Introduction to an Index
Chitra Ganesh + Mariam Ghani

Chitra Ganesh + Mariam Ghani have collaborated since 2004 on the project Index of the Disappeared, which is both a physical archive of post-9/11 disappearances and a mobile platform for public dialogue.

As an archive, Index of the Disappeared foregrounds the difficult histories of immigrant, ‘Other’ and dissenting communities in the U.S. since 9/11. Through official documents, secondary literature, and personal narratives, the Index archive traces the ways in which censorship and data blackouts are part of a discursive shift to secrecy that allows for disappearances, deportations, renditions and detentions on an unprecedented scale. The Index builds up its collection by collaborating with others actively engaged in political and legal challenges to the policies we track, and draws on radical archival, legal and activist traditions to select, group, and arrange information.

As a platform, the Index presents discussions on ideas and issues related to the materials it archives, and draws upon materials in the archive to create text-based, site-specific works installed in a range of physical and virtual spaces, including galleries, museums, universities, community centers, libraries, conferences, publications, windows, the street, the web, and the mail. These visual forms of public dialogue are designed to confront audiences with the human costs of public policies, challenging them to re-consider the abstractions of political debate in specific, individual terms.

An index can be a trace, a signpost, an indicator or a measurement. Our Index begins in the gaps where language ends; that is, in the records of absence and absence of records where official language fails and new languages must be developed in its place. The Index in its most material form, the archive, preserves and presents the traces of redactions and erasures in the official record, alongside the words of the original actors and witnesses of the histories it explores. For the Index, the gaps in those records are not flaws in the archive, but rather the key to its organization. We configure the bits of information remaining in the public domain in order to make visible the missing links, the submerged body of secret information below the simple surface. Presenting the Index archive as an artwork-in-progress, constantly readapted to the specific sites in which it is installed, encourages visitors to approach it not as researchers seeking facts but rather with the critical awareness that the ‘facts’ they encounter are in flux, defined and redefined in relationship to time, to their context and to each other.

At the same time, the Index archive’s steadily increasing mass is a visceral measure of the slow and steady creep of the troubling policies it chronicles, through every echelon of our society and every facet of our culture. In our own research with these materials, we have tried to probe the texts for productive breaks and slippages, moments where language escapes from official to unofficial registers, from public to private domains, from political to poetic testimony. These moments become the extracts and fragments of the Index, literal signs and visible trails that we circulate in the wider world.
For the Review, we have presented a chronology of the project through extracts from, reframings of and comments on documents that represent both productive ruptures in and particular phases of our research – on special interest detention and special registration; on the laws and legal terms that enable and double disappearances in the detention system; on national security letters, libraries and domestic surveillance; on detainee abuse and deaths in custody; on the individual narratives pieced together from the stray details of tribunal transcripts, interrogation logs, testimony and trial exhibits; on legal (re)definitions of torture and military codes of conduct; and on the migration of “enhanced” interrogation techniques from the psychological experiments of the SERE program to GTMO to Iraq and finally to Afghanistan, where they continue to be practiced today.

Source notes:

Pages 1-2: This was the first document released, after several months of total information blackout, about the 766 men known as the “special interest detainees” – men who were picked up by the INS (now ICE) on immigration violations shortly after 9/11/01, then classified as being of “special interest” in relation to the events of 9/11, and remanded to the custody of the FBI and DOJ. Everything on the list is redacted except the arrest dates and the nationalities of those arrested.

Pages 3-4: A blank “form” National Security Letter (NSL) and a redacted list of all the NSLs served between 2001 and 2005. Both documents were released under FOIA as part of the ACLU’s lawsuit on behalf of four Connecticut librarians who refused to release patron records in response to NSL requests.

Page 5: The redacted page is from the CIA Inspector General report of 2004 (declassified though still very redacted in 2009) about the use of authorized and unauthorized “enhanced” interrogation techniques in CIA detention and interrogation operations. The prisoner classification chart is from Army Field Manual 19-4: Military Police Battlefield & POW Operations. The prison schematic is from a military Powerpoint presentation.

Page 6: Testimony and exhibits from a combatant status review tribunal (CSRT) held at GTMO for an Afghan prisoner named Muhebullah.

Page 7: The sample medical intake form is from US Army Special Text 4-02-46, Medical Support to Detainee Operations. Text extracted from the 83-page log detailing the interrogations of and “softening techniques” applied to Mohamed al-Qahtani at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) between 11/23/02 and 11/01/03. The log was declassified in 2009 and its level of detail was cited by Physicians for Human Rights in their 2010 report as compelling evidence of human experimentation at GTMO.

Page 9: Suicide note written by and documents related to the suicide of Hassiba Belbachir, who died in immigration detention. Among other things, her note asks, “What is the difference between prison and the tomb? In both places it is cold, dark and closed.”

Page 10: Watercolor portrait of Affia Siddiqui by Chitra Ganesh. Text from a psychiatric evaluation submitted as an exhibit for the prosecution in her 2010 trial.


Page 12: Illustration from Code of the US Fighting Force (Army Pamphlet 360-512). Document is an invoice from Jeppesen Dataplan (a Boeing subsidiary) for charges related to a rendition flight through Stockholm-Bromna airport, obtained via the unsuccessful ACLU lawsuit on behalf of rendition victims, Bashmilah et al. v. Jeppesen.

Pages 13-14: Extracts from the CIA Inspector General’s report cited above.

Pages 15-16: Photograph by Mariam Ghani (Kabul, 2010). Text superimposed on the barbed wire is taken from first-hand accounts of experiences in secret prisons in Afghanistan, in particular the “prison of darkness” thought to be located somewhere underneath the grounds of Bagram Air Base.

Texts not linked to a specific source were either composed by the artists, derived from proverbs, or abstracted from fragments of other portions of the same / similar / related documents in the Index archive.
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*Your names erased, and now blank slates*
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**DRO Comments:**

WHERE ALL FEARS CAN BE WRITTEN
[Mr /Mrs.] [COMPANY POINT OF CONTACT]
[TITLE]
[COMPANY]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE No Zip Code]

Dear [Mr /Mrs ] [LAST NAME]:

Under the authority of Executive Order 12333, dated December 4, 1981, and pursuant to Title 18, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 2709 (as amended, October 26, 2001), you are hereby directed to provide the Federal Bureau of Investigation

In accordance with Title 18, U.S.C., Section 2709(b), I certify that the information sought is relevant to an authorized investigation to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities, and that such an investigation of a United States person is not conducted solely on the basis of activities protected by the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

You are further advised that Title 18, U.S.C., Section 2709(c), prohibits any officer, employee or agent of yours from disclosing to any person that the FBI has sought or obtained access to information or records under these provisions.
CIA psychologist/interrogators threatened KSM by saying that "if anything else happens in the United States, We're going to kill your children."

Figure 6: Section of Afghanistan Facility

(toxic blueprints)
Detainee: My father wrote in the map that the Americans promised him that they were going to take me to the hospital after I got better. They (the Americans) did not explain why I wasn’t released.

Recorder returned with the materials. Upon the Recorder’s return, the Tribunal Member announced that the Detainee indicated he would be more comfortable describing the layout of his compound (as for the sketch) to the Tribunal Member. At that time, the Tribunal Member approached the Detainee with the blank paper and pen for the drawing. The Tribunal Member knelt in front of the Detainee and took instructions from him describing his compound. The paper was also placed in front of the Detainee so he could draw directly on it to clarify the layout of the area he was from. This layout included the Detainee’s home, surrounding homes, the courtyard, a garden and area roads and rivers.

Detainee: When you go to my house, you will see that it is surrounded by other houses. This is the front of my house (referring to drawing), and you can’t see anything because these houses block our view.

Tribunal Member: I am going to place the letter “D” for the Detainee’s house in the middle of the circle (on the drawing).

Detainee: This area is a big garden. We have a pomegranate garden.

Tribunal Member: (still kneeling in front of Detainee) Then I’ll write garden here. When you say garden, what kinds of things are in this area?

Detainee: We have huge garden. There are grapes, plants, and pomegranate trees.

Tribunal Member: Is there a road anywhere near by (referring to the drawing)?

Detainee: The road is all the way up in front of our house.

The Tribunal Member continued to take direction from the Detainee as to the layout of the area, and applied it to the sketch. The Tribunal Member remained directly in front of the Detainee, and referring the Detainee’s attention to the sketch, asked the following:

Tribunal Member: When you stepped out into the courtyard, where did you step out to?

Detainee: Just (place a dot) in the middle of it. We have lots of rooms in our compound. I left the room, I went to the courtyard and I stood in the middle of it.

Tribunal Member: In the middle of this circle, here, that I’m pointing at now?

Detainee: The dot is where I was standing.

And that grove of pomegranates—NOT an orchard after all, but a reliquary.
Detainee appeared to begin to understand his situation and become distressed.

0235: The detainee refuses to look at Sgt R due to his religion. He explained with answering disrespect that he was going on hunger strike. He explained that he was doing it for all detainees who enter the prison. He feels he is going to die if he doesn’t eat. He explained that the detainee was holding on to a hope that he would be found innocent. Interrogators explained that this was a false hope.

2230: Head break and 10 minute exercise.

2245: Detainee awoke on his own, and urinated through the wire of his cell. When asked why he did this and did not request to go to the bathroom, detainee replied that he woke up and could not hold it and had to go immediately.

08 January 2003: Detainee attempted to control the interrogation by complaining about his treatment, his mental illness, and his separation from his brothers.

0030: Head break and 10 minute exercise. Detainee drank one bottle of water.

0230: Head break and 10 minute exercise.

0300: Source provides information on the torture and inhumane conditions of the detainee. The detainee went as far as to state that his religion forbids such as the true definition of martyr, and Islamic beliefs. Detainee asked interrogator to tell him about hunting, and interrogator turned the topic back to futility.

**Figure G-1. Inprocessing overprint for Standard Form 600**
5. MESSAGE

Family and/or private news only

BY THE BLADE OR BY THE HANDLE?

Date 18/8/2004  Signature Omar Ahmed Kndar

The addressee is my Mother

6.

الأسماء
Section 635, Visa Waiver Program.

Follow-up to SEN on death of detainee Hassiba Belbachir (A# 97-332-245)

WITH the given information provided, DIHS recommends a medical review of this facility concentrating on suicide Standards to determine if protocols exist and are being enforced. DIHS is concerned that the detainee committed suicide, in medical pod, after being assessed as a suicide risk.

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I don't think it's very important with a judge present among

a few people too...

---

I have no fear of God.

---

Can I make my intentions known to Jason later.

---

and comment on your meeting with the judge?

---

It's simple, it's to prendre le chemin le plus logique avec quel

pour toute la vérité en face.

---

What is the chemins donc?

---

It's better to go.

---

et tu n'es pas peur de la mort?

---

What is the difference between the prison and the tomb?

---

fëme mëns ou sa.

---

assume, in the two ends it's the same, it's frad and remain.

---

Respir or CO2 and have the heart engorge a n'est pas la peine.

---

I have no fear. I see no reason to fight for the minors
ON THESE SHORES OF BROKEN GLASS

The whereabouts of the other children are unknown although Muhammad Khan claims that he has seen them in Karachi at least a couple of occasions.

Dr. Siddiqui was arrested and has been charged with murder. He is not well known. There appears to have been no serious psychiatric difficulties prior to 2001 although in the interview...
6. Code of Conduct V.

a. If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others escaping. I will not accept parole or special favors from the enemy.

b. If in doubt as to methods of the armed forces to use means available to resist the enemy. I will never surrender. I will never desert. I will never give my word or promise without caution. I will never be captured alive.

c. If captured, a prisoner of war is subject to certain penalties and restrictions.

d. It is a violation of the Geneva Convention to use a prisoner under physical or mental duress, torture or any other form of coercion in an effort to secure information. If under such alarming condition, a POW discloses unauthorized information, makes an unauthorized statement or performs an unauthorized act, the prisoner is entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention.

The Geneva Convention requires that POWs be treated with humanity and respect, and that they be afforded the same rights as members of the armed forces. POWs are entitled to regular communication with their families, medical care, and the freedom to practice their religion.

e. The POW should also recognize that any confession signed or any statement made may be used by the enemy as a false evidence that the person is a "war criminal" rather than a POW. Several countries have made reservations to the Geneva Convention in which they assert that a "war criminal" deprivation deprives the convicted individual of POW status and removes that person from protection under the Geneva Convention. The POWs who are sentenced to reparation until a sentence of reparation is served in prison, may request release of the reparation.

f. Recent experiences of American prisoners of war have proved that, although enemy interrogation may be harsh and cruel, one can resist brutal mistreatment when the will to resist remains intact.

The best way for a prisoner to keep faith with country, fellow prisoners and families is to provide the enemy with as little information as possible. Strong leadership and communication are essential to discipline. Discipline is the key to camp organization and survival. Personal hygiene, camp sanitation and care of sick and wounded are imperative. Officers and non-commissioned officers of the United States must continue to carry out their responsibilities and exercise the authority in captivity. The senior, regardless of service, must accept command. This responsibility and accountability not be evaded.

If the senior is incapacitated or if otherwise unable to act, the next senior person will assume command. Commanders should make every effort to inform all POWs of the chain of command and try to represent them in dealing with enemy authorities. The responsibility of subordinates to obey the lawful orders of ranking American military commanders remains unchanged in captivity.

The Geneva Convention Relative to Treatment of Prisoners of War provides for election of a "prisoner representative" in POW camps containing enlisted personnel but no commissioned officers. American POWs should understand that such a representative is only a means to an end and not a substitute for military discipline. The American prisoner of war is expected to observe the principles of Article IV.

As with other provisions of this code, common sense and the conditions of captivity will affect the way in which

YOUR SILIENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU,
INVOICE

Invoice no. 19122416
Op. no. 160786
Invoice date 2002-01-02
Page

JEPPESEN DATAPLAN
121 ALBRIGHT WAY
LOS GATOS CA 95030
USA

Inquiries concerning this invoice should be made to:
Tel: +46 11-19 29 28
Fax: +46 11-19 29 30

The payment shall be at our disposal not later than
2002-02-01

We don't accept any cheques.

PERIOD UNTIL 2001-12-31

(STOCKHOLM-BROMMA)
Noise-charge 700.00
Landing Charge 1886.00
Terminal Navigation Charge 659.00
Emission Charge 93.40
Passenger Charge 882.00
Security Fx 171.00

TOTAL SEK 4373.00

Org. nummer 82-20200-0763
VAT no. SE5210030281

Please remit to:
LUFTFARTSVERKET
DIVISION STOCKHOLM
SSC
S-601 79 NORRKÖPING
SWEDEN

Please specify all payments with invoice- and customer no.

BANK S-E-Banken
Account No. 5323-10 233 00
SWIFT ADDRESS:SEESSESS

Figure 5. Code of Conduct III

AND BLOOD DOES NOT WASH OUT BLOOD.
**Waterboard**

...below 18°C/64°F, detainees should be monitored for the by far the most traumatic of the enhanced interrogation techniques. the subject is immobilized on his back, and his forehead and eyes covered with a cloth. A stream of water is directed at the upper lip.

This process can continue for several minutes, and involve up to 15 canteen cups of water. **Ostensibly the primary desired effect derives from the sense of suffocation**. Trainers consider it their most effective technique, and deem it virtually irresistible.

**White noise or loud music**

**Your name, your face: once held against you like a loaded gun,**

**Shackling**

Shackling in non-stressful positions requires only monitoring for the development of pressure sores with appropriate treatment and adjustment of the shackles as required.
hours) in a standing position can be approved if the hands are no higher than head level and weight is borne fully by the lower extremities.

**Sleep deprivation**

The standard approval for sleep deprivation, per se (without regard to shackling position) is 72 hours. Extension of sleep deprivation beyond 72 continuous hours is considered an enhanced measure, which requires D/CTC prior approval.

A rigid guide to medically approved use of the waterboard in essentially healthy individuals is not possible.

**NOTE:** Examinations performed during periods of sleep deprivation should include the current number of hours without sleep; and, if only a brief rest preceded this period, the specifics of the previous deprivation also should be recorded.

**Crammed confinement (Confinement boxes)**

Detainees can be placed in awkward boxes, specifically constructed for this purpose.

Confinement in the small box is allowable up to 2 hours. Confinement in the large box is limited to 8 consecutive hours.

**FOR TORTURERS ARE NOT BORN, BUT MADE...**
THEIR IDEA OF AN OPEN SECRET:

BLOOD, WATER, AND INVISIBLE INK...
AS CLOUDS PASS THROUGH THE SKY

TRAPPED IN THE PATH OF A SPIDER'S WEB