



The Hunt for Bin Laden

Tom Shroder - editor, The Washington Post

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The long and secret effort to track down Osama bin Laden has been called the biggest, costliest manhunt in history. This reconstruction, compiled from reporting from more than two-dozen *Washington Post* correspondents and staffers over more than 15 years, traces the hunt from its beginnings in 1997, during the Clinton administration. *The Hunt for bin Laden* is a behind-the-scenes narrative revealing the 14-year, billion-dollar effort that brought the hunt to a swift and conclusive end, including:

- The numerous times CIA agents had bin Laden in their crosshairs prior to 9/11, only to have missions canceled at the last moment.
- Vivid details of bin Laden's behavior in the wake of the attacks on September 11.
- The myriad of ways he evaded detection in his years on the lam, including his narrow escape from the caves and tunnels of Tora Bora.
- How the war in Iraq drained resources and diverted the spotlight from the hunt, turning the mission to kill or capture bin Laden into a back-burner operation and political liability for the Bush administration. It wasn't until the Iraq war began to wind down that the search gained its endgame momentum, the *Post* shows, reclassified as a highest priority again by a new president.
- How increasingly punishing drone attacks, interrogations of captured al Qaeda operatives, and an ever-expanding network of informants finally began to yield a trail that led to bin Laden's courier, a cell phone interception, and ultimately, bin Laden.

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