

The interview of [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] and [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] opened at 14
Zulu, 20 August 2011, via video t nce from FOB [redacted (b)(1), (b)(1.4a), (b)(1), (b)(1.4c)]

PERSONS PRESENT

INVESTIGATION TEAM LEAD: BG J. Colt, US Army
LEGAL ADVISOR: LA
GROUND FORCE A SME: SME-GFA
GROUND FORCE N1 SME SME-GFN1
GROUND FORCE N2 SME SME-GFN2
COURT REPORTER: CR2

Derived from: [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]

Declassified on: 7 September 2036

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LA: And you're the [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) ?

[redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) : [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6), also sir
Delta Company 1/75.

LA: Thank you, it will be another minute while I get this mic (microphone) set up.

LA: Alright gentlemen, you all know that this is high visibility so obviously we got a General Officer appointed duty investigation by CENTCOM to make sure we have all the I's dotted and the T's crossed and our report is going to be as accurate and complete and unlikely to be second guessed by bunch of folks outside the military. We want to make sure that everyone is sworn to the record, so I'm going to ask you to go ahead and raise your right hand and tell me I do or I don't based what I'm about to ask you. Go ahead and raise your right hand please. Do you swear that the statement that you provide be true and accurate to best of your knowledge and belief?

[redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) : Both say "I do".

LA: Roger and thank you very much.

BG Colt: Could you please begin with an explanation of when you were alerted and then if you would then walk us through your actions with response to the aircraft shoot down of Extortion 17.

[redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) The night the aircraft was shot down my first Platoon Delta Company from Team [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) was out on a mission on the border of name Nangarhar/Laghman Provinces we were out on target simultaneously as the Team [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) platoon was and both elements were troops in contact, both working fire missions clearing through enemy engagement areas, so I was tracking some of their activities going on, on a SAT net as we were reporting up, however about half way through the operation I was told to begin reporting all SAT net that would terminate with [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) 1.4a, (b)(1) instead of [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c in [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6). Something we have never done in our entire rotation everything typically drawn to ATLAS 14 or G01 there at Task Force [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c [in FOB [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c]. So something was definitely up at that point, however we were still in contact filtering through and then we were given the call to conduct exfill as quickly as possible and not to worry about conducting SSE on the engagement site which also something entirely unlikely and unusual for us. Typically that is always the case we will go through and conduct the SSE around the on those areas. So something was definitely up at this point in time though we were, we were not aware of what was happening, but we conducted a daylight exfill on the morning of 6 August, it was probably about 0200, 0230 somewhere in that timeframe. As we were sitting in PZ posture we

were talking to some of the air assets specifically the Viper the fixed wing and they alerted us that there was a, we had inquired, "hey what is going on with Team (b)(3), (b)(6) we heard they were in contact and some stuff was going on", they alerted us and said, "yeah roger, there is a downed aircraft and they were working the recovery [and trying to develop] the picture on the ground at that time. From there we conducted exfill on the THUNDER flight from (b)(1.4a), (b)(1) picked us up at about 0230 on 6 August. En-route back the THUNDER flight lead kind of gave us the quick debrief on Team (b)(3), (b)(6) correction; Team (b)(3), (b)(6) was out on target and made contact, called in QRF as they found multiple squitters. Only that QRF aircraft Extortion 17 was shot down. The initial report was they were looking to infil a Ranger platoon, then they had made mention that our Thunder Package may drop us off at (b)(1.4a), (b)(1) and then push down to (b)(3), (b)(6) to support, at that point we offered, "hey anything we can do to help, have no idea what's going on, on the ground really, but let us know".

BG Colt: Can you describe what a THUNDER Package is please?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Roger Sir, a THUNDER Package is (b)(1.1.4a) (b)(1)1.4a from ARSOA.

BG Colt: OKAY, thank you, we will ask some more clarifying questions later, thanks, continue.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yes sir, so then we offered our services letting them know if there is anything we can do to help, that we would be more than happy to. We returned to base here at FOB (b)(1.4a), (b)(1)1.4a, linked in with Team (b)(3), (b)(6) and of course, as soon as we got out of the bus and got back on the camp we started getting the reports and began monitoring ISR and all SAT traffic trying to get up to speed on everything that was happening.

BG Colt: Any question at this point?

IO: The THUNDER call signs what are they?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, the THUNDER flight lead is THUNDER (b)(3), (b)(6) the AMC is THUNDER (b)(3), (b)(6) and the other two aircraft are THUNDER (b)(3), (b)(6) and THUNDER (b)(3), (b)(6)

IO: Okay, thank you.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Sir

BG Colt: It's a quick follow up question, can I ask what was your situation awareness was or what you think the team situational awareness was with regard to the red element or 1/B

element that was up here? Listing to SAT traffic did you think they were in contact and in need or urgent need of an IRF?

(b)(3), (b)(6): No Sir, really the only person that would have been monitoring it was myself and the RTO, I was on the SAT net for the majority of the operation again because we were in contact so I was trying to feed the SITREPS as clearly and concisely and quickly as possible, but no, there wasn't any apparent need for an IRF in the fact that the red element there at (b)(3), (b)(6) was in any sort of imminent danger, that they were being overrun or anything of that nature, no sir.

BG Colt: OKAY, Can you describe how you were activated and in ultimately inserted in support of the downed aircraft please.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Roger sir, we came back from the mission, again we could continue to monitor, and get updates get the best picture we could. We completed post mission products and requirements from our mission. We were told at that point, there was going to be an element from team (b)(3), (b)(6) that would be inserted to conduct the relief-in-place of 1/B at a time undetermined, we didn't know at that point in time whether if it was going to be us or 1 Troop from (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1), 4c. So we completed all of our requirements. We got a few hours of sleep, probably four hours of sleep or so and then at a point somebody came and got me and woke me up and said you guys have been notified you are going to be the element to go and relieve 1/B at the crash site. You need to get up and get spinning on this.

BG Colt: OKAY, could you talk us through the actual infil and the relief in place please?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yes sir, we came from (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1), 4c. I flew down to FOB (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1), 4c conducted a link-up with the EOD element from Sharana as well as the CSAR package. From there we stood by for about an hour as the THUNDER -the same THUNDER flight that had been bringing us around the last few days, went and picked up the remains and returned them back to FOB (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1), 4c. As soon as the remains were clear of the ramp on the THUNDER flight, we loaded up, we took our entire assault force and we conducted an infil to the Northeast about 3 kilometers on the ridge line. It was a night time infil about a 3 km movement....BG Colt: talking.

BG Colt: Points of clarification then, Lift one into the vicinity of the crash site in an offset was EOD and CSAR by themselves and they also back hauled the remains. Can you just clarify that for me please?

[REDACTED]: Sir, there was only one lift that conducted infil for that relief-in-place. The EOD and CSAR elements were co-located with my platoon. They were attached to us throughout the duration of the operation, conducting infil and exfill with us.

BG Colt: Can you tell me what the composition of the CSAR package was please?

[REDACTED]: Roger sir, they had one CCT and three PJ's. Four total PAX (passengers).

BG Colt: Okay thank you, can you continue then? After you got boots on the ground, can you articulate the time and actions thereafter?

[REDACTED]: Sir, I don't have an exact time in front of me when we actually got boots on the ground. I know it took us just over an hour, about an hour and fifteen to walk in, conduct link-up with the 1/B leadership there. We conducted link-up in vicinity of the bridge that was our link-up point in this village. And then their [REDACTED] walked us in, he and [REDACTED] had known each for quite some time. We conducted link-up, he walked us in and we dropped off our squads kind of ducks in a row as we walked in we dropped off a squad as we went and the headquarters element moved right to the CP for a debriefing on where the crash site was and what bases to work.

BG Colt: Okay and when you did that infil was that a zero illumination dark walk-in?

[REDACTED]: Yeah, Roger sir.

BG Colt: Okay, can you characterize or articulate any of the conversation regarding how they found the crash site when they first arrived?

[REDACTED]: What we were briefed they came up on the crash site and they found the main hull was burning in the Wadi from

there they kind of just pushed out their security positions. When we showed up on the site, they briefed us on two different locations the crash material and the crash site material, which was later to be identified as Alpha and Bravo.

BG Colt: At any time did anybody in the hand off ever elude to the possibility that there were IR beacons or strobes on when they first arrived at the crash site?

(b)(3), (b)(6): No sir, no one made mention of any IR beacons or strobes when they arrived.

BG Colt: Just for your edification --- this is kind of a spurious report we are trying to dispel, but I appreciate your candid and honest answer to that. Can we characterize it that you arrived after or before the flash flood occurred?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, we arrived after the flash flood.

BG Colt: Okay, any questions from you guys? Can you continue to talk us through your actions on until your exfill please? And if you would also characterize any of the local exchanges or interaction and if you ever or any of your soldiers ever had any kind of warning shots fired, thank you.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yes sir, as we conducted relief from replacing 1/B, they continued to walk us through all their security positions, we then assumed the role of those security positions. Once we were 100 percent their men pulled off the line and moved back toward the CP. Like I said before, the leadership took us to the two crash site locations that they were aware of,

(b)(3), (b)(6) and myself as well as the CSAR leadership and the EOD tech from Team (b)(3), (b)(6) that was with us, showed us where those locations were at, so we were tracking. From there, first priority was security and then immediately got the CSAR team to work with their saws that was the first thing that they did, they moved up to site Bravo specifically and started cutting as much as they could while we still had the cover of darkness. No interaction from the population during this period of darkness whatsoever, no shots were fired, we were only there for a few hours at this point until the sun came up and then we began the period of daylight. And from here sir, it was a lot of the same, just continued to cut with CSAR until their batteries were

depleted. We maintained security; we rotated our men on the security line down into the Wadi, at this point I think it was still just above knee deep, we were wading into the Wadi trying to pull out as many pieces (of the aircraft) as we could. We found several portions of human remains, within the Wadi and then just adjacent to the Wadi and in some of the trees and all the terraces. So [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] and I personally headed that mission up - we walked around, we had a few bags and we policed up every bit of human remains that we could possibly find in that area. At this point really the only significant, not really any significant interaction with the local populace, there was the occasional local Afghan that would walk up and try to see what was going on. We did have our Afghan [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c]

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c We had seven of them with us we had them at the friction points which was primarily down south on the Wadi by the bridge so they could interdict any kind of, deter anyone from coming too close to the crash site.

BG Colt: I don't know if you are familiar with some of the media reports, but how would you characterize the access of any of the locals to potential wreckage in the debris field and anything on that line of thought, please?

[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]: Yes sir, I saw the report a couple of days after that really infuriated me. From the time we showed up on the crash to when we left 72 hours later there was absolutely zero local interface or any interaction with any crash site materials - none whatsoever.

SME-GFA: So when you guys got there, you relieved 1/B and Pathfinders were still onsite, correct?

[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]: That is correct Sir.

SME-GFA: And correct me if I'm wrong, but the [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] element had some outside security is that true?

[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]: Roger sir, they still had the outer cordon, they didn't have any folks right on top of the wreckage or just outside for security purpose. They were in the villages primarily in their vehicles, at night the BSO remained in their vehicles, they really only kind of came out during the daytime at which point [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] would come down on occasion, conduct

link-up with myself and kind of review priorities and they had some welders that eventually came in, that I requested, both welders did a great job and then they rotated a lot of their junior guys through carrying litters, just humping the equipment out.

BG Colt: Are one of you guys going to ask him about that the building that we think the POO was? [directed to the panelists]

SME-GFA: When we talked to AC-130 pilots yesterday, they are pretty fairly certain they know where the point of origin of RPG shot was. Did you guys get any information on that and do you have any information whether that building was cleared or not?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Gentlemen, talking to my team leader and squad leader that were adjacent to where that suspected RPG fin was at, they went over, kind of identified that it was in the vicinity of one of the locations to the southwest where Pathfinder element was holding security. He started going around checking squad leaders kind 'a going up to them to see what they were looking at and recognizing out there. Taking picture of it and documented its location with the grid off the Garmin [GPS]. The adjacent buildings to it had already been searched on the beginning daylight cycle on that first day we were out there to confirm or not whether or not if there any locals in the vicinity and yet that building was uninhabited and nothing else significant to report from that building sir.

SME=GFA: Since we don't have a common graphic that we can all look at, the AC-130 crew believes it was a building almost directly to the south of the crash site that had a couple of significant towers on it, does that ring a bell?

(b)(3), (b)(6): No sir, I can't say that it does ring a bell to be honest with you.

SME-GFA: Okay, I think kind of what we are kind of digging into I believe is whether that information was passed down to any of the ground elements and anybody given a task to go and clear and search that building, doesn't sound like that happened though, or at least with you guys.

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): That's correct sir, like [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) mentioned that the fin there was of significance. We think two compounds in the vicinity of this, the crash site and that's in our Clamshell/EXSUM there. One of our security positions in our squad was up on some high terrain; they identified the bag and seated in their position, found out upon further investigation with EOD that was an RPG initiation system, an initiation device. So we confiscated that, secured it, and then cleared the two compounds that it was kind of sitting on a wall right in between the two compounds. We cleared those two with really nothing significant to report from those.

SME-GFA: Okay, when we are talking the RPG initiator we talking the tail fin correct?

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): I meant it's an IED initiation system.

SME-GFA: Okay, I remember seeing a picture of that. The actual RPG tail fin that I think you guys found, did you find that?

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): I think we may be talking about two different locations now apparently the information you are talking about sir, you are saying the AC-130 reporting that to the south correct?

SME-GFE: Yes.

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): Yea, the only fin we talked about and made reference to is the fin we found in the vicinity of the Pathfinders element and the Pathfinders element from the crash site to the Northeast kind of over northeast of the perimeter.

SME-GFA: Do you know what happened to that tail fin? We are still trying to track that down.

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): That was sent out - with the rest -- the mass amounts of the equipment and wreckage that was sent out with the BSO element.

SME-GFA: Do you know specifically who that was handed over to - by name?

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): No sir, during those three days there was just every piece of item every item from that helicopter was carried out on a litter from 10's of different the BSOs also on multiple flatbed trucks that just kept doing turns. I don't know who actually has it.

SME-GFA: Yeah roger, we are still trying to track that down, it's obviously of interest. Just, I think to clarify I think we are miss-communicating a little bit, the AC-130 identified the building compound where they think the RPG fire came from, which it's not the same, I don't believe it's the same location where the RPG fin was found, so kind of two different locations to the best of my knowledge, not really in relation, not the same location I guess I should say. Okay thank you.

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): Roger sir, that's what we are tracking as well.

BG Colt: Okay, I think I have about three more questions and as one, how would you characterize the site as far as been a sterile location on your departure? Two, if you can articulate when you were actually exfilled off the site--who was remaining there after you left? And lastly, is there anything about this particular relief in place or down aircraft scenario that there was some specific lesson that we should glean from it?

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6): Roger sir, when we departed the crash site locations after about 72 hours, the site was definitely 100 percent sterile. We conducted an exfill with the Pathfinder element; they fell under our task organization for exfill. We linked-up with [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6), I believe was the call sign of [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6), the brigade battle space owner, we conducted a walkthrough of the crash site area a minute after meeting with him. At that point there was a few items remaining, but I would say we were probably somewhere between 95 and 97 percent complete. He was very pleased with the efforts and the synchronization across the board. He then departed, a couple hours later we were 100 percent complete, I personally with [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6), conducted a walkthrough of each of the five crash site locations or where there was wreckage and it there nothing there to be found. At that point again we linked-up with

the Pathfinders, we conducted movement to our exfill HLZ, which was the same location we conducted infil from three nights prior, it's on a ridgeline kind of in the middle of nowhere, there no compound anywhere to be found. We conducted that movement under the cover of darkness and the Pathfinders were the first to exfill and then the THUNDER package came and turned around and did a second lift and picked up my element and returned us to (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(7), (b)(7)(C). And sir, as far as to what we can glean from this operation and things that could be learned from it and things that we could do in the future as far as our portion of it as the crash site recovery, I know that we all pray that this never takes place again. However, in the event that it does there are large pieces of each one of these types of aircraft that being utilized and special equipment is definitely needed to reach, when we are out to separate different sections to get in a more manageable pieces to be extracted from the site required a couple hundred pounds worth of high explosive ordinance to be able to separate some of those pieces and parts. Additionally, I know that the BSO and the engineer crew that they brought in, brought about 3 to 5 foot, not sure how much quantity that is, tanks to be able to cut through with the BROCO torches and different acetylene torches as well. However effective that may have been, it was also a very time consuming process to try and cut each one of those with the torches and some of it was not going to be disassembled with those torch systems that they had therefore, requiring a lot of the explosive charges that we had to do to separate those, specifically the rotor systems. One thing of interest that did actually aid in kind of destruction and separation of some of that stuff is that the rotor heads and the transmission itself that was inside the CH-47 had a magnesium base apparently that we were able to ignite and that helped to melt down especially those three, four heavy sections that were there from the rotor and the transmission, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, thank you that is valuable. Anything else you would like to add?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, I think just having the option of using kinetic strike if you have that capability as well not being afraid to use the demolitions, I know there's a lot of fear

initially, kind of early on with hey we are going to spread this stuff trying to destroy it, and the point that we were trying to kind of make was we got this area surrounded by an inner and outer cordon, there is not a local within hundreds of meters here. Its okay if it spreads a little bit, we got it contained, we can clean it up, but we can't move it if it's so heavy. So it took us a little while to get to that point where we could destroy it because just using the blades is not ever going to be enough.

BG Colt: Okay, thanks, anything from you guys at all? I there are two questions or couple questions from (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6).

LA: You guys reference sites A and B, do you have a graphic that shows where they were, just so that we are talking apples and apples? And if you do I can give you my email, you can send to me on the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, that will be the easiest thing to do sir looking at the EXSUM here. First, one of the thing we did when we got on site we conducted a sweep, determined all the different locations and then we sent it up on HPW with the name and location of the photos and the grids attached. So there was five different locations, but yeah... [inaudible] [voices speaking over].

(b)(3), (b)(6): Roger, if you could send us the clamshell and the EXSUM, send us what you are looking at there that would be great. We probably already have it, but to make sure we do and we are talking the same sites, that would be terrific. That's all I got sir.