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Medieval Iron Maiden

## [Why Is Torture Ineffective?](#)

### *And why is it still used today?*

People's taste for using brute force and showing off power has not changed from the Medieval times, and torture has remained more or less similar over time, and even less effective. And despite the fact that the champion of democracy states it does not use torture on political prisoners, leaked photos tell another story. Behind the pervert aspect of the issue, is torture an efficient tool? Most experts say it is not reliable when it comes to extracting information from prisoners. "If anything useful came out these interrogations in Iraq, we would have heard about it," said Alfred McCoy, a University of Wisconsin-Madison historian and author of "A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, From the Cold War to the War on Terror" (Holt Paperbacks, 2006). In 2005, the U.S. Justice Department authorized intelligence agencies to use torture. "Psychological techniques such as the water-boarding and sleep deprivation that American operatives are suspected of using recently have a history going back to behavior experiments from the 1950s. They were looking for a key to unlock the mind, and the real breakthrough was that sensory deprivation could produce a mental disorientation akin to psychosis." said McCoy. "A switch from more physical methods of torture to the psychological approaches emerged in the following decades in places such as Vietnam, Central America and Iran, without any definitive proof of their effectiveness." he added. Following the 9/11 event and the US' "War on Terror", the CIA turned Guantanamo Bay detention center into a behavioral test lab, where sensory deprivation and self-inflicted pain (like permitting a prisoner who had stood for hours to sit only if he cooperated) were the norm. "Though captives are less resentful when tortured psychologically, it doesn't make their statements any more trustworthy," said Darius Rejali, a political scientist at Reed College in Oregon. "Torture during interrogations rarely yields better information than traditional human intelligence, partly because no one has figured out a precise, reliable way to break human beings or any adequate method to evaluate whether what prisoners say when they do talk is true," Rejali wrote in a 2004 article on Salon.com. Experts also say that there is no such thing as "light" torture. "Detainees are just as likely to tell their interrogators whatever they want to hear under psychological distress as they are under physical distress," said McCoy. "Democracies, rather than dictatorships or oppressive regimes, are more likely to engage in this seemingly stealthy kind of torture because it is easier to hide from journalists and citizens," said Rejali. "Torture is a sign that a government either does not enjoy the trust of the people it governs or cannot recruit informers for a surveillance system. In both cases, torture to obtain information is a sign of institutional decay and desperation, and torture accelerates this process, destroying the bonds of loyalty, respect and trust that keep information flowing. As any remaining sources of intelligence dry up, governments have to torture even more.", wrote Rejali. Torture also gives a fake sensation of power to the executioner, fact that has a positive feedback that further fuels more violence. "Psychological torture has persisted not because it necessarily works, but because of an institutional history of the practice. The interrogators themselves tend to believe in its efficacy, and no matter what you do, you can't stop them once they start," said Rejali. The Medieval Times are regarded as the peak of organized sadistic torture, due to the terrifying torture machines like the rack, the spiked Iron Maiden coffin and the Judas Cradle, which forced the prisoner in many cases to make an untrue confession. "Despite the seemingly barbaric nature of Medieval torture, however, the methods used were actually part of an organized system of justice, as opposed to the modern clandestine nature of the interrogations. Medieval torture was neither sadistic nor savage compared to modern torture and was no more or less rational or driven by urgent security concerns. The

question [of urgency] is the only ways democratic societies are able to justify it to themselves. The search for heretics was always a serious one, just as the search for terrorists is today.", said Rejali.