

PHILOSOPHY 22: CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS

MATTHEW SILVERSTEIN

FALL 2008

THIRD PAPER

ASSIGNMENT

We have a suspected terrorist in custody. We have excellent reason to believe (though we cannot be certain) that yesterday this man planted a bomb in a crowded area of Chicago. In twelve hours, the bomb will explode, killing hundreds if not thousands. We have good reason to believe (though, again, we cannot be certain) that if we torture the suspect we will be able to learn the location of the device and deactivate it successfully. Moreover, we have no other solid leads. If we do not torture the suspect, it is very likely that we will not be able to find the bomb.

Is it morally permissible for an agent of the government to torture the ticking time bomb terrorist? Or should there be laws against the use of torture in such situations? Answer these question by explaining and evaluating one of the relevant arguments presented by Henry Shue, David Luban, or Alan Dershowitz.

Remember that in a philosophy paper, it is your arguments that matter. Make sure you provide reasons that support the claims you make.

Note: You may discuss the assignment with your classmates, but the work you submit should be your own. You are *not* allowed to consult *any* secondary or outside sources for this assignment.

Format: Your paper should be no more than 5–7 pages in length. It should be double-spaced and set in a 12-point font.

Your paper is due at 5:00 PM on Friday, December 19.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

You should submit your paper (as an attachment) via email to mesilverstein@amherst.edu. Please put your name somewhere in the filename of the attached document. The subject of your e-mail should be: Third Paper. I will return your paper to you via email with comments appended using Microsoft Word.