

## “Why I did it”



# Lessons from Yusufiyah: Table of Contents

For all members of the Army Profession

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## “Why I did it”

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## 1. Checklist

- Recruit additional strong/respected leaders from your unit to be facilitators with your unit. (Recruit as many as the situation mandates)
- Watch the video and read the transcript prior to your facilitation.
- Review the additional resources.
- Review the “How to run your workshop” guidelines prior to facilitating.
- Think about a personal experience that relates to the scenario.
- Resource Prep:
  - Make copies of the video transcripts and facilitation questions as needed for each of your facilitators.
  - If you plan on showing video clips, test to make sure they work on the system in your designated training area.
  - Make sure you have a whiteboard with dry-erase markers.

## 2. Who's Who



Justin Watt was a Soldier with 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Bravo Company. He was also the “Whistle Blower” for the War Crimes that several Soldiers in his Platoon committed.

### 3. “Why I did it” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses why he “blew the whistle” Part I



*Justin Watt deployed to Iraq in 2005 as an Infantry private. Four members of his company raped a 14-year-old Iraqi girl, then murdered her*

*and her family, keeping the crimes a secret for months. When Watt learned what they had done, he reported the crimes to his superiors. The criminals received sentences from 70 years to life and the situation received news coverage around the world.*

“I thought about the way that that dad died. Like, I can’t imagine that! As a man, just think about that for a moment. Think about being a man...and your wife married you to provide and protect. You had kids. Think about how infallible your parents were when you were a child. Think about that. Think about that as long as I got my dad, everything is going to be OK. As long as I have my mom, everything is going to be OK. Then think about how it would be to be locked in a room with armed men with machine guns raping your daughter, and having your wife look at you, ‘Do something, honey!’ ‘I can’t.’ (It’s) because you’re scared. Having that little girl hear her sister scream; think about that.

Think about what it would be like to be *that* dad. Think about what it would be like to be *that* little girl. ‘My Dad, who solved all my problems and protected me from all these things and brought me up and fed me my entire life, can’t stop these men from doing whatever to my sister. I don’t understand what’s going on. I just know that she is screaming. My mom is screaming. Everyone is screaming!’ Think

about what it would be like to get shot-up. He didn’t get shot in the head; he got shot in the chest, the stomach, and everything like that. So, he’s alive for a minute while his blood filled up his lungs. He’s laying there knowing that his little girl just got shot in the head; knowing that they’re continuing to chain-rape the older sister—his daughter—and his wife is looking at him there on the floor, just bleeding out. And that is how he died. That’s how he spent his last thirty minutes on this planet. Aside from being captured by the enemy, I can’t think of a worse way to die. I am playing that out in my head. I am playing out, ‘How do you get to this place? How do you get to this place where you can do that?’

These are people that I loved. These are guys that I would take a bullet for. These are guys that have gone back-to-back with me. It’s like I go up to the wall, they’re up to the wall right next to me; guns up, in the primary, suppressing the enemy saying, ‘I’m not going to quit on you. You’re not going to quit on me.’ That’s that relationship. It’s strong.

(I am) thinking about, ‘How am I in this position?’ In this overwhelming desire to do something, it’s like you’re thinking about being a kid. What would my mom say? What would my dad say? What would my leaders say? What would Diem say? What would Lauzier say? What would everybody who has ever been proud of me in my entire life say about me if I didn’t do anything about this? What would I say to my kids? Obviously, you would never want your kids to risk anything. You would never want your kid to have to go through any type of pain or suffering, but at the same time, how would you ever explain to your

### 3. “Why I did it” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses why he “blew the whistle” Part I (continued)

kids how you didn’t do anything about that?  
How would you do it?

That’s the thing. You think something like this stays a secret forever in today’s society? Look at guys like Lauzier. Lauzier drinks himself to sleep like every night, every night. Look at right now the PTSD rate. You think that that wouldn’t have come out at some session somewhere? Someone would have to admit that. Somebody at some point would have to admit. Somebody would say, ‘Hey, something happened over there. Look into this.’ Years later, it could be ten years later down the road, bam! All of a sudden, we’re all right back there. And then at some point, you might have kids and it might come out that you knew about it. What would you say to your kids? What does that say about you as a man?

I think that that’s where I was. I thought that at the end of the day, that

black-and-white decision is the one thing I know. That’s the truth!

I would love to sit here and say I was smart enough to war-game every conceivable scenario and that’s why I’m here today; I came back with a perfect plan. I had it all together in my head. I was able to weigh accurately exactly what was going to happen with all the media and with President Bush, having to get on Larry King Live, having all these people and these families go through what they went through.

All of that, I considered it and it was all worth it. I wish I could say that. I wish I could say I knew that. But it wasn’t like that. It was a black-and-white decision that stemmed around those factors in a position that I can’t possibly go back to. That’s the best I can explain it.”

#### 4. “Why I did it” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses why he “blew the whistle” Part II



*After discovering war crimes committed by members of his platoon, Justin Watt called his father, a Vietnam veteran, for advice.*

“So I had pretty much resolved myself to the fact that I was going to do it—that I was going to turn those guys in. It was one of those things where I felt really alone. I think that my dad had the perspective of, not only did he have my respect because of what he is as a man, but he also had a background in the military. It was going to be a good resource for me to just to talk to him about it.

I think I would have done the same thing either way, but it was like that little push. I didn’t get into specifics about it. It was just basically a conversation where I was like, ‘Dad, some terrible stuff happened and I don’t want to live with this for the rest of my life.’ Basically (I) was just looking for affirmation, looking for reassurance that no matter what happened to me, I was going to be all right by him.

He was just like, ‘I trust your judgment and if it’s that bad, you need to do something about it because that’s not OK.’ It was sight-unseen. He didn’t know what happened. He found out afterwards and obviously was like, ‘Yeah—that was the right thing to do.’”

## 5. “Why I did it” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses why he “blew the whistle” Part III



*As a private, Justin Watt discovered war crimes committed by members of his platoon and reported them to his superiors.*

“I wanted to do something good—I don’t know—like maybe save my soul, save something, do this thing that is right. I certainly sympathized a lot. I ran it over, over and over again in my head what it would be like to be *that* dad. That just was not OK with me at all.

I felt like I made a very diligent effort. I had a theory going into the deployment that the reason why war lingers with people extremely in some circumstances is because I think it’s very hard for them to process. I think that often times people end up doing things that they regret. So, I made a very diligent effort not to do anything that I regretted. I swore to myself before I left that I wasn’t going to have any ghosts that I brought back. I think that helped me out a lot.

I feel like that would have been one of those things on multiple levels—not only is it wrong, but that family would not get justice. If I didn’t do anything, there was no way that that family was ever going to get

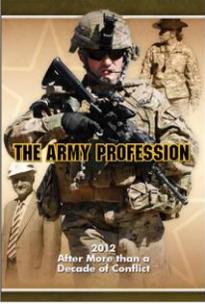
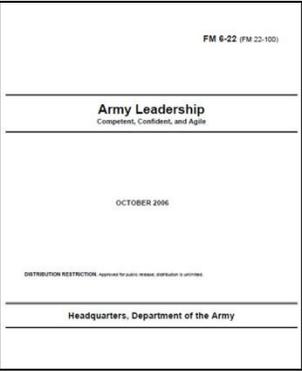
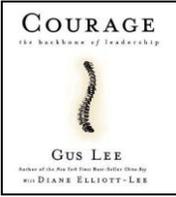
justice. And it’s true—maybe they don’t value life the way that we do and they don’t have the same belief structure as we do—but at the same time, I’ve got to believe that you can’t have that happen to you and your family without... Knowing that the killers were brought to justice would bring me a certain amount of satisfaction.

A big part of it was selfish. A big part of it was I am not going to ask myself for the rest of my life, ‘Why didn’t I do this?’ You know instantaneously. I don’t think there’s anybody in the world that doesn’t know that ultimately it’s a black-and-white decision. Ultimately, there’s a right thing to do and a wrong thing to do. I’m not going to tell you that it is not a gray decision in reality. All I am saying is, do you condone the murder and rape of an innocent family or do you not? Do you do it or do you not? You know what I mean?

The answer for me is I’m not going to live with that. For the rest of my life, I’m not going to sit there and wonder, or drink myself to sleep each night, or eventually put a bullet in my head because I was *that* guy. I was *that* guy that had the power to do something and sat there and did nothing. So I decided I’m going to do something. And I did. And I have to live with that now.”

## 6. Additional Resources

The following resources are available:

	<p><b><u>The Army Profession of Arms Pamphlet</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral CHARACTER requisite to being an Army Professional: The Army's expert work creates a moral responsibility to act on behalf of a client rather than self and thus demands a moral character of sacrifice and service to one's own, units, and the Army's Duty to the Nation</li> <li>• Resolute COMMITMENT to the Army Profession: By observation and evaluation it is clear that the professional has developed a personal calling requisite to an abiding commitment to effective, ethical and honorable service in the Army and to the Nation</li> </ul>
	<p><b><u>FM 6-22, Army Leadership</u></b>  <b>PERSONAL COURAGE</b></p> <p>Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical and moral). Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.      Captain Eddie Rickenbacker      U.S. Army Air Corps, World War I</p> <p>4-38. Moral courage is the willingness to stand firm on values, principles and convictions. It enables all leaders to stand up for what they believe is right, regardless of the consequences. Leaders, who take full responsibility for their decisions and actions, even when things go wrong, display moral courage.</p>
	<p><b><u>Courage in the Military: Physical and Moral, by Peter Olsthoorn, Journal of Military Ethics, Vol 6, 2007</u></b></p> <p>The author provides excellent background on the study of physical and moral courage. He contends that the military's emphasis on social cohesion encourages physical courage, but detracts from moral courage because it requires one to go against group norms and behaviors.</p>
	<p><b><u>Courage: the backbone of leadership</u></b>      By Gus Lee</p> <p>"Yet principled conduct under pressure is a simple concept. It has two working parts: (1) establishment of high core values and (2) courageous behaviors in alignment with those core values."</p>

## 6. Additional Resources (continued)

### Media coverage:

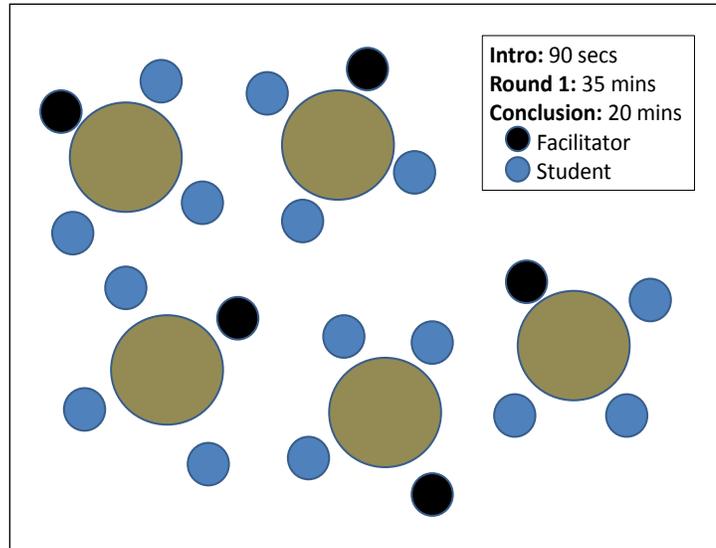
- "G.I. tells why he testified in rape-murder inquiry" *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07cnd-iraq.html?pagewanted=print>
- Profile: "Steven Dale Green" *New York Times*
  - o [http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/g/steven\\_dale\\_green/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/g/steven_dale_green/index.html)
- "Soldier to plead guilty in Iraq Rape and killings." *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/15/washington/15plea.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- "Lawyers for accused G.I. say confession was forced" *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/22/world/middleeast/22iraq.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- "Inquiry into Iraq killings focuses on supervision of Soldiers" *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/05/world/middleeast/05military.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- "When the Personality Disorder Wears Camouflage" *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/09/weekinreview/09carey.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- "Accused G.I. was troubled long before Iraq" *New York Times*
  - o <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/14/us/14private.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- "Whistleblower denied clemency in killings case," *Army Times*
  - o <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/04/ap-whistleblower-adam-winfeld-denied-clemency-in-afghanistan-killings-case-041812/>

## 7. How to run your workshop

The basic concept provided below is a way to facilitate this module. Modify as necessary to fit the needs and demographics of the group. We find that having a variety of ranks/leadership positions in each group increases perspective and maximizes takeaway.

**PREP:** Have a whiteboard and markers available. Bring copies of the video transcripts. Have a Facilitator Guide available for each facilitator. Get there early and set up the room in huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. Put chairs around one table (keep people close), rather than pulling several tables together.

**BASIC CONCEPT:** Meet for 55 minutes to discuss the module. The group breaks down into huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. For example, you want to have SLs, PSGs, PLs, and CDRs in the same huddle so you can maximize the overall effectiveness and increase the number of vantage points. Have one facilitator at each table to guide (NOT LEAD) the discussion. The workshop begins with facilitators asking the participants what their response was to the module. The facilitators' main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at hand. This module includes two rounds of discussion, and ends with personal stories and vignettes that relate to the module.



### KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- Let participants do most of the talking.
- The facilitators' key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- Ensure you engage each level of leadership and everyone within your group. Do not let any one person dominate the conversation.
- Have questions prepped for each round to drive the conversation. (See "Detailed Plan" on page 9)
- You are a catalyst for conversation. Make sure that you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.

## 8. Detailed plan for your workshop

### INTRODUCTION (90 seconds)

*Introduce the Workshop in a way that communicates the purpose of the event.*

*“Today we’re going to look at the Army Profession and discuss Honorable Service and Personal Courage.”*

### ROUND 1 - (35 minutes): Discuss Honorable Service and Personal Courage

[Watch “Why I Did It – Part I”]

1. Watt processes what happened with each of the victims. He repeats, “Think about-”
  - A) As Watt suggested, think about – and describe the feelings of – being the following people:
    - a. The helpless father: “He’s alive for a minute while his blood filled up his lungs. He’s lying there knowing that his little girl just got shot in the head...continuing to chain-rape his daughter...his wife is sitting there looking at him on the floor, just bleeding out.”
    - b. The confused mother: “Do, something honey!” Hearing the response, “I can’t.”
    - c. The scared sister: “My dad...can’t stop these men from doing whatever to my sister. I don’t understand what’s going on.”
    - d. The Iraqi girl who was raped.
  - B) How did this thinking affect Watt’s empathy for the family?
  - C) How did it impact his decision?
2. Describing the events Watt asks, “How do you get to this place where you can do that?” How would you answer him?
3. Watt describes the strong relationship he had with his peers before the crimes took place. How did these relationships factor into his decision?
4. Watt thinks of his spheres of influence. He says, “What would everybody who has ever been proud of me in my entire life say about me if I didn’t do anything about this?”
  - A) How did his close friends and family help him make a decision?
  - B) How does this tie into the concept of honorable service?

## 8. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

5. What are the effects of war-crimes on a unit? How does it affect unit-morale? Individual Soldiers?
6. Watt notes Lauzier's high intake of alcohol and the high rate of PTSD among military members. What does he think some of the causes might be?
7. Watt believes eventually the crimes would have to come out in the open. A) What do you think? B) How should "getting caught" factor into the decision?
8. Was Watt's resolution to turn the criminals in a right-and-wrong, black-and-white decision? If not, what makes it "gray"?

### [Watch "Why I Did It – Part II"]

1. After resolving to turn his peers in, Watt said he felt very alone. What impact does loneliness have on the clarity of decision-making? If no impact, explain.
2. Watt sought guidance from his father, a Vietnam veteran. A) How did his father respond? B) How did that response influence Watt's judgment?
3. Watt said he was looking for affirmation and reassurance on his decision. What role does mentorship have on a Soldier?
4. What conditions determine whether or not a Soldier should seek guidance from others over relying on his/her own instinct?

### [Watch "Why I Did It – Part III"]

1. Watt says, "I wanted to do something good." What does this tell you about him?
2. "...The reason why war lingers with people extremely in some circumstances is because I think it's very hard for them to process," Watt says. A) What does it mean to mentally "process" something? B) What is the value of "processing?" C) What about war makes it hard to process?
3. Watt says, "Knowing that the killers were brought to justice would bring me a certain amount of satisfaction." What type of satisfaction is he describing?

## 8. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

4. Watt makes the point that, “maybe they don’t value life the way we do,” but he still wants to bring justice to the situation. When faced with an ethical dilemma, whose morals and opinions should be factored into the decision?
5. Watt didn’t want to come home with any regrets. He said he didn’t want to be, “*that* guy that had the power to do something and sat there and did nothing.” What does this say about his sense of ownership?
6. What were the *immediate* effects (negative and positive) resulting from Watt, “blowing the whistle?”
7. What were the *long-term* effects (negative and positive) resulting from Watt, “blowing the whistle?”
8. After listening to the numerous considerations that went into Watt’s decision, how do you rate his judgment? Justify your answer.
9. What would you have done in Watt’s position? What would your personal costs be? Why would you/wouldn’t you turn the criminals in?
10. How do we develop Soldiers who will make the right decision when put into Watt’s position?

## 8. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

### **ROUND 2-Conclusion (20 minutes): Personal Vignettes and takeaways.**

*Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.*

**It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing Honorable Service and Personal Courage. Leaders should walk away with a better understanding of the Personal and Moral Courage that it takes to perform Honorable Service.**

**Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:**

<b>Learning</b>	Q - What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders?  Q - What are the future implications of this decision and or experience?
<b>Reflection</b>	Q - How do you feel/what do you think about what you learned?  Q - What will you do with your new information?  Q – How can you integrate new learning into your Command team philosophy, command structure and climate?