



Fifteen years after he helped devise the brutal interrogation techniques used on terrorism suspects in secret C.I.A. prisons, John Bruce Jessen, a former military psychologist, expressed ambivalence about the program.

He described himself and a fellow military psychologist, James Mitchell, as reluctant participants in using the techniques, some of which are widely viewed as torture, but also justified the practices as effective in getting resistant detainees to cooperate.

“I think any normal, conscionable man would have to consider carefully doing something like this,” Dr. Jessen said in a newly disclosed deposition. “I deliberated with great, soulful torment about this, and obviously I concluded that it could be done safely or I wouldn’t have done it.”

The two psychologists — whom C.I.A. officials have called architects of the interrogation program, a designation they dispute — are defendants in the only lawsuit that may hold participants accountable for causing harm.

The program has been well documented, but under deposition, with a camera focused on their faces, Drs. Jessen and Mitchell provided new details about the interrogation effort, their roles in it and their rationales. Their accounts were sometimes at odds with their own correspondence at the time, as well as previous portrayals of them by officials and other interrogators as eager participants in the program.

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