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## Guantánamo Bay: Female interrogators' tactics aired

Paisley Dodds  
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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Female interrogators tried to break Muslim detainees at the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay by sexual touching, wearing a miniskirt and thong underwear and in one case smearing a Saudi man's face with fake menstrual blood, according to an insider's written account.

A draft manuscript obtained by The Associated Press is classified as secret pending a Pentagon review for a planned book that details ways the U.S. military used women as part of tougher physical and psychological interrogation tactics to get terror suspects to talk.

"I have really struggled with this because the detainees, their families and much of the world will think this is a religious war based on some of the techniques used, even though it is not the case," the author, former Army Sgt. Erik R. Saar, 29, told AP.

Saar didn't provide the manuscript or approach AP, but confirmed the authenticity of nine draft pages AP obtained. Saar, who is neither Muslim nor of Arab descent, worked as an Arabic translator at the U.S. camp in eastern Cuba from December 2002 to June 2003. At the time, it was under the command of Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who had a mandate to get better intelligence from prisoners, including alleged al-Qaida members caught in Afghanistan.

Saar said he witnessed about 20 interrogations and about three months after his arrival at the remote U.S. base he started noticing "disturbing" practices.

One female civilian contractor used a special outfit that included a miniskirt and thong underwear during late-night interrogations with prisoners, mostly Muslim men who consider it taboo to have close contact with women who aren't their wives.

Some Guantánamo prisoners who have been released say they were tormented by "prostitutes."

In one case, Saar describes a female military interrogator questioning an uncooperative 21-year-old Saudi detainee who allegedly had taken flying lessons in Arizona before the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

One suspected Sept. 11 hijacker, Hani Hanjour, had received pilot instruction in 1996 and 1997 at a flight school in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"His female interrogator decided that she needed to turn up the heat," Saar writes, saying she repeatedly asked the detainee who had sent him to Arizona, telling him he could "cooperate" or "have no hope whatsoever of ever leaving this place or talking to a lawyer."

The man closed his eyes and began to pray, Saar writes.

The female interrogator wanted to "break him," Saar adds, describing how she removed her uniform top to expose a tight-fitting T-shirt and began taunting the detainee, touching her breasts, rubbing them against the prisoner's back and commenting on his apparent erection.

The detainee looked up and spat in her face, the manuscript recounts.

The interrogator left the room to ask a Muslim linguist how she could break the prisoner's reliance on God. The linguist told her to tell the detainee that she was menstruating, touch him, then make sure to turn off the water in his cell so he couldn't wash.

Strict interpretation of Islamic law forbids physical contact with women other than a man's wife or family, and with any menstruating women, who are considered unclean.

"The concept was to make the detainee feel that after talking to her he was unclean and was unable to go before his God in prayer and gain strength," says the draft.

The interrogator used ink from a red pen to fool the detainee, Saar writes.

She put her hands in her pants and the detainee then saw what appeared to be red blood on her hand, he says.

"She said, 'Who sent you to Arizona?' He then glared at her with a piercing look of hatred.

"She then wiped the red ink on his face. He shouted at the top of his lungs, spat at her and lunged forward" — so fiercely that he broke loose from one ankle shackle.

"He began to cry like a baby," the draft says, noting the interrogator left saying, "Have a fun night in your cell without any water to clean yourself."

Events Saar describes are similar to two previous reports of abusive female interrogation tactics, although it wasn't possible to independently verify his account.

In November, in response to an AP request, the military described an April 2003 incident in which a female interrogator took off her uniform top, ran her fingers through a detainee's hair and sat on his lap. That session was immediately ended by a supervisor and that interrogator received a written reprimand and additional training, the military said.

In another incident, the military reported that in early 2003 a different female interrogator "wiped dye from red magic marker on detainees' shirt after detainee spit on her," telling the detainee it was blood. She was verbally reprimanded, the military said.

Sexual tactics used by female interrogators have been criticized by the FBI, which complained in a letter obtained by AP last month that U.S. defense officials hadn't acted on complaints by FBI observers of "highly aggressive" interrogation techniques, including one in which a female interrogator grabbed a detainee's genitals.

About 20 percent of the guards at Guantánamo are women, said Lt. Col. James Marshall, a spokesman for U.S. Southern Command. He wouldn't say how many of the interrogators were female.

"U.S. forces treat all detainees and conduct all interrogations, wherever they may occur, humanely and consistent with U.S. legal obligations, and in particular with legal obligations prohibiting torture," Marshall said late Wednesday.

The book, which Saar titled "Inside the Wire," is due out this year with Penguin Press.