

National Geographic Announces In-Depth Analysis of Osama bin Laden's Newly Declassified Personal Files in bin Laden's Hard Drive Special Premiering Thursday, September 10, at 9/8c

On May 2, 2011, almost a decade after masterminding the brazen 9/11 terrorist attack that would bring down New York's Twin Towers, Osama bin Laden was tracked to a well-fortified safe house in Pakistan and killed. Now, almost a decade later, National Geographic and New York Times best-selling author and CNN National Security Analyst Peter Bergen presents a groundbreaking look at the al-Qa'ida founder's personal life through an in-depth examination of newly declassified hard drives taken from the compound. With insights from CIA profilers, criminal psychologists, religious scholars, battle-tested military experts as well as men who personally knew bin Laden, the one-hour event special more than a year in the making, **BIN LADEN'S HARD DRIVE**, sifts through the trove of personal moments and the extremist content he created to piece together the story of the multifaceted man behind the headlines. Nearly 470,000 digital files. 250 gigabytes of data. Over 100 USB drives, DVDs and CDs. Five computers. And multiple cell phones. Piecing together every shred of evidence from these items taken from the Abbottabad compound where bin Laden was killed, **BIN LADEN'S HARD DRIVE** scrutinizes the al-Qa'ida founder's layered personal psychology, his relationship with his family, the lens through which he viewed faith and religion, as well as his nihilistic legacy of violence and destruction. **Premiering Thursday, September 10, at 9/8c**, the special offers a roadmap into the mind of a mass murderer that offers increasing twists and contradictions the deeper it goes. Bergen leads a team of experts in the search for meaning in each letter and home video, leaving no item unturned in a quest for answers. Having produced the first televised interview with bin Laden in Afghanistan in 1997, and as the only Western reporter to tour the Abbottabad compound before it was demolished, Bergen is uniquely placed to reach for the essence of what made this terrorist leader tick. In addition, Peter Bergen sits down in London with **Abdullah Anas** — a former mujahideen and one of Osama bin Laden's closest friends in the '80s, who traveled with him to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet forces — to unpack his thoughts on bin Laden's evolution. He also speaks with **Abdel Bari Atwan**, a journalist and former Editor-in-Chief of Al Quds Al Arabi, who offers unique insights as one of the only reporters to spend two days in person with bin Laden. "Exploring these hard drives, it's clear that digital information can say a lot. Osama bin Laden's files left behind an imprint of a complex man, responsible for the murder of thousands of people. History will remember him for that but, in order to cut through the perception of this ascetic in a cave on a holy crusade, it's important for us to see how he crafted the videos that went out to his followers. To read how his well-educated wives helped him write incendiary speeches. To watch as he inculcated his children and grandchildren into an ideology of hate leading to acts of violence against animals and the recitation of jihadist poetry. Understanding him is vital in order to combat other potential bin Ladens in the future," said Bergen. Spurning email and encrypted digital options, bin Laden was careful to conduct all communication through couriers. Despite his curated facade of humility and quiet respectfulness, the letters reveal his narcissism and increasing paranoia while cut off from the outside world, including in this missive to one of his four wives, who he believed may have had a tracking device implanted in her tooth: *"I was told that you went to a dentist in Iran, and you were concerned about a filling she had put in for you... The size of the chip is about the length of a grain of wheat, and the width of a fine piece of vermicelli."* Over 20 people lived with bin Laden in the run-down Abbottabad compound, including three of his wives, a dozen of their children and

grandchildren, as well as bodyguards and their families. Letters and footage expose bin Laden's strict rules about the children needing constant supervision when playing in the yard so as not to make noise, as well as the daily mundanity of their existence, sustained by livestock and vegetable gardens: *"We bake our own bread and the milk is delivered to the house...the chicken and the eggs are produced in the house."* Eventually, the letters reveal, even the two men he relied on to safeguard the family and act as intermediaries with the outside world tired of their way of life: *"...they are getting exhausted, security-wise from me staying with them...I have tried so hard as God as my witness, to convince them to agree, but sadly I came to realize that they have reached a level of exhaustion that they are shutting down, and they asked to leave us all."* EXPERTS FEATURED IN THE SPECIAL INCLUDE:

- **Nelly Lahoud**, Senior Fellow, International Security Program, New America and one of the few people in the world to have read every personal communication recovered from Abbottabad;
- **Dr. Reid Meloy**, forensic psychologist and FBI consultant;
- **Ali Soufan**, former FBI special agent who led investigations into al-Qa'ida and was one of the first to uncover the link between the terrorist outfit and 9/11;
- **Dalia Mogahed**, American-Muslim scholar and Director of Research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.

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