

## A U.S. Army Interrogator

Music: John Crigler

Lyrics: John Crigler & Ray Bennett

*Chorus: Just reading the Constitution brings tears to my eyes. I have this view of America as trying to get it right.*

I'm a U.S. Army interrogator and I've got something to give. What do I have to give you rabble rousers who stand against torture?

Everybody wants to talk to someone. Everybody wants to talk to someone. My job is to discover the one you want to talk to and become that one — a U.S. Army interrogator.

*Chorus*

What happened was, in August of '02, we prepared to deploy before the Senate voted. We went to Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction. I asked all around, "Has anyone ever seen someone bury something in the middle of the night?" .... Years later and still no weapons to be found.

Betrayed by my government, just a pawn in their plan! Even General Powell went along with the scam.

*Chorus*

I got orders for Guantanamo, but I couldn't go. My conscience wouldn't let me apply my trade to men detained outside the rule of law: the Geneva Conventions, the Laws of War, *any* laws at all.

Conflicts within me: duty versus shame; honor versus guilt. I cried uncontrollably. I retired instead of going. But have I pulled my weight? The bitter pill to swallow is someone went in my place.

The clincher was, I told the doctor, I might not come out alive. There's no honor for a soldier at Gitmo. What's left? .... Suicide?

*Chorus*

I don't see myself contributing much. I see you folks as smarter than me. But you don't have my experience. And that's what I want to give you rabble rousers who stand against torture.

I want to be a person with a conscience. I want to be a person with a conscience. I *am* a person with a conscience, a U.S. Army interrogator.

*Chorus*

Performed at "Torture is a Moral Issue" Panel on June 26, 2009 in Palo Alto, CA

*Program Notes for:*  
**A U.S. Army Interrogator**  
John Crigler

John Crigler sings the story of the disillusionment of a patriotic, senior U.S. Army interrogator, beginning with the hopeful chorus: “*Just reading the Constitution/ brings tears to my eyes./ I have this view of America as trying to get it right.*” Before the U.S. Senate approved the invasion of Iraq, the interrogator’s unit had already prepared for deployment. The task of the interrogator’s debriefing team in Iraq was to locate weapons of mass destruction. He understood this task finally as a fool’s errand. Upon notice of reassignment to the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp, he began to fall apart. He knew he couldn’t interrogate in good conscience detainees held outside the rule of law. After two decades of service, the interrogator retired abruptly. “There’s no honor for a soldier at Gitmo./ What’s left? .... Suicide?” Yet he struggled with having failed his comrades because someone went in his place.

The song concludes with the interrogator's commitment to us: “I don’t see myself contributing much./ I see you folks as smarter than me./ But you don’t have my experience. / That’s what I want to give you rabble rousers/ who stand against torture” — and his confidence in his moral purpose – “I *am* a person with a conscience, a U.S. Army interrogator.”

The song lyrics were derived from an oral history of the interrogator (Bennett, 2007), then modified by Crigler in collaboration with the interrogator.

Reference: Bennett, Ray (pseudonym). (2006, November 13, & 2007, August 18). *I have this view of America as trying to get it right.* Oral history interview conducted by Jean Maria Arrigo, Washington, DC, & San Francisco, CA. *Intelligence Ethics Collection*, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.