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## Who knew what at Abu Ghraib?

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THE ACCOUNTABILITY gap between the grunts and generals of Abu Ghraib widened this week. Charles Graner, one of the soldiers accused of prisoner abuse, tried to have charges dismissed on the grounds that a jury would be tainted by the prior condemnation of the abuse by President Bush, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers.

Military judge James Pohl rejected the defense motion, saying the Bush administration never said any of the individuals were guilty nor cited any individual soldier by name.

Graner's attorney, Guy Womack, was also rebuffed by Pohl in an effort to force Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the former US commander in Iraq, to testify. Sanchez has not been accused of any wrongdoing, but has been criticized for not acting quickly enough over reports of abuse. Womack said Sanchez's testimony "would show how the ball started rolling downhill that ended up with this Abu Ghraib case."

Pohl ruled the opposite, saying any testimony by Sanchez has "nothing to do with what happened on the ground."

The highest up the chain of command that Pohl has so far allowed defense attorneys to haul into court is Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the former commander at Abu Ghraib. She will testify at the trial of one of the other accused soldiers, Javal Davis.

Ironically, Karpinski, who was suspended after the shocking photos from Abu Ghraib were seen worldwide, says she is the fall gal for her higher-ups. In an interview in August with the BBC, she said she was left out of meetings discussing interrogations at the prison and that senior officials took measures to make sure she was kept in the dark about any abuse. In a September interview with the Associated Press, Karpinski fingered Sanchez, Major General Geoffrey Miller, the former deputy commander for detention operations, and Major General Barbara Fast, the former head of military intelligence in Iraq.

"It was a conspiracy all along," Karpinski told the AP. "Sanchez and Miller and likely Fast had fallback plans and people to blame if anything came unglued."

There probably will be no innocents here. The New York Times reported Saturday that top defense officials made little or no effort to monitor interrogation procedures in Afghanistan and Iraq. There had been certain get-tough techniques such as stress positions and sleep and light deprivation that Rumsfeld approved only for Guantanamo Bay.

But by January 2003, such techniques were being used in Afghanistan. Apparently, commanders in Afghanistan had submitted a list of get-tougher techniques to the Joint Chiefs and Central Command. They heard nothing negative back. A Pentagon investigation run by Navy Inspector General Albert Church said the Afghanistan commanders "interpreted this silence to mean that the techniques were unobjectionable to higher headquarters and therefore could be considered approved policy." Similarly, the investigation said the Iraq high command "was left to struggle with these issues on its own."

On Monday the AP reported that the FBI told the Pentagon that agents witnessed three incidents of prisoner abuse in 2002 at Guantanamo itself. But in a letter this summer from FBI

counterterrorism specialist Thomas Harrington to Major General Donald Ryder, who is investigating prisoner abuse in the war on terror and Iraq, Harrington wrote, "I have no record that our specific concerns regarding these three situations were communicated to the Department of Defense for appropriate action."

One of the incidents involved the use of a dog to intimidate a detainee. The incidents happened when Guantanamo was under the leadership of Miller. Miller would go on to advise Abu Ghraib on how to handle interrogations. Dogs were used at Abu Ghraib to intimidate prisoners, and prisoners were literally treated like dogs as they were put on leashes.

A coincidence? Despite a "somewhat heated" debate between the FBI and the military over interrogation procedures, one agent wrote Harrington to lament, "It did not prevent them from continuing the . . . methods."

With these methods now showing every sign of going back to almost Sept. 11 itself, and with such heated debate between agencies, the idea that senior officials had no clue is increasingly implausible, from Miller and Sanchez all the way up to Rumsfeld and attorney general nominee Alberto Gonzales, who said prisoners were outside the "quaint" and "obsolete" parts of the Geneva Conventions. It may or may not be a conspiracy, but there is a whole lot of conniving going on. It is becoming inconceivable that the grunts did all this abuse without a wink and a nod by the generals.