

~~SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR~~

Major General Votel: Just so you kind of know in the room with me here is Brigadier Rob Nitsch from the UK, I got an SME from the United Kingdom, I got a US SOF SME, and I've got Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6). And they kind of constitute kind of the main body of my investigating team back here that is looking into the hostage rescue operation up in Konar Province that occurred almost two weeks ago. I'm sorry; I'm losing track of time here.

WIT: No worries, sir.

Brigadier Nitsch: Twelve days ago.

Major General Votel: Yeah, about 12 days ago. We're in here to ask you some questions. We want to talk to you because of your role as the ITC operator out there ~~at (a), (b)(2) High~~. This is an official investigation so I've got to kind of provide you a little information up front so I'm going to go through a little bit of administrative stuff here. I'd just ask you to kind of just respond as appropriate here. First of all, we will ask you to furnish some information about yourself. The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that I inform you of my authority for this requirement. We will be faxing to you a Privacy Act Statement that we'll ask you to review and sign that we can attach to your witness statement here. Everything that we're doing this afternoon is being recorded digitally and then we'll transcribe it into a written report that will be part of the investigative report going to General Mattis. Obviously, just answer all your questions verbally here and we should pick everything up. Everything is on the record here.

Before we do begin, I do have to remind you how important it is to make truthful testimony. It is a violation of Federal law to knowingly make false statements under oath. I think you recognize that. I am going to administer you an oath here. This will be a sworn statement so as I finish this oath statement if you would please respond accordingly.

[The witness was sworn.]

Major General Votel: The time right now is 1402 Zulu on the 22nd of October and we are at Bagram Air Field. I've already described for you the people that are present. (b)(6),

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if I could ask you to please spell out your full name, and then your duty position please.

WIT: My name is [redacted (b)(6)], [redacted (b)(6)], and I am the ITC here for Task Force.

Major General Votel: Okay. Thank you. And [redacted (b)(6)], if you could please state your organization. Are you a contractor or are you mil or civ?

WIT: I am; I am a contractor, sir.

Major General Votel: Okay. If I could just ask you to state that and the particular company that you contract from, please.

WIT: Okay. I am a contractor for [redacted (b)(2)High] is [redacted (b)(6)].

Major General Votel: Hey listen, [redacted (b)(6)], you are not suspected of any offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Federal, or local law. Therefore, I am not advising you of any of your legal rights and as a result, you're not authorized to have a legal counsel present. You are required to answer all my questions except those that you feel may incriminate you, that should not be a problem here.

Okay. Do you understand all that, [redacted (b)(6)]?

WIT: Yes, I do, sir.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Hey, listen, let's go ahead and get started here and I think we'll zoom in pretty quick here with the group. I'll ask you a few questions and I'm going to open it up here. What we're trying to get an understanding for is kind of first off, what the plan was for the ISR assets up over Objective [redacted 1.4(a), (b)(2)High] that evening and then kind of how that all played out, what you all were able to see, and in general how all that went. As background, we understand based on the investigative work we've done to date. On the evening of the objective, we had [redacted 1.4(a), (b)(2)High] different sensors. Does that sound about right to you?

WIT: That sounds about correct, sir.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. We talked to [redacted (b)(6)] last night and he kind of talked us through the pattern development

business here so we've got a pretty good handle on that. What I'd like you to kind of describe to the best of your recollection is how were those assets that we just kind of confirmed there, how were they being employed as the force was coming into the objective? When you say "the high confidence," you mean where the high confidence hit was or looking for Ms. Norgrove, the UK hostage?

WIT: No, we had no intel that led us to believe that she was on location. So we were looking to find this individual to get further information on where she might be at the time, but we had no clear indication that she was actually on the objective at the time.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Thank you. (b)(6), what I'd like to ask you to describe next is kind of as the assault force gets on the ground, they complete their 1.4(a), (b)(2)High insertion, the (a), (b)(2)High commander, kind of gets up, gets up on command net once he's on the ground. What's the transition, if I can use that word, that occurs between you and him at that time? What - what - how does that work between control of the various sensors at that particular time?

WIT: Well once the objective goes hot, I turn my control

1.4(a), (b)(2)High

Major General Votel: Okay. If I could just summarize and make sure I summarize this correctly. When the 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

1.4(a), (b)(2)High

WIT: That is correct.

Major General Votel: And then the actual aspect of what the various sensors really reverts to the ground force.

WIT: That is correct.

Major General Votel: Okay. Thanks. I understand you're playing an important role there but it's principally a monitor, observe what those sensors are looking at and where the assets are.

WIT: That is correct, sir.

Major General Votel: So what responsibilities then do you have then at that point if you see something that looks like it's particularly significant with respect to the objective? Do you have any responsibilities for calling out or anything like that?

WIT: What I would do is I would make a comment to - I

1.4(a), (b)(2)High

Major General Votel: Okay. And most of that communication is taking place
1.4(a), (b)(2)High

WIT: 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Thanks. Hey, listen, the last area I want to probe here and then I'll open it up for the some of the other guys. I want to take you back a little bit to the planning phase as we're getting into this. Before the ROZ is stood up and you're in 1.4(a), (b)(2)High, do you recall for this particular objective, were you given any specific instructions that were different on this objective than you might have seen on others principally because we were looking at the recovery of a hostage?

WIT: No. We get information from all sources. We get

1.4(a), (b)(2)High

that we had no visibility of so what we were trying to do was trying to gather information that was actually credible.

Major General Votel: Right.

WIT: On communications that were happening in a certain area so what we did was we just shifted our assets over there and we got lucky enough to obtain location intelligence. [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High.

Major General Votel: Okay, (b)(2) High a - how do you define (b)(2) High

WIT: [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

Major General Votel: Okay.

WIT: An [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High of the target.

Major General Votel: Okay. [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High.

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: You used the phrase "credible information." In this case that you just cited, credible information would have been that specific hit there. Were there other specific information requirements that you were tasked with on this objective that were more peculiar to the mission that they were doing? And I guess what I'm really kind of getting after is what specific - did you have any specific information requirement looking for Ms. Norgrove or indicators of someone who was a hostage and was being treated in a manner that could be perceived that way?

WIT: Well, sir, we had several reports of things happened; we had reports of people trying to ransom her, other reports talking about her being moved to various locations. We were in the week to 10 days that we were trying to find her, we had her all over Konar. We had her in several different places. We didn't know at what time things were going to be - and I used the word "credible," I'll use it again - credible because we had so much information putting her in so many different places.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Thanks, (b)(6). (b)(6), I'm going to turn it over to Brigadier Nitsch here to see if he has any particular questions.

Brigadier Nitsch: Hey, (b)(6), it's a pleasure to talk to you. Just a real quick question really, do you ever get feedback that perhaps you haven't met the ground force's aspirations?

WIT: I have not gotten any kind of feedback about that. We were pretty sure the day that we went in that we would find the individual that we were looking for as far as the (b)(1), (b)(2)High. That was our goal for the day. I mean, Ms. Norgrove being on the objective, I'm sure it was a surprise to everybody because we did not expect to see her there or her to be there. But, no, I was never told that I was missing any expectations in trying to aide in recovery of Ms. Norgrove.

Brigadier Nitsch: That's great. Thanks, (b)(6)

Major General Votel: Thank you, Brigadier. And next is the UK SME.

UK SME: Yeah, (b)(6) Just one question just to follow up on what the Brigadier asked you so that I'm clear in my mind. As far as you were concerned, this was effectively a target development operation where you were going to find the (b)(1), (b)(2)High and by

(b)(1), (b)(2)High

might be. Is that a correct way of describing it?

WIT: That is correct, sir. That's what we were looking for. We were looking to capture the (b)(1), (b)(2)High to develop this case further. It was getting to where we were concerned about she had been gone for so long if we don't get behind what's going on, we were concerned about them moving her into Pakistan. We were trying to get the individual that seemed to be central in what was going on. He was doing some negotiating. He had communications with several of the individuals that were alleged to be a part of what was going on so that was our goal, sir. We were trying to find individuals to further develop where she might be somewhere down the line.

Colonel (b)(6), (b)(8) Okay. That's clear, thanks.

Major General Votel: Anything else? Just one quick follow up from that and then one other question, were you aware - I understand you're focused on the [1.4(a), (b)(2)High], that's very clear for us. Were you aware that there a possibility, a chance that at least the assault force and [1.4(a), (b)(2)High] Task Force [1.4(a), (b)(2)High] assessed there was a distinct possibility that Ms. Norgrove could have been on that objective?

WIT: I was not aware that she might be on that objective. I was not aware of it and there was not any conversation that I was privy to if it was spoken about. No. I wish I had more to say about that, and I wish we did have some type of intelligence that stated that she was there. It didn't seem like that would be the case to us because as I said before, once we got the [1.4(a), (b)(2)High] information for that target, we

[1.4(a), (b)(2)High]

had no information from anybody that said that she was likely there.

Major General Votel: Okay. Thanks. That's pretty clear. Any follow ups from that? One final question for you there, [1.4(a), (b)(6)], can you describe your professional path to - I mean what did you do before you became a contract ITC guy?

WIT: I was a intelligence operator. I worked in special operations for 13 years, finished.

Major General Votel: In uniform?

WIT: In uniform, yes, sir. I was in intelligence. I was in 1/10 Special Forces. I was in 1/7 Special Forces. I made a change late in my career. I'm a retiree. I made a change late in my career to [1.4(a), (b)(2)High] platforms and I just worked it ever since. I've worked in a capacity trying to support Special Operations. I've seen stuff like this before. I'm familiar with how operations are run. I want to say for my role, I wish that we would have had more intel. It's not always the case that you have a clear picture on

what's happening but I'm sure from my point of view, we're just trying to do the right thing to actually bring her back safely.

Major General Votel:

Thank you, (b)(6). There's no doubt about that. We certainly appreciate that. Let me just pause here and see if there is anything else. Hey, (b)(6), thanks very much. We appreciate it. I think you've answered all of our questions here. Let me just conclude with a couple other official investigative related comments here. I do want to remind you this is an official investigation. It is protected in that the statement that we've just taken from you now will be made part of the report that goes to the appointing authority upon which he will make some - he may make some decisions and take some action.

I am ordering you not to divulge the nature of this investigation or the questions, answers, or discussions included in this interview with anyone except a Chaplain or your counsel if you have one, you have no need to have one in this particular case, until the case is closed or unless approved by me, an Inspector General, or the appointing authority, General Mattis. If anybody should approach you regarding your testimony or the matters discussed here, you are required to report it immediately to me or to the appointing authority.

I can't provide you a copy of this statement at this point because of my role as the investigating officer. You may submit a request at some point in the future here in writing for the report or any part thereof to the appointing authority or the Freedom of Information Act office. The release authority will evaluate your request under the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act and provide the releasable information to you.

If anything else comes to mind here, (b)(6), that you might think about just in the wake of this discussion that you think would be useful for us to consider, please contact us and we'll immediately reconvene and have a discussion.

WIT:

I will do that, sir.

Major General Votel: A couple of final questions here just to close up, are there any other matters that we haven't covered that you believe may be important to the investigation?

WIT: No, I do not, not where I'm concerned, no.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. And we did talk to your other counterpart who is on the opposite you. Is there anybody else you think we ought to talk to with respect to ISR?

WIT: No, sir.

Major General Votel: And, (b)(6), do you have any questions?

WIT: No, sir. I just hope I helped the investigation.

Major General Votel: You did enormously and we greatly appreciate it. Thank you for your time this evening. I also want to personally thank you for your continued service to the command and to your nation. I recognize as a retired service member, here, you continue to serve your country in another capacity and I just want you to know that it is greatly appreciated by myself and literally millions of Americans here who have an understanding of what's going on. Really appreciate what you're doing up there and the great support that you provide to the Task Force, so thanks very much for that.

WIT: Thank you, sir, no problem. I'm just doing what I can do to help.

Major General Votel: Great. Thanks. I'm noting the time right now is 1425 Zulu and this interview is concluded. Thanks very much, (b)(6).

[The call was terminated.]