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Project report

MACS390, “Media, war and peace”

Autumn session, 2010

Media and Cultural Studies, University of Wollongong

The project report assignment had two parts. For details of the assignment see http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/MACS390_10outline.pdf

1. An information pack for an organisation.

Julia Najjar prepared an information pack designed for an organisation — the International Crisis Group — in the form of a booklet, supplemented by photo panel. These items are separate files.

Note that these materials are neither the product nor the responsibility of the International Crisis Group.

2. A fictional dialogue on doing the project.

Julia Najjar's dialogue starts on the next page.

This document is located at http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/MACS390_10tops/.

MACS390 Dialogue

General: Listen up! I will not repeat myself, as research analysts for the Australian Torture Institute¹, you all have been assigned top secret tasks. You have been debriefed, please be safe and don't blow your cover.

**Private talk between Detective Annie & Inspector Martha
23/5/ 2004 @ 1900hrs²**

Detective Annie: Hey, how are you going with your nominated assignment?

Inspector Martha: Hey! I'm going well - I have had a few leads. I'm happy with my assignment especially because it's in my field of Middle Eastern politics and war. Finding a theory was a bit harder. I think I have sorted it out though.

Detective Annie: Wow that sounds intense. What did you end up deciding?

Inspector Martha: Well I decided to focus on Torture as my theme and my case study would be the Abu Ghraib scandal. Intense? That's an understatement.

Detective Annie: What did the general say about your progress so far?

Inspector Martha: I think his happy with my progress. However, he did have some reservations about my organisation and not blowing my cover.

Detective Annie: Your organisation? Who did you decide to do?

Inspector Martha: I started off as having Amnesty International as my organisation. However, the general pointed out that Amnesty International already focuses on torture and have top research analysts. Based on his feedback, I decided on another organisation - the 'International Crisis Group'. The first hurdle has been solved.

Detective Annie: I think the general did a good job by trying to cover up our real professions by wanting us to develop a brief with theories for our chosen organisation.

¹ The Australian Institute of Torture is a hypothetical institute developed for the purpose of this dialogue.

² The dates and times have been changed in order to make Abu Ghraib a current situation in the world to effectively produce a relevant dialogue.

Our cover will never be jeopardised - no one will know what we are doing and we will bring into light what's happened from a different perspective!

Inspector Martha: To be honest, it's quite scary,. I have not started at looking at what theories I want to focus on. I do remember touching on a couple of theories in regards to torture during my university years. Oh before I forget, I'm going to have to contact someone from the International Crisis group ASAP. How about when we meet up next time, I will give you bit of an update?

Detective Annie: Ok. Yes you better contact someone soon. Sounds like a plan. I will see you soon. Stay safe!

Phone Conversation between Inspector Martha & Isabella Kopler (ICG)

27/5/2004 @ 0800hrs

Isabella Kopler: Hi, My name is Isabella Kopler; I'm the general director of International Crisis Group. Is this Inspector Martha. I am returning her call.

Inspector Martha: Hello, Ms Kopler. This is Inspector Martha. Thank you for returning my call so soon.

Isabella Kopler: Please call me Isabella.

Inspector Martha: Ok. Isabella.

Isabella Kopler: Have you seen the news?

Inspector Martha: Are you referring to the torture and interrogation allegations at the Abu Ghraib prison, in Iraq?

Isabella Kopler: Yes, photos were leaked to the media and now our main focus is finding out about what actually happened at Abu Ghraib. Torture is a serious breach of human rights. Can you understand why I need your help?

Inspector Martha: Yes, I do to an extent. Just to be clear, what do you exactly need me to do?

Isabella Kopler: Well Inspector, I need you to present all of your findings in regards to torture at Abu Ghraib. We are happy for you to set it out how you see fit.

Inspector Martha: I will need to debrief with my general. I will be in contact soon.

Isabella Kopler: Thank you. Bye.

Conversation between Inspector Martha & the General

27/5/2004 @ 0900hrs

Inspector Martha: Sir, we have had a new development.

General: I know, I saw the news. What is this new development?

Inspector Martha: Isabella Kopler contacted me this morning at 0800hrs. She has requested my help. They are in damage control - she needs me to present all of my findings in regards to these allegations of torture at Abu Ghraib.

General: I agree, do what she wants - I'm changing your assignment slightly, I want you to bring your findings to me also.

Inspector Martha: Ok, sir.

Conversation between Inspector Martha & Detective Annie

27/5/2004 @ 2200hrs

Inspector Martha: There have been new developments - I'm a bit concerned on how am I going to do this.

Detective Annie: I know, I saw the news. I really think you need to be clever and creative about your findings.

Inspector Martha: I know - I want to present it in a way people won't expect. I'm thinking a comic strip with the pictures from the press and a book about the Torture and Abu Ghraib and then I will present my findings to the general and to Isabella Koplner from ICG.

Detective Annie: Wow, I think that sounds great. Let me know how you go. Remember to add theories!

Inspector Martha: Of course. This is going to be very challenging.

Detective Annie: You will be right - we will debrief in two days!

Inspector Martha: Same time and same place.

Conversation between Inspector Martha & Detective Annie

29/5/2004 @ 2200hrs

Political Annie: Hey! How is it all going?

Inspector Martha: Hey! It's going well - lots of research. I have managed to find five major theories and writings.

Political Annie: ok excellent. What did you come up with? I remember reading something about John Yoo in the newspaper.

Inspector Martha: Ahh yes, John Yoo is pro-torture. I found that Yoo was quite controversial especially in association with torture. I found alot of his materials were quite in favour of America and Bush - one of his main arguments is that the President is allowed to condone torture - he has the right to define what torture is and if he says it isn't torture then the country should believe him.

Political Annie: Oh my! That's very intense. Do you agree?

Inspector Martha: No, I don't - just because you're the President does not allow you to play God. However, Bush is the president and he seems to play God with everything.

Elaine Scarry was a great read - "The Structure of Torture". She argues that the infliction of pain is the primary physical act. In other words, this makes torture what it is. She characterises the structure of torture through language.

Political Annie: Wait, so Scarry is saying that torture and the perpetrators do not require anyone, victim or torturer to speak.

Inspector Martha: yes, exactly.

Political Annie: wow that's really interesting. It will be good to read further into it.

Inspector Martha: I know. Henry Shue wrote this essay called "Torture" - the basis of his essay is discussing that torture is like opening the 'Pandora's box'. For Shue, there are rules for torture—rules that people involved with torture make, follow, ignore and change—at least some observers might regard as morally dubious because it cloaks an unmitigated evil in legitimating language of rules.

Political Annie: It sounds that Shue is coming from a political standpoint.

Inspector Martha: Exactly, his essay was coming from a very strict political standpoint. It's good that his coming from this perspective about torture because Vincent Iacopino has written about torture from a medical perspective which was a good contrast. Iacopino is the co-writer of "The Medical Documentation of Torture". He believes that torture is not in the best interest of the individual or society. It is quite clear that Iacopino is against torture- as he takes an anti-torture stance. Overall he thinks that the world has deemed torture unjustifiable under any circumstances and thinks it undermines our worth and humanity.

Political Annie: Oh didn't this essay report include documentations of torture?

Inspector Martha: Yes it did - which was quite hard to look at. However they opened a fund directly for survivors of torture which is quite significant.

Political Annie: yes that is quite significant - what was your final theory?

Inspector Martha: Alan Dershowitz. He wrote "Want to Torture? Get a Warrant". It advocates the issuance of warrants permitting the torture of terrorism suspects.

Political Annie: I don't get it.

Inspector Martha: What he was trying to say, if there were an absolute need to obtain immediate information in order to save lives coupled with probably cause that the suspect had such information and is unwilling to reveal it.

Political Annie: Oh Ok, I get it

Inspector Martha: I have to go and organise my notes for Isabella Kopler. I need to fill her in on my findings.

Detective Annie: Ok see you soon.

Phone Conversation between Inspector Martha & Isabella Kopler (ICG)

30/5/2004 @ 0800hrs

Inspector Martha: Hello Isabella. I received your interview questions sent to my email.

Isabella Kopler: Hello. No worries, it was a pleasure. How are you going with everything?

Inspector Martha: I'm going very well. I am in the process of putting my findings together. What I have done is written a book and designed a comic strip which will compliment the book.

Isabella Kopler: That sounds amazing! I cannot wait to receive it. I'm impressed with the two mediums you are using. This will help us at ICG to gain a better understanding of torture at Abu Ghraib and what actually happened.

Inspector Martha: great, I will send my findings in the next week or so.

Isabella Kopler: Ok thanks again!

Conversation between Inspector Martha & Political Annie

30/5/2004 @ 1300hrs

Inspector Martha: Hey! I have finished my assignment!

Political Annie: Oh that's great! I can't wait to see it. Have you submitted it to the general?

Inspector Martha: No not yet, I have finished it before the deadline. I'm just happy that it's all done!

Political Annie: What are you thinking?

Inspector Martha: Not much at all. I really think I have produced something good. Just have to see what the general thinks! Thanks for your help throughout this! It's been good to be able to talk to someone.

Political Annie: Ha Ha no worries! Bye

Inspector Martha: Bye