

Talking to the traumatised and to those who made them suffer - a journalist's perspective.

Following 9/11, Ian Cobain became gradually aware that the UK was involved in the rendition – or kidnap – of a significant number of terrorism suspects, and in their detention and mistreatment.

By talking to the detainees, their families and lawyers, in the UK and abroad, Cobain built up a picture of the way in which these operations appeared to have been organised.

He eventually obtained a copy of the UK government guidance that governed the actions of those intelligence officers who were most closely involved in the operations.

His principal aim throughout was not to detail allegations of abuse, but to test and challenge the official denials that were the response to these allegations.

Cobain reluctantly agreed to write a book that traced the UK's involvement in unlawful detention and detainee abuse from 1940 to 2008 and, in so doing, located and interviewed a number of people who were involved in the abuse of detainees.

Some of those interviews took place a short walk from the venue of this conference.