



# Case-Ex Video Vignette Cover of Darkness, Tucker Discussion Guide



Published: June 2012 in <http://cape.army.mil>

## “Cover of Darkness”



# Case-Ex Video Vignette: Discussion Guide

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

## “Cover of Darkness”

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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



In 2003, **Jerry Tucker**—a squad leader in Iraq—is tasked with a mission to establish security at a compound south of Fallujah. As the mission progressed, 1SG Tucker and his Soldiers encountered a different scenario than intelligence had prepared them for.

### 3. “Cover of Darkness” Video Transcript: Part I



“We were going to go into this little town called Watertown, which is down South Fallujah down by the factories. So we

were going to be security—basically, we were going to take down the guard shack and then move up and secure the foothold so the two other elements could come in.

The city was basically like a little compound. They were their own guard force. It was pretty much the engineers and the scientists and things of that nature that worked in the factories that lived in this town. So they had a good bit of money. It was just a really, really, secure town—one entry point and one exit point.

Our Intel told us there was going to be like two guys in the guard shack and there was going to be big lights so we had to cut the lights off before we even got in there. We already had everything planned out. We did rehearsals and things of that nature.

We took off (and) got out of the vehicle, ran up. One of my guys ran over and killed the lights. Then (we) moved over to the guard shack and the interpreter was telling everybody, “Come out of the Guard Shack! Come out of the Guard Shack!” We walk into the guard shack and there was like 20 people in the guard shack, so (there

was) a little bit of difference from the two to 20.

I was the first one in the door. I did have two tac-lights on my weapon just because I knew it was going to be dark because we were shutting generators down. When I entered the first door—it wasn’t like you see on TV or like we’ve done in training—it wasn’t a hard hit. I walked in the room. It was a violence of action just because it was dark; it was late at night and these guys had just woken up. When I panned into the room—I basically pied the room off as I came in—everybody was asleep. There were guys lying on their sleeping mats with weapons laying everywhere. Of course, my guys were literally directly behind me. They started coming in and getting the guys up and getting the weapons up.

I noticed there was a secondary room to the guard shack so I grabbed the interpreter and he and I walked to the door. I pied the door off and noticed that there were three bunks in there and there were three guys in there. Whenever we went into the big room where there was like 20 guys, all of them were armed and everybody had an AK. So, (we) really didn’t know what this guy had. He took the sheet and covered himself up and you could see him moving underneath the sheet. At that point, having the interpreter telling him, “Hey, you need

to get out; you need to get out; you need to get out!”

Could I perceive a threat out of it? Yes. Could I perceive him being scared? Yes.

Some of the things like, a week prior to this, a marine had gotten killed from the guy who had booby-trapped himself. So, that was one of the thought processes going through our minds—“Is this guy a booby trap? What is he doing under the sheet?” There were plenty of weapons lying around. Everybody else there had a

weapon, so it was a safe bet that he had a weapon.

We don’t know if he has a grenade. We don’t know if he has an AK. We don’t know if he has a glock. We don’t know what he’s got.

I would say the worst-case scenario is I flip the guy out of the bed and we both go “Boom!”

All of those things running through my mind, and of course, it happens in about 1.2 seconds. (I) really didn’t have time to sit and debate it.”

## Video Transcript: Part II

“I had a tough time with it because I didn’t know everything that I needed to know. You have to weigh your options, and it’s got to be quick. You can’t be an indecisive person because you won’t make it long. You have to be decisive, but you have to weigh your options. You have to make sure you’re doing it with not only your Soldiers in mind, but the mission in mind, and the second and third (order) effects in mind. So, I had thought about doing flash-bang, but I didn’t want to be noisy. I didn’t have a suppressed weapon system, so if I shoot the guy, I’m going to let everybody know we’re here.

At that point, nobody really knew we were there and moving into the town. If I had shot him—and then he was an 8-year-old boy—then what? I know I would freak

out if someone came in my house at 2 in the morning and tac-lighted me and told me to get out. I’d be freaking out!

To me, the best choice was just to snatch the guy up and take the chance.

I know a lot of people—like my platoon sergeant, other squad leaders and hell, my team leader standing behind me—(they were all) saying, “You should have shot him.”

It would have been faster. Granted, we only took 2-3 minutes extra, but it would have been faster and safer because he can’t pull a pin on a grenade if his bodily functions aren’t working.

I think that if I had shot, it would have without a doubt been justified. I don’t know about morally justified, but it would

have been justified in the eyes of the Rules of Engagement in the 15-6.

I look back on it now that I am older and I say, "That was a good decision. That was the best decision to get the guy out without shooting."

Our profession is the only profession that we make decisions, especially at leader levels, that impact lives daily. We make decisions that impact not only our lives, but our families' lives. When we're engaging, we're engaging to do something that's part of a bigger plan, that's part of the mission. If the mission is to go in and win the hearts and minds of the coined environment, then that's what we're going to do. That's my beliefs, and that's where my moral compass points.

I personally don't like to take someone's life. I will if I have to. I will if it

means that he may take somebody else's life—whether it be mine, my soldiers or an innocent. I think with me, as a Soldier, me having those morals and me having the thought process of we need to help them as much as possible; being able to flip that switch and be able to engage if we need to engage, and do it effectively because we've trained as much as possible. I think that makes me a better soldier and a more rounded soldier. I think if everything was just "kill, kill, kill," then everybody would be desensitized and we would have a bunch of hooligans running around. And that's not what the world needs, that's not what the Army needs and definitely not what the units need."

## 4. Additional Resources

The following resources are available:

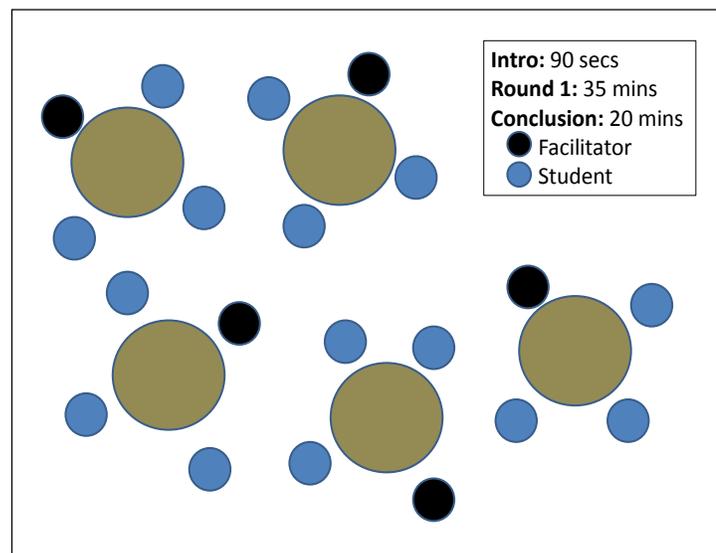
<p><b>The New York Times</b></p>	<p><b><u>How do age and innocence factor into war?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Read the following article from the New York Times: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/03/world/asia/03afghan.html?_r=2">http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/03/world/asia/03afghan.html?_r=2</a></li><li>b. Read also: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/world/asia/28afghan.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/world/asia/28afghan.html</a></li><li>c. For more information on NATO, read: <a href="http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/n/north_atlantic_treaty_organization/index.html?inline=nyt-org">http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/n/north_atlantic_treaty_organization/index.html?inline=nyt-org</a></li><li>d. What were the results of these incidents?</li><li>e. What other steps could have been taken?</li></ul>
	<p><b><u>“A Manager of Violence”</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Read the following magazine article: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/10/magazine/10SPECIAL.html?pagewanted=all">http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/10/magazine/10SPECIAL.html?pagewanted=all</a></li><li>b. Miller talks about making his first attack that could lead to deaths. He had never killed before. In fact, he had never seen a dead Soldier. He says, “At first, it’s an intellectual challenge.” Then you reach the mentality of, “We’re really going to do this.” Do you agree or disagree and why?</li><li>c. How can Soldiers be prepared to attack/kill? How can Soldiers be prepared to know whether or not it is a justified kill based on age/innocence/level of risk?</li></ul>

## 5. How to run your workshop

The basic concept provided below is a way to facilitate this module. Modify as is necessary to fit the needs and demographics of the group. We find 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.



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### 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 5)
- You are a catalyst for conversation. Make sure that you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.

## 6. 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 1SG Tucker’s story and examine some the details of his situation.”*

### ROUND 1 - (20 minutes): Discuss 1SG Tucker’s story

#### [Watch “Cover of Darkness” – Part I]

1. 1SG Tucker talked in detail about the mission’s environment. He described the people who lived and worked in the town, the people’s economic situation and some geographical elements of the area. What role do situational factors and awareness play in the decision-making process?
2. 1SG Tucker described the objective area as “a very secure town.” A) How does this affect the mission planning and subsequent execution? B) How might this affect how Tucker and his unit engage with the local populace?
3. Based on intelligence, the unit was able to rehearse and prepare for the mission, but conditions on-the-ground weren’t as expected. A) What role does adaptability play in the tactical decision-making process? B) What role does adaptability play in the moral/ethical decision-making process?
4. What decision(s) does 1SG Tucker face?
5. 1SG Tucker said the incident was a “violence of action.” What does this mean?
6. After going into the secondary room in the guard shack, 1SG Tucker said, “We really didn’t know what this guy had,” but he assumed he had a weapon because all of the others did. In a combat setting, how do our interpretations of the environment affect our ethical processing?
7. 1SG Tucker described some of the thoughts running through his head. He said, “Could I perceive a threat out of it? Yes. Could I perceive him being scared? Yes.” In addition to

external factors influencing perceptions of situations, how does a person's moral character impact his/her perceptions?

8. 1SG Tucker said he had to make a decision in 1.2 seconds; he didn't have time to debate it. A) How does the Army develop Soldiers to make quick decisions in stressful environments? B) Why is it important for a professional Soldier to be confident in his/her ability to make these types of decisions?

## **ROUND 2 - (20 minutes):**

### **[Watch "Cover of Darkness" – Part II]**

1. "I didn't know everything I needed to know," 1SG Tucker said about making the decision. How do Soldiers and leaders on the battlefield make the right decisions even when they don't have all the information they need?
2. In reference to being an Army leader, 1SG Tucker says, "You can't be an indecisive person or you won't make it very long." A) What does he mean by this statement? B) What does this statement imply about the culture of his unit and the culture of the Army Profession?
3. 1SG Tucker talked about the need to make a decision with his Soldiers in mind, the mission in mind, and the second and third order effects in mind. How does 1SG Tucker demonstrate characteristics of an Army Professional by his consideration of these factors, despite the life and death decision he faced at the time?
4. He asked himself the question, "What if I had shot him and he had been an 8-year-old boy?" 1SG Tucker alluded that who the person under the blanket was would affect whether he made the right or wrong decision. How and why does our moral perception of a situation change based on the age/gender of the person(s) involved?
5. 1SG Tucker reversed the roles – He pictured the situation as if he was the one sleeping and someone woke him up in the middle of the night. A) What does this say about Tucker's character? B) How does his character lead him to make the decision he did?
6. 1SG Tucker said if he would have shot, "Without a doubt, it would have been justified. I don't know about morally justified, but it would have been justified in the eyes of the

rules of engagement and the 15-6 (Investigation).” A) Why did 1SG Tucker feel that he may have been legally right but morally wrong if he had chosen that course of action?

7. What do 1SG Tucker’s actions say about his level of military expertise and confidence in his own ability?
8. 1SG Tucker said he makes decisions based on his beliefs and his upbringing. How does an individual’s personal set of beliefs and values interact with his/her decision-making as a member of the Army Profession?
9. What rules, outcomes and values did 1SG Tucker use to evaluate the situation and choose a course of action?

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

### **ROUND 3 - Conclusion (15 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 the significance of 1SG Tucker’s story. Leaders should walk away with a better understanding of the decision point, and be able to properly convey the importance of the decision-making process to Soldiers in their unit.**

**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?