

Keep going
Judge ends parental rights of Chinese immigrants who fought to get daughter back ■ 3A

Pomp and politics collide

Colleges often invite criticism along with speakers ■ 1D

Condoleezza Rice
by Getty Images

Stocks get \$85M

Suit is largest amount ever in company stock losses in 2001 or workers says. 1B.

Treaty idea

Nuclear standoff with U.S. ending Korean War, signed by U.S., North Korea says. 8A.

Smoking ban across USA

Smoking bans have become a signature issue, ruining crops and killing people. Signs go up on highway I. 16A.

Security causing concern

Convicts are tying up labs as they investigate crimes. 18A.

Load costs rising

Rate services are getting a lot of attention, and copyright issues, and missing parts. 1B.

Report shows record \$46 billion in imports and exports, adding to global economy. 2B.

Formula refined

Officials are close to a new formula for football title. 1C.

Work cut out

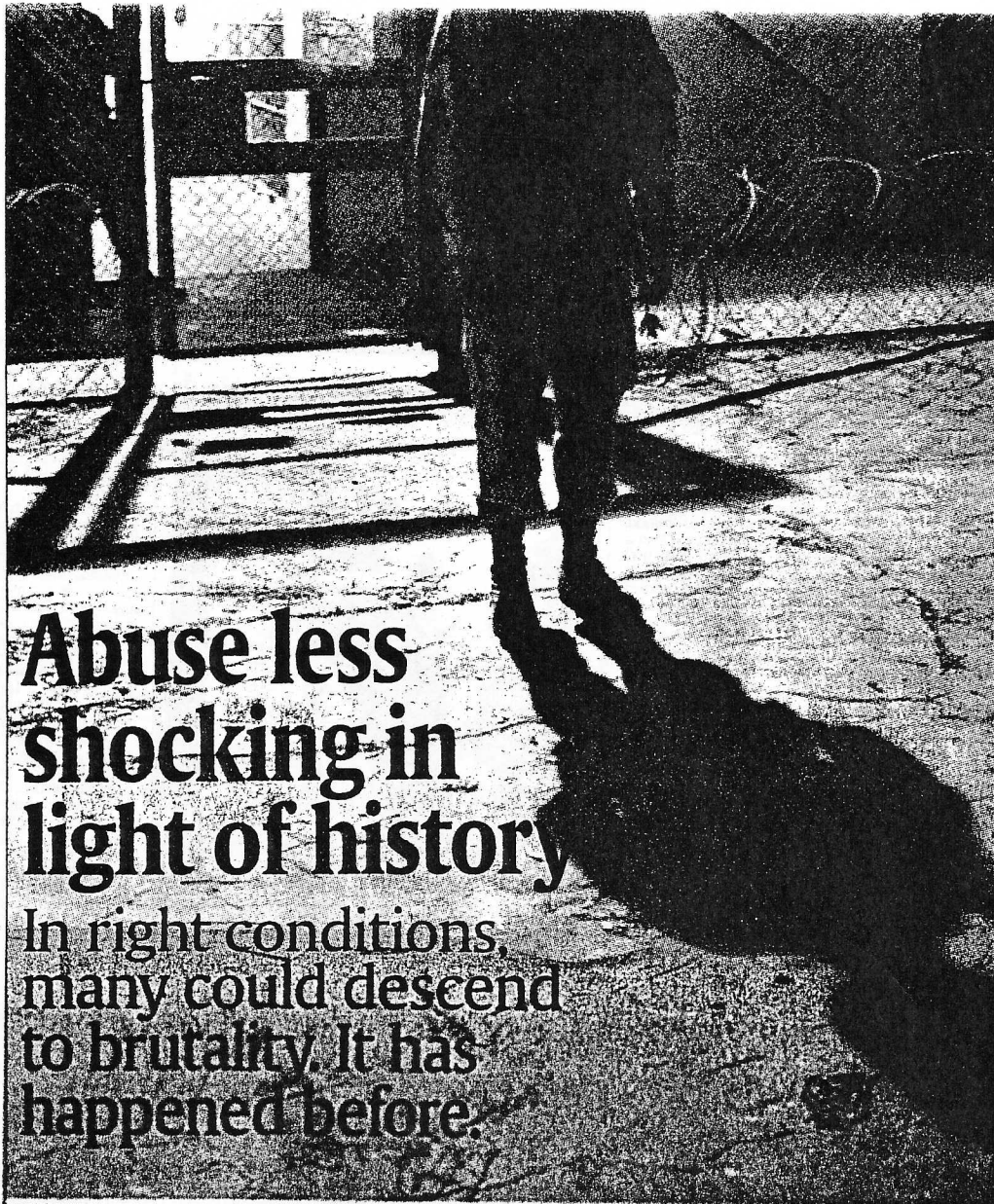
Will tout fall programming as a heavier dose of reality. 1D.

America's first "test-tube" baby, born at a college in Boston this week before she was even born, her blood. 8D.

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re most babies



By John Moore, AP

Infamous facility: A U.S. military police officer stands guard Sunday at the high-security block of the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. Photos of Iraqi prisoners being abused came out of the prison.

By Rick Hampson
USA TODAY

One of the most surprising things about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers is that so many Americans are surprised.

Decades of research and eons of history point to one conclusion: Under certain circumstances, most normal people will treat their fellow man with abnormal cruelty. The school-boys' descent into barbarism in William Golding's classic *The Lord of the Flies* is fiction that contains a deeper truth.

And from Andersonville to the "Hanoi Hilton," no combination of circumstances turns us against our better nature faster than the combination of war and prison, whether we are acting on orders or on our own.

Charles Figley, a Florida State University psychologist who studied the experiences of 1,000 U.S. soldiers in the Vietnam War, describes himself as "shocked about people being shocked" by the reports from Iraq.

"About 25% of the vets I've talked to either participated in, witnessed, or were aware of vio-

lations of the Geneva Conventions" in Vietnam, he says.

Geneva is a long way from Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, where U.S. military police photographed each other tormenting hooded, naked Iraqis in their custody. Three face courts-martial, and four others could soon learn whether they will be tried, too.

President Bush has called the alleged offenders a relative few whose actions "do not reflect the nature of the men and women who serve our country." Still, many Americans

wonder how people described as kind and decent by the folks back home could lapse into such extraordinary behavior.

Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford University psychologist who presided over the single most famous experiment in the field, blames the system, not the soldiers, who "were put in a situation where the outcome was totally predictable."

"It's not a few bad apples," he says. "It's the barrel that's bad. The barrel is war. That's what can

Cover story

See COVER STORY, 2A ▶

on

Senator after se

By Dave Moniz and
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON - the soldiers at the on-abuse scandal military intelligence the photographs with bound and na

Guy Womack, Charles Graner, tol itary intelligence s the scenes to tell pose Iraqis in hum gio Ra'Shadd, an at England, said intell sible for interrogat land to humiliate in the photograph.

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The comments versy over wheth alone or under or telligence officials prisoners for inter: tonio Taguba, w abuses, has said he policy to mistreat

Sen. John Warr the Senate Arme has said he belie tographs were tak who did not coop other senators ex the seven Army charges acted along

Senators who v oner abuse Wedne makers said they itary dogs snarri commanded to ex "I expected that stomach lining, an I had anticipated,"

Sen. Frank Laut pictures and so ma have known what

Military officials U.S. soldiers face oners at Abu Ghrai

That brings to ti proceedings. Staff face five charges t third Army Reserv vits, goes on trial M

Another four U scandal; seven oth

Moniz reported fro Contributing: Willi reports.

'It's not a few bad apples. It's the barrel that's bad. The barrel is war.'

Continued from 1A

corrupt, whether it's in My Lai or in Baghdad."

That might explain the actions of soldiers such as Lyndie England, so gentle back home in West Virginia that she wouldn't even shoot a deer on family hunting trips, or Sabrina Harman, whose mother says that when she found a bug in the house she'd release it outside.

It also raises the question: Were the American guards following orders or defying them?

The evidence is conflicting. Many families and other experts say they doubt the relatively unsophisticated reservists would come up with tactics that seemed specifically designed to humiliate Muslim men, such as stripping

Cover story

them naked and forcing them into homosexual poses.

England said Tuesday that she was ordered to pose for photos showing her holding a leash around the neck of an Iraqi prisoner. In an interview with KCNC-TV in Denver, she said her superiors praised the techniques she and other military police were using on prisoners. They "just told us, 'Hey, you're doing great, keep it up,'" England said.

Whether the American guards were following orders or not, the prison seems to have been a virtual petri dish for the sorts of abuses that experts have long warned against and that threaten to undermine the U.S. war effort in Iraq.

School for scandal

Soldiers are not lab rats. But experts say that in retrospect, conditions at Abu Ghraib virtually assured a scandal. They point to the presence of some conditions — and the absence of others. The following appear to have been insufficient or deficient:

► **Training.** The guards were reservists, most of whom had not been trained to work in a prison or internment camp, much less interrogate terrorists or prisoners of war. The 372nd Military Police Battalion was practiced mostly in traffic enforcement.

► **Staffing.** By most accounts, there were too many prisoners and too few guards. Experts say this tends to encourage brutality as a crude means of inmate control.

► **Direction.** The soldiers' basic charge was to guard prisoners, but that became muddled when military intelligence officers came for-

ward with vague requests to "soften up" prisoners and "set conditions" for interrogation.

► **Supervision.** The unit's commander, Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, rarely visited the prison within a prison (the so-called hard site) where prisoners were abused. Her authority may have been usurped by military intelligence officers, but even at a congressional hearing Tuesday, a Pentagon official and a major general couldn't agree on who was in charge. That prompted Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., to ask, "How do you expect the MPs to get it straight if we have a difference between the two of you?"

► **Accountability.** In the absence of a clear line of command, the guards were on their own — operating at night, behind prison walls, in a foreign country far from home, without lawyers, journalists or relatives to observe them.

In addition to what was lacking, Abu Ghraib also had ingredients to encourage abuse:

► **Stress.** The young and inexperienced soldiers were in a war zone that had witnessed many deadly sneak attacks on soldiers and civilians. The prison itself was the target of almost daily mortar attacks. One such incident Sept. 20 killed two Army intelligence soldiers.

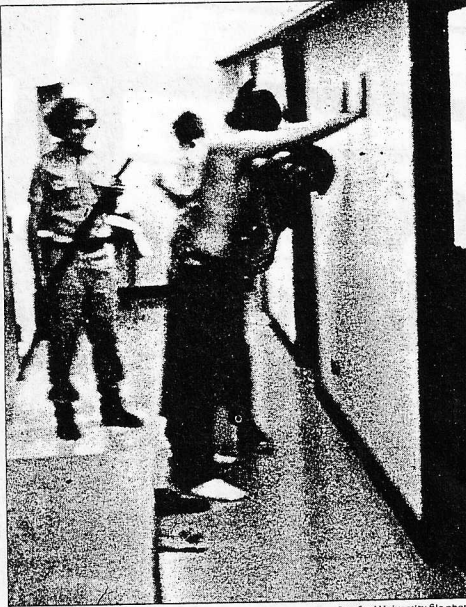
► **9/11.** The government has argued that the war on terrorism sometimes requires suspensions of civil liberties. Critics ask whether this message trickled down to guards, who concluded that in this war, anything goes.

► **Revenge.** Soldiers may have been influenced by a range of events, from the 9/11 attacks to an escalating series of incidents in Iraq.

► **Instability.** Prisons are stabilized by long-standing, informal understandings between guards and inmates. But at Abu Ghraib, everyone — guards and prisoners alike — was new and had neither a common language nor culture.

These factors combined to produce a classic case of abuse. But Zimbardo, the Stanford psychologist, sees something else in the jeering faces of the guards in the prison photos — a sort of timeless euphoria.

"The trophy photos make no sense," he says. "At some level, even as you're doing this stuff, you should realize this isn't something you're going to want documented in the future. I think these people got lost in what I call 'expanded present time.' The past seemed distant. The future was vague. All they knew was they were in charge of these animals. It was



Stanford University file photo

"The power of the situation": College students play roles of prisoners and guards during a 1971 Stanford University experiment. The "guards" were loosely supervised and quickly began mistreating the "prisoners." Some have pointed to similar circumstances in Abu Ghraib prison.

their circus."

He sounds surprised. And, after what he went through in 1971, it takes a lot to surprise Zimbardo.

Studying abusive behavior

The two most famous experiments that bear directly on Abu Ghraib were separately designed and executed by two members of the class of 1950 at James Monroe High School in the Bronx — Zimbardo and Stanley Milgram.

In the early 1960s, Milgram was teaching at Yale and studying the impact of authority on human behavior. He wanted to see whether ordinary people would follow orders to keep administering what they thought were ever more painful and powerful electric shocks to test subjects.

He hired local residents to participate in what he told them was an experiment in "teaching through punishment." They were the "teachers," and they would, on instructions, apply electrical shocks to the "learners." The director would take responsibility for any harm to the "learners."

college students from around the San Francisco Bay Area to pose as guards or inmates in a mock prison for two weeks.

But, in contrast to Milgram, he gave them few further orders and supervised them only loosely.

Quickly, the guards became more and more abusive, the inmates more and more cowed. At night, when Zimbardo was gone, guards put bags over inmates' heads, stripped them of clothing and told them to simulate sex acts. Finally, after several inmates suffered emotional breakdowns, a shaken Zimbardo stopped the experiment after six days.

He concluded later that he himself had gotten swept up in the situation and didn't see what was happening until it was too late. "You could never even try that today," he says. "You'd be sued."

While Milgram's study stands for the proposition that most good people will sometimes follow bad orders, Zimbardo's suggests that sometimes good people don't even need bad orders — none or vague ones will do.

Milgram had strictly supervised his subjects, and they did the wrong thing — he called it "surrendering your agency," your self-control. Zimbardo had mostly left his subjects on their own, and they did the wrong thing. He called it "the power of the situation."

Over the years, the experiments have become famous. They are taught in psychology classes and have formed the basis for novels and movies.

At the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., the experiments are often mentioned in courses in the Department of Behavior Sciences and Leadership.

Not everyone fails the test. The cadets at West Point periodically get a visit from someone who did not surrender his agency — Hugh Thompson, the Vietnam War Army helicopter pilot who put his craft between marauding GIs and Vietnamese civilians during the My Lai massacre in 1968.

Who among us?

To some, the fallout from the Abu Ghraib scandal is a sign of progress.

David Finkelhor, a sociologist at the University of New Hampshire and director of the school's Crimes Against Children Research Center, says the government's willingness to deal immediately with the problem contrasts with World War II and Vietnam.

"In other wars, these things stayed under wraps — it was not

talked about," he says. "Now I think that there are a lot (of people) around who are not willing to tolerate this, colleagues and their superiors who are truly committed to keeping this from happening, even if it allows some compromise of our mission."

Frank Farley of Temple University, past president of the American Psychological Association, says the photos offer an education, albeit a painful one. "We have learned a little bit," he says. "We may become a little bit more enlightened, also, about ourselves. It is going to be hard for those dark concerns to be hidden."

What's really different about Abu Ghraib are the photos, which have granted the public a rare view of what can go on behind prison walls — even when Americans are the jailers.

In his psychology classes at Stanford, Zimbardo used to talk about Milgram's experiment. Who among you, he'd ask, would have been in the minority that refused to keep applying the shocks? Without fail, he says, each hand in the room shot toward the ceiling. The fact is that few people in situations like this actually do.

Time and again, students and torturers also have returned the same verdict: "terrifyingly normal," in the words of Hannah Arendt, chronicler of the trial of Nazi Holocaust functionary Adolf Eichmann.

This has been true in Northern Ireland, Greece and Brazil, in Josef Stalin's Russia and Pol Pot's Cambodia. It was true in ancient Mexico; blocks from the Iraqi prison hearings in Washington, the National Gallery of Art displays a mural of Mayans parading tortured captives before their victorious leader.

Who could do such a thing? The answer could be as far away as the nearest mirror.

Contributing: Karen Peterson, Cathy Lynn Grossman, the Associated Press

Corrections & Clarifications

USA TODAY is committed to accuracy. To reach us, contact Reader Editor Brent Jones at 1-800-872-7073 or e-mail editor@usatoday.com.

A story Wednesday on the whistle-blower in the Iraq prisoner-abuse scandal incorrectly listed the date of the first court-martial in the case, that of Army Reserve Spc. Jeremy Sivits. It is May 19.

Photos of Abu Ghraib abuse

To see photos of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, visit usatoday.com