

The Piece of Paper that Killed Bin Laden

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Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#)

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If you can manage to decipher Leon Panetta's chicken scratch, you too can read the final memo that launched the raid that killed America's most hated enemy. The memo is part of [Peter Bergen's *Time* cover story](#) on Osama bin Laden's last days and Obama's call to go ahead, despite Joe Biden and Robert Gates' disapproval, with the Navy SEAL raid on bin Laden's Abbottabad complex. Here's the memo:



And *Time* has gone through the trouble of transcribing [Panetta's penmanship](#):

Received phone call from Tom Donilon who stated that the President made a decision with regard to AC1 [Abbottabad Compound 1]. The decision is to proceed with the assault. The timing, operational decision making and control are in Admiral McRaven's hands. The approval is provided on the risk profile presented to the President. Any additional risks are to be brought back to the President for his consideration. The direction is to go in and get bin Laden and if he is not there, to get out. Those instructions were conveyed to Admiral McRaven at approximately 10:45 am.

If Admiral McRaven's name is a little bit familiar, you may be a follower of *The Washington Post's* Karen Tumulty (who, it's worth mentioning, was [a longtime *Time* staffer](#)), who recently humble-bragged on Twitter that, "My [White House Correspondents Dinner] guest this year is my 5th-grade classmate, Bill McRaven. He was too busy to go last year." Tumulty links to a profile of her elementary school classmate headlined [Adm. William McRaven: The terrorist hunter on whose shoulders Osama bin Laden raid rested](#). Okay, so he's a pretty cool date for Nerd Prom.

For the full story on bin Laden, head over to [Time](#).

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