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### The Literary Remnants of Torture: An Examination of the United States Censorship Regime

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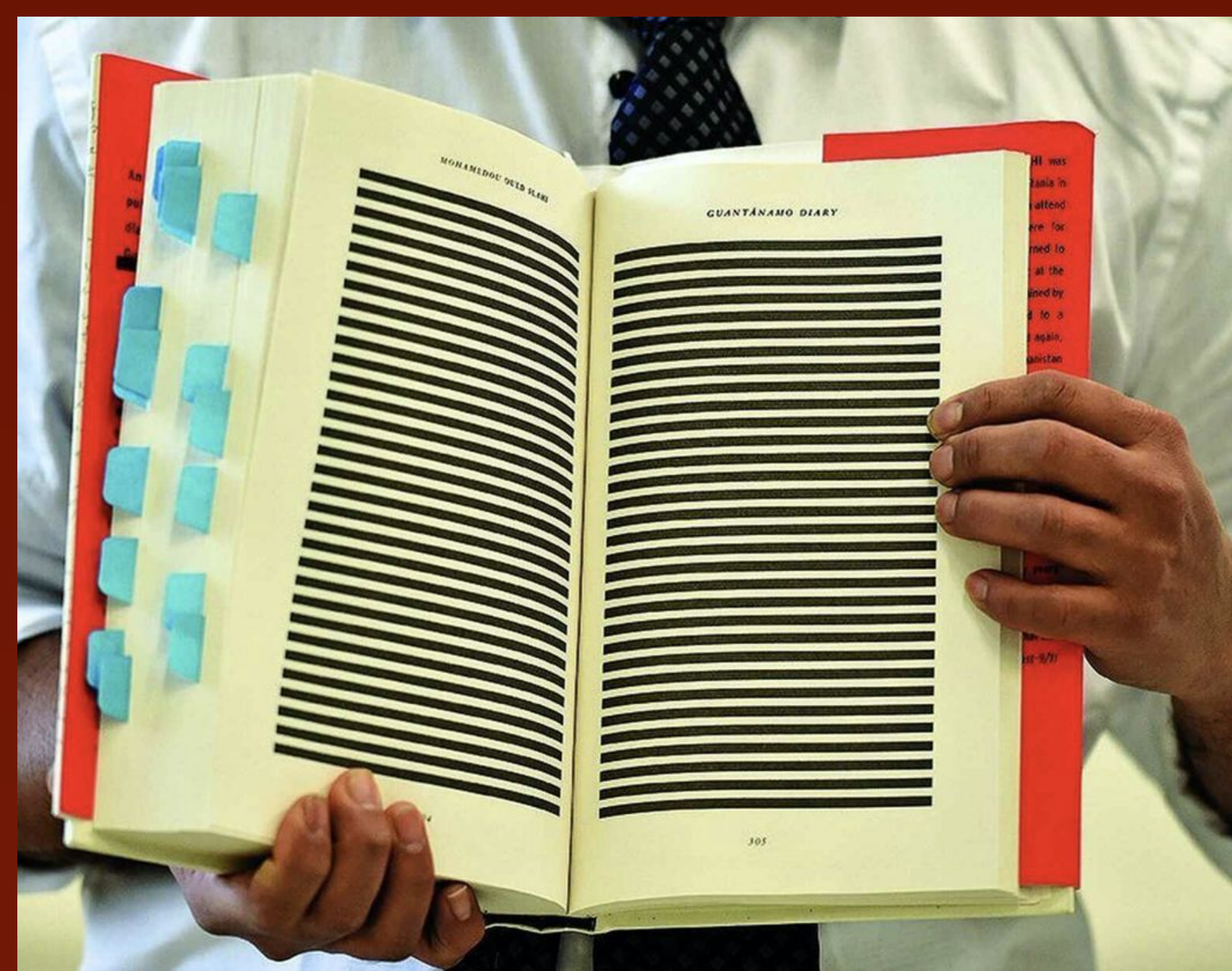
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# The Literary Remnants of Torture: An Examination into the United States Censorship Regime

Olivia Vinson

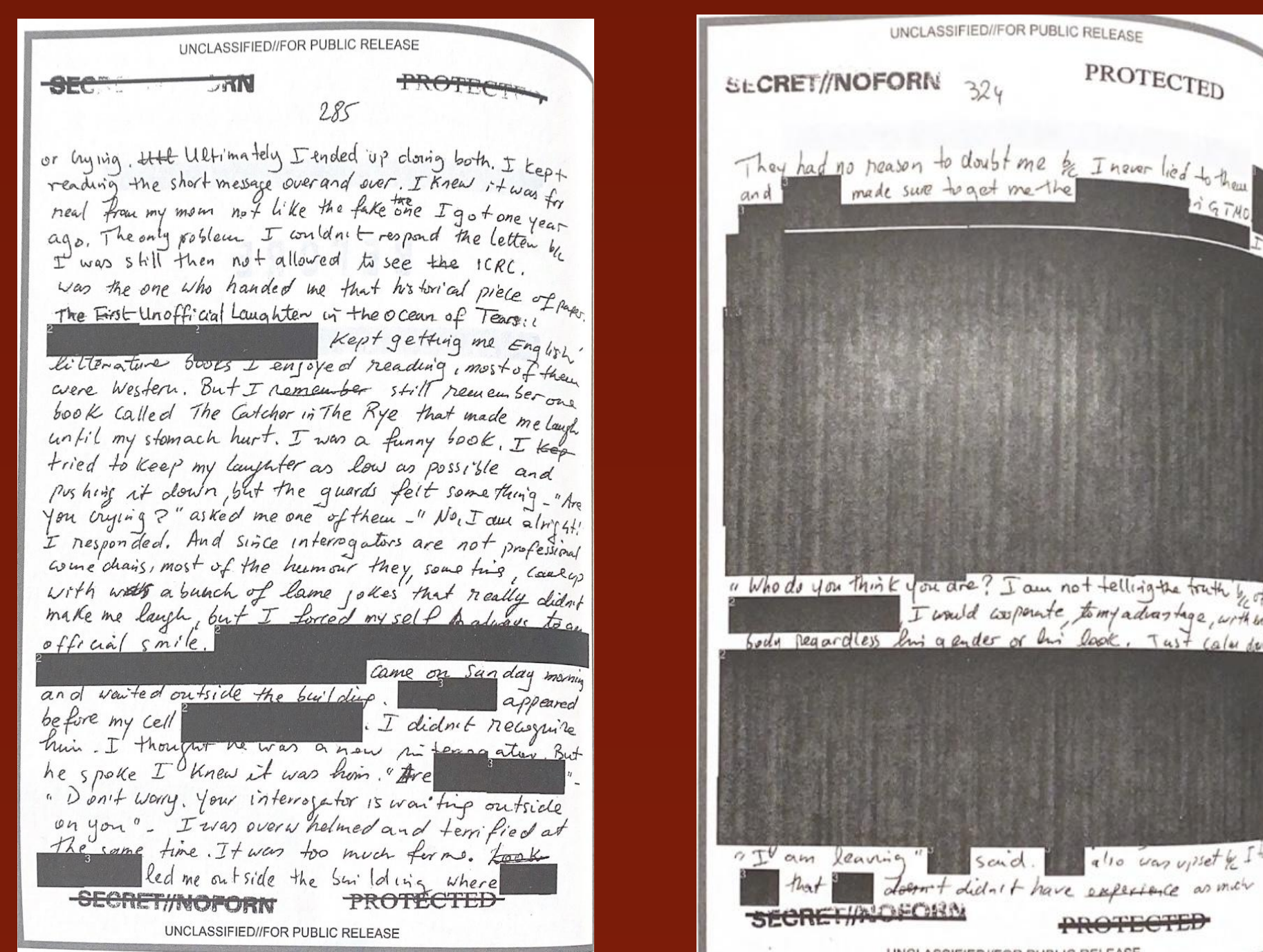
A case study of Guantánamo Bay through the restored version of Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary*



Photograph of *Guantánamo Diary* published by El Español



Photograph of Mohamedou Ould Slahi taken by CNN



Redactions present within Slahi's original manuscript



Scan to watch the trailer to the new film, *The Mauritanian*, based on Slahi's book

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## Guantánamo Bay:

- U.S. naval base and prison where suspected terrorists are detained as part of the War on Terror

## State Secrets Privilege:

- "judicially created evidentiary privilege that allows the federal government to resist court-ordered disclosure of information in litigation" on the grounds that the disclosure could threaten national security (Garvey & Liu, 2001)
- 39 invocations of this privilege by the Bush administration since 2001 (Wells)

## Freedom of Information Act:

- "To the extent required to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, an agency may delete identifying details..."
- Information classified under an "Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense and foreign policy..."

What reasonably constitutes a threat to identity, national defense, or foreign policy?

## Methodology

- Analysis of the legitimacy of the restored redactions of Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary*
- Coding over 2,000 redactions

## Results:

- **Legitimate:** justified as a threat to personal identity, national security, or foreign policy
- **Illegitimate:** clearly not included within the exemptions outlined under FOIA
- **Questionable:** may fit the criteria for exemptions under FOIA, but does not pose a legitimate threat
- Access the spreadsheet of redactions by scanning the QR code:



## Implications for U.S. Citizens:

- Redactions challenge the nation's facade of transparency
- U.S. government continues to avoid accountability for its use of torture in the War on Terror and silence those it has victimized