

CASE STUDY - LTC WEST

WHAT HAPPENED?

On 20 August 2003, at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gunner (vic. Taji, Iraq), during the interrogation of Mr. Yehiya K. Hamoodi, an Iraqi Police Officer, LTC Allen West, Commander of 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Battalion (2-20 FA), 4th Infantry Division (4ID), fired his side arm into a clearing barrel while Mr. Hamoodi's head was held over the barrel.

Four days prior to the interrogation, elements of LTC West's unit were ambushed and after the attack intelligence linked Mr. Hamoodi to the ambush and to planned future attacks on LTC West and his soldiers. On 20 August, Mr. Hamoodi was apprehended and after the initial attempts to extract information from him failed LTC West got involved.

During the interrogation, LTC West threatened to kill Mr. Hamoodi if he did not cooperate. Mr. Hamoodi continued to resist and refused to provide any information. LTC West then had Mr. Hamoodi's head held over the barrel while he fired his weapon next to his head. Once this occurred, Mr. Hamoodi began to inform LTC West of the assassination plot. He gave specific information about the plot, the names of the conspirators, and a detailed description of a planned attack.

LTC West reported this information to his superiors. He also informed them of the methods he used to extract the information from Mr. Hamoodi. Nothing happened until a letter was written from an NCO assigned to another unit to the 4ID Commanding General (CG) complaining about the brigade's command climate. The division initiated a formal article 32 investigation and LTC West was relieved of his duties. In the end LTC West received non-judicial punishment (Art-15) and was relieved of command for assaulting and communicating a threat toward Mr. Hamoodi.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR SOLDIERS...

What is the dilemma that LTC West is dealing with? What conflicting values are at play in this scenario?

What are some of the contextual factors that are influencing LTC West in his decision making and thought processing?

As a Battalion Commander, what do think LTC West's priorities are as he weighs this decision?

When looking at a morally / ethically "charged" situation we process the information through one, or a combination of, three "lenses". These lenses are a rules/process focused lens, a outcome focused lens, and a values focused lens. Which lens (s) do you think LTC West was applying as he processed this situation? Which one(s) would you have used? What information influenced you to use that lens(s)?

As LTC West processed the information surrounding this situation what aspects of the following did he act on / fail to act on:

Professional values and norms?

Rules of engagement?

Laws and regulations?

Professional ethics and ethos?

Do you think his intentions matched his actions?

What aspects of the organizational culture / climate do you think influenced LTC West?

Did the Army take appropriate action against LTC West once his cases was heard? Was the treatment of LTC West to harsh, not harsh enough?

When reading about this case how does it make you feel?

If you were a soldier in LTC West's command how would you have felt about how things transpired?

What about if you were a subordinate leader under his command?

His superiors?

A local Iraqi citizen in the community?

If you were in LTC West's position what would you have done?