

Abu Graib at Home in America

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Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

“This is not what America is about” argues a reporter referring to revelations of misogynist, violent, racist behavior by employees of the U.S. Border Patrol ‘guarding’ migrants held in detention centers.

Sorry Mr. Thompson (Propublica journalist who broke this story); THIS IS what America is about — administrative abuse of vulnerable people, i.e. women, men and children held in secret or without legal representation, — undocumented migrants, Americans in detention or serving sentences in prison, our indigent and our Black and Brown citizens in general, and foreign prisoners. We witness threats, racial slurs, assaults, beatings and killings by ‘authorized’, armed personnel every day-every day- most of it carried out by our local police officers.

But that’s another long, sad story. Let’s get back to those border guards and their contempt for their wards. Where did we last see this shameless conduct on the scale of these recent revelations? Was it not Abu Graib in 2004? And Abu Graib was just one Iraqi prison where American excesses were exposed. One can find more references to extreme cruelty and sadistic acts by American and allied troops (all under earlier administrations) directed against prisoners in Afghanistan.

As much as our naïve public and the noble liberal wing of our press may wish to assign this newly revealed shame to the Trump administration, the ‘problem’ is much deeper.

I suggest it exists within the training of U.S. troops today and to the license given them in the Iraq and Afghan wars- a license to humiliate, mutilate, shame, torture and murder with impunity— people they have been taught to despise. Recall the report of an American verbally attacking a Muslim woman in the street not long ago proudly proclaiming: “I killed people like you over there!” (This week we had one U.S. Navy Seal tried for just one murder by U.S. troops in Iraq; and he was acquitted.)

The U.S. is home to more than two million Iraq-Afghan war veterans who, when they announce they are veterans, we are obliged to hail with “Thank you for your service”. A huge percentage of these veterans are ill—little wonder, given crimes they have witnessed and committed. Of those, an undocumented number have become abusers and killers at home. Too often, if one searches through a news story we’ll find that many killings- of families by out-of-control husbands or fathers, or the perpetrators of mass shootings- are by veterans. A local New Hampshire paper carried a story in May about the murder of two enlisted women by a fellow soldier at their military base.

One [threat of a mass shooting, by a military veteran](#), was thankfully intercepted more recently in Dallas, Texas.

A [Mother Jones investigation of mass murders](#) in the US and contributing factors (updated May 31, 2019) offers no analysis about killers' experiences in the armed services and in foreign wars.

What we need is a thorough, honest tally of the number of our prison guards, our border patrol guards, and policemen who've been in the U.S. military-policemen like those [threatening the family in Phoenix](#).

Videos exposing this kind of terrorizing American urban police behavior may shock our largely white population. It will not shock Black Americans. Nor will it shock Afghans and Iraqis who doubtless witnessed countless such shameless, unrestrained murderous conduct by U.S. and other occupation troops in their neighborhoods.

A closer examination of prior military experience of those involved in the recently revealed activities towards would-be-migrants by border guards may well reveal a) racism, Islamophobia and misogyny perpetuated by our military establishment, and b) the culpability of all American administrations. The ugliness that faces us today cannot simply be laid on the shoulders of the current White House occupant.

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