the report was finished and submitted. Based on his findings during his time in Abu Ghraib, Taguba concluded that some soldiers of the 372nd MP Company abused detainees, with acts of physical violence, severe sexual humiliation and psychological torture.

37 Taguba, A M "Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade" P. 16 L. 31 – P. 17 L. 11
He assigns culpability and compiles a list of fixes that should be put in place. Here are some examples:

**Training**
Taguba concluded that none of the soldiers in the 800th MP Brigade had the proper training required to conduct the task of handling and preparing detainees for MI interrogations. In addition, they were never familiarized with the Geneva Convention, which specifically prohibits the kind of treatment that the detainees were exposed to in Abu Ghraib.

**Conditions**
Taguba assesses that the conditions are relevant, because it influenced the psychological wellbeing of the soldiers. He mentions for example the lack of dining facilities, a barbershop and a place for the soldiers to unwind. He also concludes that the fact that they were in constant danger, contributed to the extremely high stress-level of the soldiers.

**Culpability and Lack of Leadership**
Unsurprisingly, Taguba found that no one wanted to take responsibility for what happened to the detainees on Tier 1A. Several of the guards of 372nd MP Company blamed the Military Intelligence officers for instigating the abuses, because they were constantly commanding the MPs to perform tasks they did not have the necessary skills to do.

Brigadier General Janis Karpinski who was in charge of all MP operations at Abu Ghraib, also blames the MI for what happened. Taguba on the other hand, puts a lot of blame on Karpinski because most witnesses stated that they never saw her on-site. He even goes to the extent of claiming, that if
she had paid attention to the administrative faults of her brigade, the abuse could have been prevented.

“There is a general lack of knowledge, implementation, and emphasis of basic legal, regulatory, doctrinal, and command requirements within the 800th MP Brigade and its subordinate units.”

In his report, Taguba recommended a few changes that should have been in place from the beginning. These included changes in the preparation of the soldiers and making sure that they had a clear set of guidelines that every soldier, down to the lowest levels, understood. Furthermore, Taguba assessed that the Geneva Convention should be available for both detainees and guards. To make sure that the detainees also knew their rights, there would have to be a copy in their native tongue.

Conclusively he recommended the following people to either be relieved of command or reprimanded:

Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, Commander, 800th MP Brigade.

Colonel Thomas M. Pappas, Commander, 250th MI Brigade.

Lieutenant Colonel Jerry L. Phillabaum, Commander, 320th MP Battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel Steven L. Jordan, Former Director, Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center and Liaison Officer to 205th Military Intelligence Brigade.

Major David W. DiNenna, 320th MP Battalion.

Captain Donald J. Reese, Commander, 372nd MP Company

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38 Taguba, A M “Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade” P. 22 L. 27 – L. 29
1. Lieutenant Lewis C. Raeder, Platoon Leader, 372nd MP Company
Sergeant Major Marc Emerson, Operations SGM, 320th MP Battalion

1. Sergeant Brian G. Lipinski, First Sergeant, 372nd MP Company
Sergeant First Class Shannon K. Snider, Platoon Sergeant, 372nd MP Company

Apart for these mentioned operatives, we have profiled the most important actors in the abuse scandal. The following is a short outline of those people.

Profiles of the people in Abu Ghraib

Sabrina Harman

Sabrina Harman, born January 5th 1978, was a Specialist with the 372nd MP Company stationed at the Abu Ghraib prison’s hard site. She was responsible for a lot of the photographs that were used as evidence in the indictments against her and other military personnel depicted in the infamous pictures from Tier 1A and 1B.

Her comrades described Sabrina Harman as a very genteel, person not condoning violence in any way. Specialist Sivits of the same company said of Harman:

“We’d try to kill a cricket because it kept us up all night in the tent. She would push us out of the way to get to this cricket, and would go running out of the tent with it. She could care less if she got sleep, as long as that cricket was safe.”

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39 Taguba, A M “Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade” P. 34 L. 9 – P. 36 L. 10
40 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 6 P. 73. L. 4 – L. 7
Harman was also a good friend to the Iraqis of Al Hillah – she bought one family a refrigerator and for the Iraqi kids she would have balloons and American treats.

Even though she did not approve of violence she was very interested in the marks that the use of violence would leave. Death fascinated her and she even visited the morgue in Al-Hilla and took photographs of the dead bodies:

“She would not let you step on an ant,” Sergeant Javal Davis said. “But if it dies, she’d want to know how it died.”

Harman says herself that her first inclination whenever someone is injured is to take a photo of the injury.

Harman was often to be found behind the camera documenting her days in Iraq. Photography had always been fascinating to her, and after serving her sentence for her participation in the events at Abu Ghraib she attempted a degree in the subject. So snapping a photo here and there did not seem out of place to her:

“‘I guess we weren’t really thinking, Hey, this guy has family, or, Hey, this guy was just murdered,’ Harman said of those parting happy snaps. ‘It was just—Hey, it’s a dead guy, it’d be cool to get a photo next to a dead person. I know it looks bad.’”

41 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 6 P. 74. L. 15 – L. 16

At one point Harman herself writes in one of her letters to her wife Kelly:

“I just don’t think it’s right and never have that’s why I take the pictures to prove the story I tell people.”

On March 20th 2004, the Army files charges against Sabrina Harman. She was prosecuted for participating in the events at Abu Ghraib of the fall of 2003. On May 16th 2005 she is convicted of maltreatment, conspiracy to maltreat, and dereliction of duty. She is sentenced to 6 months in prison, a reduction of rank to private, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and a bad conduct discharge.

**Lynndie England**

Lynndie England was a private first class with the 372nd MP Company where she worked as an administrative clerk.

One of the pictures circulated in the media was that of Lynndie England holding a leash, wrapped around the neck of the detainee “Gus” whilst he is lying on the floor, naked. To England this is no big deal. But she understands why the picture looks so disturbing when it appears on TV or in the newspaper, but to her it is not disturbing. It is merely a picture of her and not a picture of a naked prisoner being tortured.

“I don’t see the infamous picture from the Iraq war. I just see me. It’s just a picture. The first thing that comes up in my mind is just that’s me and yeah – that happened at that prison when I was in Iraq, and that was one of the pictures taken.”

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43 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 16 P. 201 L. 1 – L. 2
44 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 11 P. 139 L. 22 – L. 26
And on the question of the detainee being sexually humiliated:

“Just because Gus is naked? [...] That’s standard operating procedure.”45

On March 24th 2004 Lynndie England was prosecuted for participating in the events of the fall of 2003. On September 26th 2005 she was sentenced to 3 years in prison, a reduction in rank to private, and a dishonorable discharge.

**Charles Graner**

Charles Graner, an ex-marine, was a Corporal with the 372nd MP.

“My first impression of Graner was that he was an arrogant, loud, and obnoxious type person,” Sergeant Frederick said. That was back in Virginia, at Fort Lee. Graner was new to the unit. He was an ex-Marine, a Desert Storm vet, now a Pennsylvania corrections officer, a grown man with more spark in his eyes than most of the kids in the company. He made sure he was noticed, talking up his exploits with women, full of attitude, a gung-ho soldier, and at the same time a prankster (he liked to tell the one about how he spiked a rookie prison guard’s coffee with mace); he came on as a bit of a bad boy, not a misfit but a maverick, always ready to take a poke at pomp and hypocrisy, and he didn’t care who heard him.”46

Because Graner was a former corrections officer, he came in with the mindset of that. But he did not find it to be of much use.

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45 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 11 P. 139 L. 31 – L. 32
46 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 10 P. 119 L. 4 – L. 14
“Graner however found that his civilian training wasn’t of much use at Abu Ghraib. “I had come in with a correctional officer’s mind-set of care, custody, and control, and I’m going to do the least amount of work possible and get paid for it because that’s what corrections officers do,” he said. “And that lasted for about a day, and then I met Big Steve.” Big Steve was the CACI contract interrogator whom Javal Davis identified as one of his primary MI tutors on Tier 1A. His proper name was Steven Stefanowicz, he was a former petty officer in the Navy, and he had never conducted an interrogation before he arrived at Abu Ghraib in October with a six-figure salary.”

Though Graner was responsible for many of the photographs taken at Abu Ghraib, he initially did not like to do unpleasant things to the prisoners. Megan Ambuhl Graner says:

“He didn’t want to see this guy [Prisoner nicknamed Santa] who was mental be harassed by other detainees. Same with Shitboy – we weren’t interested in seeing these people suffer.”

According to himself he merely took the pictures to make sure that he could prove what had happened at Abu Ghraib to others when he went home, because upon his return after the First Gulf War, he experienced to be disbelieved when seeking medical benefits for veterans. But as time went by, he started staging the prisoners for photos as had happened in the case of the picture of Lynndie England and the detainee “Gus”.

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47 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure" Ch. 10 P. 121 L. 11 – L. 19
“Graner cradled one prisoner’s head in his left arm, drew back his right arm in a cocked fist, posed as if to strike, and asked Sivits to take a picture of him. It was obvious to everyone that Graner was staging the situation for the camera.”

On March 20th 2004 Graner is charged with assault, maltreatment, indecent acts and conspiracy to maltreat. He is finally convicted on January 16th 2005 and sentenced to 10 years in prison, a reduction of rank to private, a dishonorable discharge and the forfeiture of all pay and allowances.

England and Graner

England and Graner first met each other on a drill weekend in Maryland in 2001, where they were sent to get prepared for the stationing at Abu Ghraib. England did not immediately notice Graner, but he noticed her. He was used to female attention, and if he did not get it from the woman he had eyes on, he would make her give it to him. Lynndie England says:

“He would draw the attention. If the attention is not on him, he’ll get it there. That’s what he does. He thrives on that. If you’re not paying attention to him, he’ll make comments about you. Whatever you want to hear, he’ll say it. [...] He knew what to say, what to do, how to act. I finally suckered in around the end of February.”

Lynndie England initially did not wish to have a relationship with Graner, because she had a husband at home. But she gave in, filed for separation and told her husband that she wanted a divorce.

On the last weekend of February 2003, the company was moved to Fort Lee. England and Graner were now around each other all the time. They talked

49 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 16 P. 191 L. 2 – L. 6
50 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 11 P. 132 L. 20 – L. 26
about getting married and having children. But people advised her to stop the relationship.

“Everyone tried to tell me, he’s too old for you [England was 20, Garner was 34], he’s a bad guy, I don’t think you should be messing around with him, [...] But I didn’t believe them because I believed him.”

One weekend they both left Fort Lee to visit England’s parents, but her husband was in the house. England thought it would be too weird. Instead they drove to Graner’s hometown Unitown. When they came back to Fort Lee they were in love and ready to go to Iraq.

According to Lynndie England many of the things she did during her stay in Abu Ghraib was due to her infatuation with Graner. Regarding the picture of the naked detainee “Gus” and herself holding him on a dog leash (captured on October 24th 2003), she says, it is not a picture of her relationship with “Gus”, because she had none. It is a picture of her relationship with Graner, who took the photo:

“It’s showing that he has power over me, and he wanted to demonstrate that power [...] Anything he asked, he knew that I would do it.”

**Ivan Frederick**

Ivan “Chip” Frederick was a Staff Sergeant with the 372nd MP Company stationed at Abu Ghraib. Frederick was appointed the NCO (noncommissioned officer) in charge of the entire compound during the course of the night shift, therefore being the highest ranking officer present during the questionable events.

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51 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 11 P. 133 L. 1 – L. 3
52 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 11 P. 139 L. 28 – L. 30
Frederick had been a correctional officer as a civilian back home in Virginia, and therefore had experience with the most common procedures in running a prison, but when he asked for a copy of the standard operating procedures of Abu Ghraib all he got was one page on the rules of engagement.

“[...] Frederick asked for a copy of the prison’s standard operating procedure, all he got was the MPs’ one-page rules of engagement, which described the steps for escalating the use of force in a dangerous confrontation: shout, show, shove, shoot. ‘It had nothing to do with handling the detainees,’ he said.”53

Along with Cpl. Charles Graner, Staff Sergeant Frederick became one of the leading figures in the events at Tier 1A. Even though Frederick outranked Graner, he was portrayed as a “relatively unassertive, more of a go-along-and-get-along officer than a natural leader”.54 This created an off-balance in the power structure and allowed for Cpl. Graner to act more freely in his actions at the Tier.

Frederick was highly involved in the abusive treatment of the some of the detainees at Tier 1A. For example, he was the one instigating the situation with the detainees called ‘Gilligan’, who was hooded, placed on a box and wired with fake wires.

“[...] Frederick went to the shower and surveyed the scene [...] Gilligan was perched on his box. Frederick noticed some loose electrical wires hanging from the wall behind Gilligan. “I grabbed them and touched them together to make sure they weren’t live wires,” he said. ‘When I did that and got nothing, I tied a loop knot on the end, put it on, I believe, his index finger, and left it there.’”55

53 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure" Ch. 7 P.89 L.28 – P.90 L.2
54 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure" Ch. 10 P.119 L.29 – L.31
55 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure" Ch. 15 P.176 L.23 – L.30
He explained this deviant behavior with this:

“Frederick said he took Romero’s words “like an order, but not a specific order,” and he explained, ‘To me, Agent Romero was like an authority figure, and when he said he needed the detainee stressed out, I wanted to make sure the detainee was stressed out.’”

On March 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2004 the Army filed charges against SSG Frederick and on October 20\textsuperscript{th} of the same year he pleaded guilty to aggravated assault, maltreatment, conspiracy to maltreat, indecent acts, and dereliction of duty. He was sentenced to 8 years in prison, reduction in rank to private, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and a dishonorable discharge.

**Megan Ambuhl Graner**

Megan Ambuhl (now married to Charles Graner) was a specialist with the 372\textsuperscript{nd} MP Company that worked the night shift at Abu Ghraib. She was the best friend and roommate of Sabrina Harman, whom she regarded as her little sister.

At Abu Ghraib, Megan was present at some of the events at Tier 1A that would later incriminate others, but did not wish to be in any of the pictures. She was only captured once in the same frame as a prisoner. “She just happened to be in the way [...]” as Lynndie England puts it. She says herself that she did not like the pictures, because it does not show what really happened.

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\textsuperscript{56} Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 15 P. 176 L. 20 – L. 23

\textsuperscript{57} Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 12 P. 142 L. 4 – L. 5
“[…] Your imagination can run wild when you just see blood, and you don’t have a story behind it. The pictures only show you the fraction of a second. You don’t see forward and you don’t see backward. You don’t see outside the frame.”

Though she did not wish to be in any pictures, she had no problem with what happened at Abu Ghraib:

“Not when you take in to account that we’re being told that’s helping to save lives, and you see people coming in from right outside the wire with their body parts missing, and they need to know who’s doing it so they can stop it – and these are your battle buddies.”

On March 20th, 2004 Megan Ambuhl Graner is prosecuted for not reporting acts of abuse in the fall of 2003 and is sentenced to a reduction of rank to private and loss of a half-month’s pay. On October 30th, 2004 she pleads guilty and she later receives an other-than-honorable discharge from the army.

Javal Davis

Javal Davis was a Sergeant with the 372nd MP Company. He joined the Army Reserves in 1994 because the military life impressed him and he took pride in serving his country to the point where he was willing to die protecting it. Especially after 9/11 this resolve strengthened.

At first he was serving at Tiers 1A and 1B where the intelligence detainees were kept, but got transferred to Tiers 3A and 3B of Abu Ghraib’s hard site where Iraqis arrested as common criminals were detained. There was no structure to any of the arrests of the detainees at Tiers 3A and 3B, they had

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59 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 9 P. 114 L. 18 – L. 22
never been charged with anything or received a court date. This caused major frustration between the detainees.

“To gain respect and burn off some energy, Davis would strip to the waist and work out in front of his new wards. He could do thirty pull-ups in a set, and a hundred push-ups, and when he was done he’d let a few prisoners out at a time and offer cigarettes to anyone who could do better. He didn’t have to give away a lot of cigarettes, but he said the prisoners appreciated it. He organized regular prayer hours for them, and with time, he learned passable Arabic, and they appreciated that, too.”

In this case Davis applied a very human approach in his relations to the Iraqis and this something-for-something, man-to-man relation seemed to work well for him.

He couldn’t keep that attitude up at all times though. He had a reputation as a man who liked to yell at his prisoners, subject them to psychological strain and threats. Staff Sergeant Frederick stated that Davis sometimes would kidney-punch new prisoners while they were being processed.

Even though Davis had been transferred from Tier 1A and 1B and had no official business there anymore, he still went back from time to time. Spending nights on Tier 1A meant seeing MI and OGA, ‘other government agencies’ (FBI, CIA, NSA etc.), people coming and going, making fun of what was going on. He explains it like this:

“over time—seeing it every day, day in and day out, and then seeing the MI guys and some of the OGA guys coming in, laughing and joking like it’s funny—after a while it became the same thing for myself. Like, man, look at

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60 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E "Standard Operating Procedure" Ch. 8 P. 103 L. 17 – L. 24
that guy. I bet you don’t want to blow up Americans now. I bet you don’t want to come shoot at us now. You go from a compassionate guy, saying, ‘Hey, don’t put that guy in no panties, that’s a grown man, what the hell are you doing?’ to ‘Yeah, you’re in the panties now, brother. Don’t you feel ashamed now?’”

Javal Davis was part of the group of soldiers convicted for the events of November 7th 2003 portrayed by photographs taken by Sabrina Harman and others, where detainees were subjected to enhanced interrogation methods, and Davis for instance jumped and threw himself on to a heap of detainees that had been piled up on the floor. He does not deny it though, but explains it with this:

“It got down to everyone was pissed. You know, soldiers got hurt—it was a real heated moment.’ Davis understood why the prisoners would riot. They were pissed off too, he said. […] ‘And a bunch of them were there for no reason, just because they got swept up in a raid. Like they were in a concentration camp, you know. […] I had a soldier die that I knew, got killed by an insurgent. We were getting bombed every night. All those things balling up into a ball in your mind, and you just want to take it out on that guy, right there. He wants to take your life, or wants to see you hurt, when you’re there to try to protect him from being hurt. […] I wanted to hurt him really bad, because I felt that he deserved it. I felt that they all deserved it. So I stepped on the guy’s finger. I stepped on the guy’s toe. At the time, of course, I was like, ‘Wow, I think we’re crossing the line.’ But the answer to that was the contrary: We’re at war. They blew up New York, and anything goes.”

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61 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 4 P. 104 L. 19 – L. 27
62 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 16 P. 189 L. 1 – P. 190 L. 8
On March 20th 2004, Sergeant Javal Davis was prosecuted for his participation in the events of November 7th 2003. On February 4th 2005 he pleaded guilty to assault, intent to deceive on an official statement, and dereliction of duty. He was sentenced to 6 months in prison, a reduction in rank to private, and a bad conduct discharge.

**Jeremy Sivits**

Jeremy Sivits was a Specialist with the 372nd MP Company as a mechanic. He too was implicated in the events on November 7th 2003 and was later convicted for his participation.

He describes himself as an easygoing, agreeable guy, who wants to be friends with everybody, and that is his explanation of how he got himself pulled into the activity surrounding the treatment of the detainees on Tier 1A.

Sivit’s only actual crime in all this mess, seem to be failure of reporting what he witnessed on Tier 1A. He was a mechanic so he did not deal with prisoners except when he offered to help out Sgt. Frederick of November 7th. Upon delivering his detainee to Tier 1A:

> “Graner instructed them to dump the prisoners in a pile on the floor. Sivits gave his man a push, and he fell on top of the others.”

March 20th 2004 Jeremy Sivits was prosecuted for participating in the events of November 7th 2003. On May 19th 2004 he pleads guilty to dereliction of duty, maltreatment, and conspiracy to maltreat. He was sentenced to 1 year in military-prison, a reduction in rank to private, a fine, and bad-conduct discharge from the Army.

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63 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 16 P. 188 L. 16 – L. 18
**Geoffrey Miller**

Geoffrey Miller was in 2003, and at the time of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, Major General with command of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, that also had its share of negative attention regarding treatment of detainees. He visited Abu Ghraib in August 2003

“To discuss what he called the ‘current theater ability to rapidly exploit internees for actionable intelligence.’”\(^{64}\)

He was never charged with anything despite the fact that many had the comprehension that:

“I do believe that the Miller visit propelled Abu Ghraib to become a ‘mini-mo’,”

*Captain Wood said.*\(^{65}\)

**Joe Darby**

Joe Darby was, as mentioned, known as the whistleblower of Abu Ghraib. He returned to Abu Ghraib from home leave, and so did not partake in any of the highly chastised events, that would later incriminate the others.

He explains how he got pictures from Graner:

“But he said that as he flipped through Graner’s photos, and realized that they were shot on Tier 1A, he focused on the images of “sexual stuff” from the night of the pyramid, and it occurred to him that what he was looking at was evidence of prisoner abuse. And then the next thought is, ‘What do I do?’” he said. “ ‘Do I turn these in? Do I look the other way?’”\(^{66}\)

Joe Darby was never convicted and was actually regarded as a hero for exposing the pictures.

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\(^{64}\) Gourevitch, P & Morris, E *Standard Operating Procedure* Ch. 4 P. 46 L. 2 – L. 4

\(^{65}\) Gourevitch, P & Morris, E *Standard Operating Procedure* Ch. 4 P. 55 L. 15 – L. 16

\(^{66}\) Gourevitch, P & Morris, E *Standard Operating Procedure* Ch. 19 P. 233 L. 17 – L. 22
Chapter 3: Analysis and Discussion

In looking at cases of the Stanford Prison Experiment and the events that took place at the Abu Ghraib prison in 2003, it becomes clear that there are some striking similarities in both the physical aspects of the environments and behavior of the people involved. In the aftermath of the experiment conducted at Stanford University by Philip Zimbardo and his associates, Zimbardo has developed his theory of the Bad Barrel to explain the behavior of the college students involved in the experiment. Because of the similarities between Stanford and Abu Ghraib, it is very much relevant to look at his theory and apply it in the context of Abu Ghraib and the behavior of the 372nd MP Company personnel. In order to compare and elaborate on the behavior of the guards at Abu Ghraib it is also relevant to look at army psychologist Col. Larry C. James’ explanation of what caused this abusive behavior. In this following analysis the three different theories will be put head to head and their strengths and weaknesses compared and dissected.

Philip Zimbardo and Colonel James

Zimbardo’s Bad Barrel theory as mentioned earlier is what Colonel James’ bases his own theory of the abusive behavior on. Col. James has a PhD in psychology and has made a career in the US Army serving several military hospitals. He is considered an expert in the field of prisoner psychology and played a big part in developing interrogation methods aimed at prisoners accused of committing acts of terrorism. In 2002 when reports of prisoner abuse at the Guantanamo base in Cuba started to surface in the media, Col. James was appointed by the army to sort out the situation and improve the conditions for both interrogators and detainees. He constructed guidelines for the personnel to follow and he managed to change the situation for the
better. In 2004, when the photos of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib were leaked to the press, Col. James was again approached to fix an embarrassing problem for the US Army. James consulted with Zimbardo before going to Iraq, and the two of them discussed The Stanford Experiment and how the findings from Stanford could help deal with the situations at Abu Ghraib and perhaps help understand why it went wrong. On the several flights James had to take to get to Iraq, he watched video recordings of Stanford repeatedly and made a list with steps of action that had to be put in place, in order to turn the situation around.

In September 2004 James had a conversation with a Lt. Colonel stationed at Abu Ghraib where they discuss the situation at hand and what caused the abuses that transpired almost a year before. He arrived at this conundrum:

“Who (or perhaps what) caused Abu Ghraib to occur? Was it an intentional, evil plan by the Bush administration? Was it just the natural evil in normal human beings coming out under stress? Was it an institutional problem or the actions of a few bad apples?”

To answer these questions he developed a theory of his own that would explain the complexity of the situation at Abu Ghraib and at the same time deal with the issue of assigning personal blame which counters the points made by Zimbardo in his Bad Barrel theory. James’ theory conveys the idea that the barrel is not the sole reason why people do evil acts. He claims that people have to be predisposed to letting certain immoral urges manifest themselves in their behavior, because of the fact that only 8 people out of 2200 soldiers stationed at Abu Ghraib were involved in the abusive treatment of detainees.

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67 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A “Fixing Hell” Ch. 9 P. 188 L. 22 – L. 27
“[…] I was also certain that the individual soldiers had some predisposition to this immoral behavior. I was beginning to wonder if we had taken eight questionable apples and thrown them in a Bad Barrel. How would the results be any different than what we were seeing in Abu Ghraib?”

Philip Zimbardo arrives at his Bad Barrel theory because the participants were screened thoroughly to ensure they were all perfectly ‘good apples’. He made a point of only recruiting healthy male college students to his experiment. This therefore supports the idea of the environment as the main catalyst in causing these ordinary students to turn to abusive behavior.

Colonel James on the other hand speaks to the point that the catalyst is found in the people who are in the barrel. There were certain factors in both situations that Zimbardo and James can agree on being relevant for the behavior to deteriorate into abuse. One of these similarities involves the people put in charge of guarding other people. At Stanford, the students selected to be guards received little but a few general guidelines to follow, but had not prior to the experiment received any form of training for the job they were tasked. At Abu Ghraib, the MPs too had not received the proper training that would help them perform their duties, which consisted of preparing detainees for interrogation. The MPs did receive training on keeping law and order, and how to contain a general prison population, but not in the manner that was required for Abu Ghraib.

Therein lies the difference between the two: The students at Stanford received no training at all while the MPs did have to go through basic training. At Stanford, Zimbardo in conjunction with the students, created

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68 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A “Fixing Hell” Ch. 9 P. 194 L. 25 – L. 28
some general guidelines that the guards were to follow in order for the experiment and the prison to operate smoothly, these were handed out in writing to the students, both guards and prisoners, while the MPs at Abu Ghraib had to deal with very vague guidelines that were often revised by the higher ranking officers or the Department of Defense.

Due to the lack of preparation for the task of being prison guards, the students at Stanford were left mostly to their own devices when handling prisoners. Early on in the experiment the guards turned to de-individualizing the prisoners in order to be in control of the “cellblock”, such as by removing their personal clothing in exchange for bland and uniform clothes and referring to them only by their prison-numbers and not their actual names.

The same process of removing any kind of personal identity was exercised at Abu Ghraib where the detainees were processed through the prison administration and henceforth only known as a number. All clothing was removed and the detainee was then hooded, given a standard prison garment to wear and placed in the correctional facility corresponding with the severity of their alleged crimes.

The mentality of the MPs at Abu Ghraib toward the detainees were very much influenced by mortar attacks that would land somewhere on the compound every night, often times killing or maiming friends and colleagues. To the guards, the Iraqi outside the prison was no different from the Iraqi inside, and prisoners, guilty or not, were treated at times with extreme prejudice and animosity. It was common for the detainees to save their feces and urine in the containers they were handed when being fed, for the purpose of throwing them in the faces of the guards as they walked
by. These factors together create the mentality in the guards that is called “The Enemy Effect”, as Zimbardo says is the distinction between us, our kin, our kind and them, their kin, their kind, which is the act of mentally lumping a large group of people together based on ethnicity, color, creed or some other feature they have in common, thereby branding them all as enemies.

The same effect started to become evident in Zimbardo’s experiment when a riot ensued in the early hours of day two. The hostility of the prisoners created *The Enemy Effect* in the guards, where, even though it was just an experiment, the differences of the two groups became very distinct, to a point where it was now “them vs. us” seen from both sides. The guards being the dominant group seemed to have a constant need to ascertain their position of power and make it clear to the prisoners who’s in charge. Because of the enemy effect being instilled in the mindset of the guards at both Abu Ghraib and Stanford, the treatment of prisoners and detainees evolved in brutality to the point of their behavior becoming abusive.

This abusive behavior was made all the more easy by the dehumanization of the “enemy”. At Stanford, the prisoners themselves were required to refer to each other by their prisoner number, thus stripping them of one of the essential things that makes one a person. The prisoners were also stripped of their autonomy by constantly being told that their opinions didn’t matter and being told repeatedly to perform obviously redundant tasks. Instilling in the prisoners a sense of worthlessness and making it easier for the guards to consider them as non-human entities. Hoods were also used for this particular purpose, at Stanford they were applied to keep the prisoners disoriented when moving them outside the “cellblock” for
instance when escorting them to the bathroom. At Abu Ghraib they were also used when the alleged criminals were transported to the compound and processed through the prison administration or sometimes when detainees were being interrogated.

These things combined enabled the guards to act without sympathy or compassion toward their “enemies”.

“There were a few times when I had forgotten the prisoners were people, but I always caught myself, realized that they were people. I simply thought of them as ‘prisoners’ losing touch with their humanity. This happened for short periods of time, usually when I was giving orders to them. I am tired and disgusted at times, this is usually the state of my mind. Also I make an actual try of my will to dehumanize them in order to make it easy for me.”

Most of these horrible acts of abuse occurred during the night at both Stanford and Abu Ghraib and were committed by the night shift in charge of the cellblocks. At Stanford, the abuse seemed to peak during the nightshift hours even though the level of supervision was the same at all times. This might partially be due to a greater lack of tasks for the nightshift to handle compared to the dayshift. The night shift, in order to keep themselves busy, made up tasks of their own that they needed to take care of, these included waking the prisoners up in the middle of the night to perform “the counts”. This served the dual purpose of depriving the prisoners of their much-needed sleep and to distort their sense of time.

The Abu Ghraib night shift performed many of the same tasks as that of Stanford, including depriving detainees of sleep to exhaust them in

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69Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 8 P. 157 L. 16 – L. 22
preparation for the military intelligence team who were to interrogate them. They were basically left to their own devices during the night because of the lack of supervision. The soldiers had a small office set up in the upper tiers and would often pass the time by watching movies on a laptop. The boredom that the guards at both Stanford and Abu Ghraib experienced during the night was a leading cause for why the prisoners became a source of entertainment.

The conditions under which the cellblocks at Abu Ghraib were operated were far from ideal. For the soldiers on the compound, each day meant putting your life at risk. They were understaffed and not able to patrol the entire perimeter of the camp or even the correctional facilities, meaning that prison breaks were a constant nuisance, so not only did they have to watch out for incoming mortar shells but also the possible escapee lurking in the dark around every corner. They did not have the basic living conditions that the facilities of the green zone, or other prison camps in Iraq, had. The soldiers slept in old, battered prison cells or tents out in the open, vulnerable to attack. Their sanitary facilities were also far below the standards they were used to.

All this contributed to a constant mental stress factor making the soldiers much more irritable, thus heightening the likelihood of them succumbing to their darker and more sinister impulses. Initially the conditions at Stanford were far less stressful and might even have been considered nice by prison standards, the only point of distress being the lack of access to proper toilet accommodations, which had initially led to the prisoner rule about 5 minute bathroom visits. These conditions did, however, deteriorate throughout the experiment and were worsened by the implementation of using the aforementioned toilet visits as a privilege, and not a right as was originally
the idea, thereby creating a largely unpleasant odor which likely contributed to putting the guards in a hostile mood from the get go. Otherwise the conditions at Stanford don’t seem to have contributed much to it being a *Bad Barrel* or at least not nearly as much as the structure of the system that the Stanford prison represented. A system in which people with no training and no discernible knowledge regarding the setting they were placed in and with few, and vague guidelines to follow, ended up instigating the abuse of others who might as well, but for the flip of a coin, have been their co-workers.

Along with the issue of not having guidelines that clearly state what is allowed and what is prohibited, the leadership at Stanford did not properly supervise the guards or the wellbeing of the prisoners. Zimbardo himself has claimed that his dual role as the superintendent of the prison and lead researcher caused him to lose focus, possibly because he had a selfish interest as a scientist to let things play out without intervening for the experiment to yield the most interesting results. He has later come to the conclusion that he should have had separated the two and assigned the role of superintendent to a different person.

One of the main points in Col. James’ theory of how to prevent things going awry when handling prisoners, is the fact that leadership needs to be visible at all times, most importantly when guards do not expect to be supervised. The superior officer has to be willing to look for skeletons under every rock. At Abu Ghraib the boss was simply never around. Janis Karpinski, who was in charge of the 372th MP Company that would handle the prisoners and was involved in the abuse, oversaw 15 detention camps spread out across Iraq and had never been in charge of a prison before. Being severely
overtasked, she could not be present at all at Abu Ghraib to ensure that the MP guards followed an appropriate code of conduct. Major David DiNenna was next in command of the MPs but was busy handling the logistics that make up running a prison encampment.

James quickly turned this around when he arrived at Abu Ghraib. As a colonel he outranked most of the personnel present and put a lot of effort in to making himself visible at all hours of the day, most importantly for the night shift to notice that a superior officer was watching over them. Because the abusive behavior of Abu Ghraib was perpetrated by the night shift, this is where he put his focus. He found that the conditions under which the abuse had occurred, and the leadership situation that had allowed said abuses, had not improved in the slightest:

“As I walked to the intel center, I was intensely curious to see what was really going on in this place, and more than a bit apprehensive. Walking past the sleeping soldier who was supposed to be guarding the entrance to the building, I entered and proceeded down the long hall. [...] Inside, I found a twenty-five-year-old supervisor fast asleep with his feet up, a Playboy magazine clutched tightly to his chest. As I stood over him, I noticed he wore dark aviator sunglasses, despite it being 1:30 in the morning, and despite his being asleep. They reminded me of the sunglasses worn by the “guards” in the Stanford Prison Experiment. I tapped on his right shoulder to get his attention. [...] “Son, I’m Colonel James.” [...] “Well sir . . . But sir, may I ask why you’re here, sir? We ain’t never had no colonel here this time of the night, sir.”

“Yes, I can see that,” I responded, with a bit of a grimace. “Well, I’m here to keep us safe and help make us all better.” Then I turned and went to disturb the nap of the sleeping MP guard at the front door.”70

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70 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A "Fixing Hell" Ch. 5 P. 107 L. 26 – P. 109 L. 2
This lack of supervision led the soldiers to falsely get the impression that their actions would not be penalized and since no one was putting an end to the behavior, it was believed to be allowed. Thus creating the effect of living inside a bubble where the rules and morals of the outside had no influence on their behavior. The uniform clothing and somewhat similar appearance of the soldiers helped create in them a feeling of self-perceived anonymity. This anonymity of the individual guard might be what enhanced this “bubble effect”.

The bubble effect might have played a role at Stanford as well but to a lesser degree. As before the uniform clothing and the aviator glasses made the guards feel more anonymous which probably increased the bubble effect here as well. When the guards found out that breaking the rules they themselves had agreed upon had no consequences, they proceeded to continuously break them.

There were a few guards who chose to not participate in the abuses that were otherwise so prevalent among the guards, but they generally did nothing to hinder them either. Only one instance of such an action was recorded during the experiment. A guard, who was normally one of the most physically abusive guards, chose to break the pattern when he walked over to a prisoner, who was unhappy with the guards decision to let another prisoner sleep in the isolation closet, and told him that he was going to let the prisoner out of isolation and put him to bed as soon as the other prisoners had fallen asleep. The rest of the guards who chose not to participate in the abuses but who also opted not to do anything at all to hinder the abuses perpetrated by their fellow guards, were generally
considered “good” by the prisoners but were still quite guilty of the “evil of inaction”.

At Abu Ghraib the amount of people directly perpetrating the abuses was actually a very small minority, while the vast majority did not actively participate in the abuses. These guards, just like the ones in Stanford, chose not to act upon the abuses they witnessed and just continued their routines thus becoming perpetrators of the exact same evil of inaction as was committed by the guards at Stanford. In The Stanford Experiment, however, there was at least one act of open opposition towards the abusive methods practiced at Abu Ghraib. In the prison it was commonplace to use dogs as a means of intimidation, letting the canines bark and growl at the prisoners while they were being interrogated under the threat of letting go of the leash if the prisoner did not cooperate. It must be noted that in Iraq, having a dog as a pet is not common practice, which may enhance the level of fear induced by the dogs. During one of these interrogations a woman, who was a member of a K-9 unit, was asked to use her dog for just this purpose. She flat out denied the request and thus opposing the abusive tendencies that were frequently used in interrogations at Abu Ghraib.

“[…] ‘Sir, she said, ‘You’re crazy. This is my dog, that’s an illegal order and you can’t make me do that shit. This is my dog and you ain’t gonna tell me to make him hurt anybody.’ […] This young MP was a K-9 dog handler during the abuse period from August to October 2003. One night, she was called to the cellblock where all the abuses commonly occurred and was ordered to have her dog be used in the torture tactics. She refused, […] Then she calmly told her dog, “Let’s go,” and walked off the cellblock, never looking back.”71

71 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A, “Fixing Hell” Ch. 9 P. 190 L. 20 – P. 191 L. 2
Defusing the *Bad Barrel*

Though Col. James gives a more nuanced view of Dr. Zimbardo’s *Bad Barrel* theory, they can both agree on the most significant points, these being conditions, lack of supervision and guidelines. However, Professors Alexander Haslam and Stephen D. Reicher do not agree. In their essay published in the open access journal plosbiology.org on November 20th 2012, they challenge the idea of the environment being the primary contributor to moral decay.

They question the very validity of Zimbardo’s experiment, because of the predetermined elements, such as lack of ethnic diversity among the participants and the active role Zimbardo played in determining the behavior of the prison guards. The thesis Haslam and Reicher has created based on the *Stanford Prison Experiment* is that, rather than having evil imposed on them by the situation and surroundings they are placed in, they choose actively to perform evil acts.

They came to this conclusion by viewing footage from the *Stanford Prison Experiment*, and observing how the prison guards were committed and creative in their abuse of the prisoners. This meaning inventing new forms of counts where the prisoners would for e.g. sing their prisoner ID-numbers, making new forms of punishments and even rewrite the rules that they themselves had agreed upon prior to the experiment, to give them a more malignant streak. This all point towards a conscious choice in the minds of the guards and not, as Zimbardo concludes mindless conformity to a broken system. Instead they introduce the idea that, when believing in a cause, you would go through great lengths to serve and protect it.
Believing in a greater good can be related to the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal, where the prison guards were fighting the war against terror. They were witnesses to the murder of their friends and fellow countrymen and the mental scars of the events of September 11th 2001 were still fresh in their memory.

In the *Stanford Prison Experiment*, however, this concept came into play as they believed they contributed to an experiment that would have great impact on the understanding of the human psyche.

In the 1960’s, Dr. Stanley Milgram conducted an experiment that would explore the human tendency to obey commands when in the presence of a direct authority figure. He set up a fake situation wherein he had an unknowing participant (teacher) sit in a room and supposedly administer electric jolts to a person (learner) in the booth next to him. When the learner gave a wrong answer on a quiz, shocks were administered to see if this would improve his learning ability. The person supposed to receive the electric shock however, was an actor, and was never at any point during the experiment exposed to pain. A prime part of the motivational influence was the presence of an authority figure, a man dressed in a lab-coat who was described as the head researcher on the project. One of the main points of the experiment was to observe how people reacted to authority. They arrived at the conclusion that people would go through great lengths when urged by an authority-figure. However, Haslam and Reicher dispute this result. They arrive at a different conclusion when looking at the same data. Their take on the experiment is that people were more likely to continue causing pain, when being told that the experiment requires, that they continue instead of being given a direct order like “you have no other
choice, you must go on!”\textsuperscript{72}, where most of the participating people would refuse.

This is particularly relevant in the case of Abu Ghraib. The Abu Ghraib Prison was an instrument in a time of war. The prison guards believed they were fighting for a greater good and they were under the impression that the lives of their fellow Americans depended on them getting intelligence, no matter the cost. This feeling is something the army makes a great deal of trying to implement in the minds of soldiers. The following quote is from the official website of the US Army:

“[…] As a Soldier, you will be prepared to serve our country whenever and wherever you are needed, combat-ready at all times, trained to counter any threat, anywhere.”\textsuperscript{73}

This concept of \textit{a greater good} constitutes the utmost justification for people e.g. soldiers, to go against their own moral code and commit acts they would normally find atrocious.

In the case of Milgram, the professors make the point that abuse was tolerated in the name of scientific progress, being told that your effort made a difference in the outcome between failure and success. Military Intelligence officers would often thank Corporal Graner for the work that was being done on Tier 1A, how it had softened the detainees to a point where they were ready to crack and confess to their crimes.

In other words the soldiers submit to the idea that something, or someone, is worth throwing away your previous inclinations for. They accept the rules of their new environment, even though this might contradict their

\textsuperscript{72} Haslam, S A & Reicher, S D \textit{“Contesting the “Nature” Of Conformity”} P. 2 Column 3 L. 34 – L. 36

\textsuperscript{73} http://www.goarmy.com/about.html
own sense of moral, and they can eventually lose grasp of where their own morals stop and the new ones begin. In relation to the Milgram Experiment, the authority figure in military context is a higher ranked soldier.

“The MI staffs to my understanding have been giving Granier compliments on the way he has been handling the MI holds. Example being statements like, ‘Good job, they’re breaking down real fast. They answer every question. They’re giving out good information, Finally, and Keep up the good work. Stuff like that’.”

In the case of Abu Ghraib, Corporal Graner became a figure of authority. Due to the lack of visible command he was one of the highest ranking officers present on Tier 1A. Even though Staff Sergeant Frederick was also one of the orchestrators in the abuse scandal of Abu Ghraib and technically outranks Graner, it is Graner who stands as the main instigator to most of the episodes where abuse occurred. This may be explained by his charismatic appearance. Specialist Joe Darby says of Graner:

“He is the most charismatic, most manipulative person you will meet,” Darby said. “You want to like him when you talk to him. But he has a very dark side, a very, very dark side.”

It is a person with characteristics exactly like these, according to Reicher and Haslam, which makes a leader of the sort who can turn others into simple followers and thereby get them to accept a different set of moral guidelines.

Haslam and Reicher stress the point that personal histories between people of a group strengthen the feeling of a collective group identity. Major

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74 Taguba, A M “Article 15-6 Investigation Of The 800th Military Police Brigade” P. 19 L. 12 – L. 16
75 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E “Standard Operating Procedure” Ch. 19 P. 234 L. 24 – L. 26
General Taguba, who writes in his report that the personal relationships between the MP guards at Abu Ghraib had a major role to play, also supports this.

Many of them knew each other prior to being deployed in Iraq, and this has most likely affected them to the point of taking part in the behavior of a group of friends and colleagues, rather than taking a step back to judge what they were doing on a moral basis.

Because the soldiers on Tier 1A of Abu Ghraib shared “the same boat” they came to identify with each other and so letting the stronger, more influential personality shape their common behavioral pattern. This creates an environment where the other guards weigh their actions against those of Graner, and let his immoral dispositions be the ethical guide by which they are greatly influenced.

“Darby saw Frederick and England and Harman and Jeremy Sivits, too, in the pictures, but he was fixated on Graner. To Darby, it was obvious that Graner was the source of the abuse, and that the others, while culpable as well, were simply under his sway.”

Not until Joe Darby came in possession of the evidence of abuse that happened on Tier 1A of the hard site did it have consequences for the people involved. Many people witnessed the horrific scenes of abuse; some even found them disturbing, but nonetheless remained passive in the act of stopping it. Haslam and Reicher extract from the Stanford Prison Experiment, among other things, that the collective identity of a group and followership caused many of the guards to partake in the abusive treatment

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of prisoners. All of the participating guards in Zimbardo’s experiment were young Caucasian males and two guards in particular, from different shifts, were seen as the ringleaders. The act of identifying with these two people, capable of vicious behavior, is based on several elements. One of them being social background and the perception of physical similarity, such as white males from California, but also the mere fact of being assigned to a group that has a predetermined role to play, in both these cases guarding prisoners, will conform the members to perform the tasks of the group.

**Conclusion**

When listening to the various parts of the scientific community you quickly get the feeling that Zimbardo, through his famous *Stanford Prison Experiment*, has come to shape the foundation of how most of us view evil and the surfacing of malignant behavior. However when one looks closely at the events of the *Stanford Prison Experiment* and when one tries to use Zimbardo’s theory outside the setting that spawned it, for instance the abuses at Abu Ghraib, it quickly becomes apparent that it might not be as wholesome and all-encompassing as it seems. While being a somewhat solid theory, when held up to Abu Ghraib there are some inconsistencies, such as the fact that not all of the guards at Abu Ghraib were involved in the abuses. This all seems to point towards the possibility of Zimbardo’s theory being overly simplistic in nature and that there might be other aspects that help contribute to moral decay, than the proverbial *Bad Barrel*. It also quickly becomes clear that, while the *Bad Barrel* theory may be prevalent, it is by no means the only theory out there that deals with this part of the human condition. Haslam and Reicher speak for one of these theories, a theory that points towards evil as a conscious choice and not as an environmentally
induced reflex. In their theory they also state that for people to conform to the evil of a situation there need to be some factors that the people involved have in common, such as race, color and creed or, in the case of Abu Ghraib, the general ideology they try to preserve and a distinct feeling of serving a greater good.

In conclusion it can be said that, when looking at the different theories processed during the course of the project work, it does seem like the theory of Haslam and Reicher is more well supported by the available data, than the other theories included in our work, and also offers us a new and more nuanced view of the events at both Stanford and Abu Ghraib. The theory based on multiple factors, which includes the personal, preconceived inclinations of the guards and the environment fits neatly with the events at Abu Ghraib and also goes well in hand with Dr. Harry Nelson who says that predisposition and opportunity equals criminal behavior.77

**Critique**

**Source material**

Although Zimbardo is a genuine first-hand witness to the *Stanford Prison Experiment*, we have to question our source material in that the only version of the events that transpired during the experiment is the one published by him.

Zimbardo seems to have predilection for writing dramatically. The tendency towards turning observations into an almost novel-like narrative is clearly visible and, although it arguably enriches the text and makes it

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77 Dr. Nelson, H “AR 15-6 Investigation – Allegations of Detainee Abuse At Abu Ghraib Psychological Assessment” P. 4 L 11 – L 12
more enticing to read, than if it had been a cut and dry retelling of the events. This has the added effect of allowing one to doubt the sincerity of the author and whether this is fact or fiction. An example of the dramatic and narrative style can be seen here:

“Community spirit thrives in a quiet, orderly way in places such as Palo Alto where people care about the physical and social quality of their lives and have the resources to work at improving both. Here there is a sense of fairness and trust that contrasts with the nagging tugs of inequity and cynicism that drag down folks in some other places.”

During the second chapter of *The Lucifer Effect* we are informed that he has taken artistic liberties when writing this particular chapter and he has built this narrative on a foundation of different sources but, at the same time, fails to identify these sources. This seems conspicuous given the level of attention to detail every other source in the book has received. During this particular part of the text Zimbardo describes events and actions he has no possibility of verifying. At times he even places himself inside the minds of some of the people described during the chapter. This may be to enhance the story and make it more exciting to read, but also opens the possibility of coloring the reader’s opinion on the different characters before the story really begins. An example of this can be seen here:

“Please ask your father to see to it.’ Mrs. Whittlow was involved in examining her conscience because she had many misgivings about the changes that had been taking place in the church services from which she had just returned. She

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78 Zimbardo, P. G. "The Lucifer Effect" Ch. 2 P. 25 L. 31 – L. 35
had also been thinking a lot about Hubbie recently, preparing herself for a life of twice-a-year visits from her beautiful fuzzy-blond, blue-eyed charmer.”

Another problem with our source material is that it all seems connected to Zimbardo and the fact that he is credited in every source we have that deals with the Stanford Prison Experiment. This may leave us with a biased telling of the experiment and may have colored our minds before we got to the writing phase of the project.

We have used a website for background information on Abu Ghraib called Globalsecurity.org. The site is maintained by John E. Pike. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and regularly appears on news programs, on all the major networks, as an expert commentator on security issues. Through this we have assessed that the information on this website is legitimate.

The book Standard Operating Procedure is an extended version of the documentary film of the same title, both written by Errol Morris. The book is co-authored by Philip Gourevitch. Morris is a documentary filmmaker and it is possible that his love of drama and film has colored the way in which the events are portrayed in both the film and the book, for instance using reconstructions of the events in Abu Ghraib as dramatic effect.

In addition to Standard Operating Procedure, Errol Morris has also directed the documentaries The Fog of War: 11 lessons from the life of Robert S. McNamara and The Thin Blue Line which all takes a critical look at different areas of government, in smaller or larger scales. His films aim to raise questions concerning how the systems of American governance function.

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79 Zimbardo, P G “The Lucifer Effect” Ch. 2 P. 34 L. 6 – L. 10
and try to point out their flaws. In *Standard Operating Procedure* he interviews the guards involved in the abuse and uses them and their stories to criticize the chain of command and those responsible for Abu Ghraib. A possible problem of having first-hand accounts told by the people involved, is that it opens up the possibility of them minimizing the severity of their actions. We see examples of this in the interviews, where one person tells the story of his or hers fellow guard. The following quote is Megan Ambuhl Graner on her husband Charles Graner.

“He didn’t want to see this guy [Prisoner nicknamed Santa] who was mental be harassed by other detainees. Same with Shitboy – we weren’t interested in seeing these people suffer.”

We have made use of another book called *Fixing Hell*. The author is the retired colonel and army psychologist, Larry C. James. He considers himself a conservative Democrat, but still a strong supporter in the invasion of Iraq. The fact that he is also an army colonel, may have colored his account of events in the book, specifically about the leadership and the chain of command. One could think that he omitted certain critiques he might have had, to protect his superiors. In addition to being in the army he has sworn an oath as a physician to dedicate his life to the service of humanity. This means that he has the interest and wellbeing of the detainees at heart first and foremost. This poses a paradox. Though he might wish to spare the people who in this case made the mistake, he might also want to assign blame. The complexity of his situation is something he is aware of though, and throughout the book he frequently considers this issue.

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80 Gourevitch, P & Morris, E. "*Standard Operating Procedure*" Ch. 12 P. 145 L. 19 – L. 21
Both *Fixing Hell* and *Standard Operating Procedure*, focuses on the lack of leadership and the poor living conditions as one of the reasons for attributing to an environment where abuse could happen. They cannot, however, agree on the role that General Miller had to play in the events of Abu Ghraib. In “Standard Operating Procedure” he is portrayed as an unsympathetic leader who is well aware of the conditions of the detainees but cannot be bothered:

“The first thing I noticed is that you’re treating the prisoners too well. You have to have control, and they have to know that you’re in control. You have to treat the prisoners like dogs.”

However, in *Fixing Hell* Col. James portrays him as the soldier who has a sincere wish to fix what went wrong, and he goes through great strides to make sure that Col. James gets everything he asks for.

“For the first meeting I had with General Miller after arriving, he emphasized that he was behind me. […] He also stressed that he expected me to come up with the solutions that would set Abu Ghraib right. He made it clear to the leadership on post that I had open access to anything I needed to accomplish the mission”

This shows that the two books sheds light on two separate sides of the same coin, and gives us a possibility to create a nuanced point of view and not rely solely on one account of the events at Abu Ghraib.

One thing to be aware of when reading Col. James’ *Fixing Hell* is that as one of the first things he notes is that he has changed names and identifying characteristics. This can prove a hindrance in working with the material, as

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82 Col. James, L C & Freeman, G A *Fixing Hell* Ch. 6 P. 120 L. 18 – L. 24
comparisons to other literature becomes significantly more difficult, thereby making it problematic to reaffirm facts. In our use of this material, however, it is not names and personality traits we have relied on and the alterations should therefore not have a big influence on the quality of our report.

In the essay, *Contesting the “Nature” of Conformity*, the professors S. Alexander Haslam and Stephen D. Reicher rethink the results and conclusions of the experiments by Milgram and Zimbardo and form their own. It has been hard to find points to critique, either because of our limited experience within the field or because their essay is very well founded in good logical reasoning and therefore has no obvious fallacies.

**Summary**

I kapitel 1 forklares der om Dr. Philip Zimbardos *Stanford Prison Experiment*. Der vil være en udredning for hver af de seks dage eksperimentet varede og en redegørelse for den teori Dr. Zimbardo udledte deraf.

Kapitel 2 indeholder en beskrivelse af Abu Ghraib-fængslet og en fremstilling af de vigtigste af de personer, der var involverede i mishandlingen af de indsatte. Her vil også være en gennemgang af et udvalg af de billeder, der blev lækket til pressen i 2004 og som gjorde at situationen i Irak blev offentlig kendt.

I kapitel 3 sammenlignes sagerne om *Stanford Prison Experiment* og skandalen fra Abu Ghraib. Der gives en redegørelse for forskelle og ligheder, og til sidst en sammenligning og en diskussion af Zimbardos teori om the *Bad Barrel* og teorien doktorerne Haslam og Reicher fremstiller i deres essay *Contesting the "Nature" of Conformity*. 
Til slut konkluderes at den teori Dr. Zimbardo har udformet, som går ud på at det omgivende miljø og de omstændigheder man befinder sig i er hovedårsagen til moralsk fordærv, ikke er fuldt ud i stand til at forklare hvorfor folk adopterer en ondsabsfuld adfærd og at der er andre faktorer, der spiller ind når et menneske bliver ondt.

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Annex 1 – List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guards</th>
<th>Prisoners</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day Shift: 10 A.M. – 6 P.M.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arnett, Markus, Landry</td>
<td>3401 - Glenn</td>
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<tr>
<td>(John)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Night Shift: 6 P.M. – 2 A.M.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellmann, Burdan, Landry</td>
<td>5704 – Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Geoff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning Shift: 2 A.M. – 10 A.M.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandry, Ceros, Varnish</td>
<td>819 – Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-up Guards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morismo, Peters</td>
<td>8612 – Doug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell#3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2093 – Tom “Sarge”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3425 – Jim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5486 - Jerry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2 - Pictures

Picture 1. – October 18th, 2003

Picture 2. – October 24th, 2003
Picture 3. - October 25th, 2003:

Picture 4. – November 4th and 5th, 2003
Picture 7. – December 12th, 2003