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## Reports detail Abu Ghraib prison death; was it torture?

Iraqi had been suspended by his handcuffed wrists, guards tell investigators



Abc News Via Getty Images

The body of an Iraqi who died while under interrogation lies in ice as Pvt. Charles Graner, a guard who has since been sentenced to prison, poses for a photo.

By Seth Hettena

 Associated Press

updated 2/17/2005 4:57:24 PM ET

SAN DIEGO— An Iraqi whose corpse was photographed with grinning U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib died under CIA interrogation while in a position condemned by human rights groups as torture — suspended by his wrists, with his hands cuffed behind his back, according to reports reviewed by The Associated Press.

The death of the prisoner, Manadel al-Jamadi, became known last year when the Abu Ghraib scandal broke. The U.S. military said back then that it had been ruled a homicide. But the exact circumstances of the death were not disclosed at the time.

The prisoner died in a position known as “Palestinian hanging,” the documents reviewed by The AP show. It is unclear

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whether that position was approved by the Bush administration for use in CIA interrogations.

The spy agency, which faces congressional scrutiny over its detention and interrogation of terror suspects at the Baghdad prison and elsewhere, declined to comment for this story, as did the Justice Department.

Al-Jamadi was one of the CIA's "ghost" detainees at Abu Ghraib — prisoners being held secretly by the agency.

His death in November 2003 became public with the release of photos of Abu Ghraib guards giving a thumbs-up over his bruised and puffy-faced corpse, which had been packed in ice. One of those guards was Pvt. Charles Graner, who last month received 10 years in a military prison for abusing detainees.

#### Guards quoted in documents

Al-Jamadi died in a prison shower room during about a half-hour of questioning, before interrogators could extract any information, according to the documents, which consist of statements from Army prison guards to investigators with the military and the CIA's Inspector General's office.

One Army guard, Sgt. Jeffery Frost, said the prisoner's arms were stretched behind him in a way he had never before seen. Frost told investigators he was surprised al-Jamadi's arms "didn't pop out of their sockets,"

according to a summary of his interview.



Abc News Via Getty Images  
Spc. Sabrina Harmon was among the guards who posed with the body of Manadel al-Jamadi.

Frost and other guards had been summoned to reposition al-Jamadi, who an interrogator said was not cooperating. As the guards released the shackles and lowered al-Jamadi, blood gushed from his mouth "as if a faucet had been turned on," according to the

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interview summary.

The military pathologist who ruled the case a homicide found several broken ribs and concluded al-Jamadi died from pressure to the chest and difficulty breathing.

Dr. Michael Baden, a distinguished civilian pathologist who reviewed the autopsy for a defense attorney in the case, agreed in an interview that the position in which al-Jamadi was suspended could have contributed to his death.

Dr. Vincent Iacopino, director of research for Physicians for Human Rights, called the hyper-extension of the arms behind the back “clear and simple torture.” The European Court of Human Rights found Turkey guilty of torture in 1996 in a case of Palestinian hanging — a technique Iacopino said is used worldwide but named for its alleged use by Israel in the Palestinian territories.

#### **CIA stopped reportedly practice**

The Washington Post reported last year that after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, the CIA suspended the use of its “enhanced interrogation techniques,” including stress positions, because of fears that the agency could be accused of unsanctioned and illegal activity. The newspaper said the White House had approved the tactics.

Navy SEALs apprehended al-Jamadi as a suspect in the Oct. 27, 2003, bombing of Red Cross offices in Baghdad that killed 12 people. His alleged role in the bombing is

unclear. According to court documents and testimony, the SEALs punched, kicked and struck al-Jamadi with their rifles before handing him over to the CIA early on Nov. 4. By 7 a.m., al-Jamadi was dead.

Navy prosecutors in San Diego have charged nine SEALs and one sailor with abusing al-Jamadi and others. All but two lieutenants have received nonjudicial punishment; one lieutenant is scheduled for court-martial in March, the other is awaiting a hearing before the Navy’s top SEAL.

The statements from five of Abu Ghraib’s Army guards were shown to The AP by an attorney for one of the SEALs, who said they offered a more balanced picture of what happened. The lawyer asked not to be identified, saying he feared repercussions for his client.

#### **Interrogation described**

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According to the statements:

Al-Jamadi was brought naked below the waist to the prison with a CIA interrogator and translator. A green plastic bag covered his head, and plastic cuffs tightly bound his wrists. Guards dressed al-Jamadi in an orange jumpsuit, slapped on metal handcuffs and escorted him to the shower room, a common CIA interrogation spot.

There, the interrogator instructed guards to attach shackles from the prisoner's handcuffs to a barred window. That would let al-Jamadi stand without pain, but if he tried to lower himself, his arms would be stretched above and behind him.

The documents do not make clear what happened after guards left. After about a half-hour, the interrogator called for the guards to reposition the prisoner, who was slouching with his arms stretched behind him.

The interrogator told guards that al-Jamadi was "playing possum" — faking it — and then watched as guards struggled to get him on his feet. But the guards realized it was useless.

"After we found out he was dead, they were nervous," Spc. Dennis E. Stevanus said of the CIA interrogator and translator. "They didn't know what the hell to do."

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