

**Testimony of Jamie Leigh Jones**  
*to the*  
Committee on Education and Labor

Presented: February 12, 2008

Good Afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. First and foremost, I would like to thank all the members of congress who have united together in support of holding Army Contractors accountable under enforceable law.

I went to Camp Hope, located in the "Green Zone", Baghdad, Iraq on July 25, 2005, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Halliburton/KBR, my employer, prior to leaving the U.S., promised me that I would live in a trailer equipped to house two women, with a shared bathroom.

Upon arrival at Camp Hope, I was assigned to a predominantly all-male barrack. According to documents provided by Halliburton/KBR in response to my EEOC complaint, approximately 25 women to more than 400 men were documented to be housed. I never saw a woman at the barrack. I did find myself subject to repeated "cat-calls" and men who were partially dressed in their underwear while I was walking to the restroom, on a separate floor from me. The EEOC credited my testimony with respect to this matter. That Determination Letter is attached to this statement as an Exhibit.

I complained about my living conditions to Halliburton/KBR management and asked to be moved into my promised living quarters. These repeated requests were denied.

On the fourth day in Iraq, I received a call on my cell phone. The reception in the barracks was bad, so I stepped outside to take the call. Afterwards, I noticed that the woman I was replacing (her contract had expired and she was returning back to U.S.) and several others were outside. They called me over and invited me to come and sit with them. When I did, I was offered a drink. The men (identified only as Halliburton/KBR firefighters) told me that one of them could make a really good drink and so I accepted. When he handed it to me, he told me, "Don't worry, I saved all my Rufies for Dubai," or words very similar to that. I thought that he was joking, and felt safe with my co-workers. I was naïve in that I believed that we were all on the same team. I took two sips or so from the drink.

When I awoke the next morning, I was extremely sore between my legs, and in my chest. I was groggy and confused, but did not know why at that time. I tried to go to the restroom, and while there I realized that I had many bruises between my legs and on my wrists. I was bleeding between my legs. At that point in time, I suspected I had been raped or violated in some way. When I returned to my room, a man was laying in the bottom bunk of my bed.



I asked him if he had sex with me, and he said that he did. I asked if it had been protected, and he said “no.” I was still feeling the effects of the drug from the drink and was now very upset at the confirmation of my rape. I dressed and left for help.

I reported this incident to an Operations coordinator, who took me to the KBR clinic. The clinic then called KBR security, who took me to the Army CASH (Combat Army Support Hospital). There, the Army doctor, Jodi Schultz, M.D, performed a rape kit.

Dr. Schultz confirmed that I had been penetrated both vaginally and anally, and that I was “quite torn up down there.” She indicated that based upon the physical damage to my genitalia, that it was apparent that I had been raped. Dr. Schultz took photographs, and administered a rape kit. I watched her give this rape kit to the KBR security personnel as I was again turned over to these men.

These men then took me to a trailer and then locked me in. Two armed guards (Ghurka’s) were stationed outside my door. I was placed inside, and not allowed to leave. I had my cell phone, but it would not call outside of Baghdad. I asked for a phone to contact my father, and this was denied. I was not provided food or drink (although there was a sink, I did not trust it to drink from).

I begged and pleaded with one of the Ghurka guards until he was finally willing to share his cell phone with me so that I could call my father, back in Texas. I had begged him for that until he finally agreed. My father then contacted my Congressman, Ted Poe. Congressman Poe then took actions to get me out of the Iraq.

Once State Department officials (Matthew McCormick and Heidi McMichael) saved me from the container I was placed in a “safe” trailer, and I requested that Heidi stay with me. She did.

I was later interviewed by Halliburton/KBR supervisors, and it was made clear to me that I had essentially two choices: (1) “stay and get over it,” or (2) go home with “no guarantee of a job,” either in Iraq or back in Houston. Because of

the severity of my injuries, I elected to go home, despite the obvious threat of termination.

Once I returned home, I sought medical attention for both psychiatric and physical evaluation. I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

I also saw Sabrina Lahiri M.D., who found that my breasts were asymmetrically disfigured, and that my pectoral muscles had been torn. She wanted to do reconstructive surgery, and I sought "second opinions" from several surgeons regarding that surgery. Even the doctor, Halliburton forced me to see, reviewed my injuries and agreed that they were due to forced trauma. He expressed anger and disgust. Dr. Ciaravino then performed the first reconstructive surgery.

I still require additional medical treatment, including another reconstructive surgery, and I continue to go to counseling 3 times per week.

I turned to the civil court for justice, in part, because the criminal courts have failed to even file an indictment at this point. Currently there are approximately 180,000 military contractors in Iraq. Approximately 20,000 of those contractors are females. 50% of Americans on military bases in Iraq are contractors. Contractors have been immune from both Iraqi law and the Uniformed Code of Military Justice therefore there is no law governing them. There has not been a single complete prosecution of a criminal contractor to date.

When I decided to pursue a civil suit, I was informed that within my thirteen-page employment contract that had an additional five pages attached, included an arbitration clause. At this point in my life I had no idea what an arbitration was other than a tiny paragraph included in the lengthy document that mandated that I could not get justice from the civil court system. I learned that I had signed away my right to a trial by jury. I thought this right was guaranteed by the seventh amendment to the United States Constitution that specifically states, "In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved". When there are no laws to protect army contractors who are working abroad (from violent crimes), what is to stop people from taking the law into their own hands? The arena harbors a sense of lawlessness. The forced arbitration clause in army contractor's contracts, prove to protect the criminals of violent crimes, rather than enforce they be held accountable by a judge and jury. Victims of crime perpetrated by employees of taxpayer- funded government contracts in Iraq deserve the same standard of treatment and protection governed by the same laws whether they are working in the U.S. or abroad.

Army contracting corporations harbor and ignore criminal activities in Iraq, which under the arbitration clause agreement, protects them and does not hold

corporate accountability when a crime has been committed. This clause also paves the way for corporations to not be held accountable under criminal law. My case wasn't an isolated incident. Since no actions of law could help other victims at this point, I started "The Jamie Leigh Foundation" [www.jamiesfoundation.org](http://www.jamiesfoundation.org). To date, thirty-eight women have come forward through my foundation. A number of them shared their tragedies in confidence because they were silenced by provisions of their arbitration agreements.

The arbitration proceeding is private and discrete and the outcome of arbitration cannot be disclosed to the public. Unfortunately, arbitration is stacked in favor of businesses, making it harder for individuals to prevail in a dispute and that is not just, and unfair to the patriotic hard-working employees. How can this Country not protect us contractors, who have left our families to help our country in an effort to build democracy overseas, when we are victimized criminally? Originally, this was a controlled way to expedite resolution of disputes but that's not the situation now and it is imperative the system be revised. My goal is to ensure all American civilians who become victim of violent crimes while abroad, have the right to justice before a judge and jury.