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Military intelligence analyst Sgt. Samuel Provance told ABCNEWS that the sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison began as a technique ordered by military intelligence interrogators. (ABCNEWS.com)

"There's definitely a cover-up," the witness, Sgt. Samuel Provance, said. "People are either telling themselves or being told to be quiet."

Provance, 30, was part of the 302nd Military Intelligence Battalion stationed at Abu Ghraib last September. He spoke to ABCNEWS despite orders from his commanders not to.

"What I was surprised at was the silence," said Provance. "The collective silence by so many people that had to be involved, that had to have seen something or heard something."

Provance, now stationed in Germany, ran the top secret computer network used by military intelligence at the prison.

He said that while he did not see the actual abuse take place, the interrogators with whom he worked freely admitted they directed the MPs' rough treatment of prisoners.

"Anything [the MPs] were to do legally or otherwise, they were to take those commands from the interrogators," he said.

Top military officials have claimed the abuse seen in the photos at Abu Ghraib was limited to a few MPs, but Provance says the sexual humiliation of prisoners began as a technique ordered by the interrogators from military intelligence.

"One interrogator told me about how commonly the detainees were stripped naked, and in some occasions, wearing women's underwear," Provance said. "If it's your job to strip people naked, yell at them, scream at them, humiliate them, it's not going to be too hard to move from that to another level."

'Definitely a Cover-Up'

Former Abu Ghraib Intel Staffer Says Army Concealed Involvement in Abuse Scandal

By Brian Ross and Alexandra Salomon

May 18, 2004 — Dozens of soldiers — other than the seven military police reservists who have been charged — were involved in the abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, and there is an effort under way in the Army to hide it, a key witness in the investigation told ABCNEWS.

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According to Provance, some of the physical abuse that took place at Abu Ghraib included U. S. soldiers "striking [prisoners] on the neck area somewhere and the person being knocked out. Then [the soldier] would go to the next detainee, who would be very fearful and voicing their fear, and the MP would calm him down and say, 'We're not going to do that. It's OK. Everything's fine,' and then do the exact same thing to him."

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