

Torture ever an
acceptable method of
obtaining information



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Is torture ever an acceptable method of obtaining information ? BY Kvrn 234

Is torture ever an acceptable method of obtaining information? For most of us, our gut instinct is to say 'no' and studies have shown that information obtained by the use of torture is unreliable. However, imagine a hypothetical situation where a terrorist group has planted a bomb and the government caught one of its members.

This captured terrorist will only admit to planting a bomb in a high traffic area. Would that convince you to use torture? Or what if a terrorist captured your family and took them to a secret location. Like the bomb scenario, the authorities have managed to capture one of the terrorists but he won't give up the location. Would you have any qualms about using torture to extract the information, even if that information might be faulty?

Here's a news story clip about the effectiveness (or in this case the ineffectiveness) of torture: It's become the conventional wisdom that the tortured will say anything to make the torture stop, and that "anything" need not be truthful as long as it is what the torturers want to hear. But years worth of studies in neuroscience, as well as new research, suggest that here are, in addition, fundamental aspects of neurochemistry that increase the chance that information obtained under torture will not be truthful. The backstory.

The Inspector general of the CIA last month released a 2004 report on the interrogation of Al Qaeda suspects. As my colleague Mark Hosenball reported, it and other internal documents (which Cheney called on the CIA to release, believing they would back his claim) do not show that torture

worked. In fact, The New York Times reported, the documents " do not refer to any specific interrogation methods and do not assess their effectiveness. Scientists do not pretend to know, in any individual case, whether torture might extract useful information.

But as neurobiologist Shane O'Mara of the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience in Dublin explains in a paper in the Journal Trends in Cognitive Science called " Torturing the Brain," " the use of such techniques appears motivated by a folk psychology that is demonstrably incorrect. Solid scientific evidence on how repeated and extreme stress and pain affect memory and executive functions (such as planning or forming intentions) suggests these techniques are unlikely to do anything other than the opposite of that intended by coercive or 'enhanced' interrogation. As you can see, torture is unreliable.