

Contributory Torture

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Sir,

Contributory torture occurs when the behavior of the offender influences the behavior of the interrogator or, in a broader sense, anyone disciplining the offender. The word contributory is used because if the offender acts up, he/she is part of the reason for the type of punishment he/she receives. For example, if two people are arrested and one follows the directions of the officer and the other tries to resist arrest or counter argues, the officer is going to be more placid to the offender who shows respect; this offender will be given the benefit of the doubt. The benefit in such circumstances rarely involves complete exoneration, but more often than not includes a mild degree of humane courtesy, e.g. the offender may receive a few more minutes to say goodbye to family, or smoke one final cigarette before being locked up. In relation to the interrogation of a criminal or a suspect, it may mean less severe forms of torture during the interrogation session. This is not an esoteric

concept. Portrayals of this concept have been observed in the media. These sources provide real life examples of the way that how authority figures are treated by the criminal affects how they treat the criminal. As a matter of fact, this happens incessantly, but the terminology “contributory torture” has been used only recently to describe such doctrine. Torture represents an inhumane act and may even be considered a crime. For example, in the United States, torture should be a crime because it violates the Fourteenth Amendment and Habeas Corpus right. Therefore, the aforementioned doctrine should be seen as an act of crime, and a more solid description needs to be created in order to define it more accurately. The word “contributory” means “playing a part in bringing something about”. Hence, any factor that increases the magnitude of the torture may be represented by the term “contributory torture.” This includes factors such as hatred for a race or gender, previous distrust or torture, self control capacity of the doer, state of mind at that particular point in time, gravity of the crime. In order to separate these catalysts of torture from the one described above, further refinement of the term “contributory torture” is needed.

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