

The Langley Files
File 18
The 9/11 Survivor Turned CIA Usama Bin Laden Tracker
Part II: Joining CIA and the Hunt Begins

(music begins)

Walter: At CIA, we work around the clock and across the globe to help keep Americans and others around the world safe. Secrecy is often vital to our work.

Dee: But we're committed to sharing what we can when we can. So let us be your guides around the halls of Langley as we open our files and speak with those who have dedicated themselves to this mission.

Walter: These are their stories.

Walter and Dee: This is The Langley Files.

(music continues)

Dee: Welcome back everyone to part 2 of this special 3-part episode. We've been speaking with a former CIA officer with a remarkable life and career.

Walter: When we last left off, Kevin had shared his story of surviving the attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. He discussed spending several months recovering in the hospital, at times fighting for his life, and was about to return home for the first time. It's the next step in a journey that will see him join CIA—and ultimately the CIA team working to locate the leader of the terrorist organization responsible for those attacks: Usama Bin Laden.

Dee: So let's get back to Kevin's story.

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Walter: What were your thoughts on getting home?

Kevin: Coming home was amazing. There was a welcome that I'll never forget from our neighbors, from the community. Really reflected just this amazing support that I I viscerally felt that whole time I was in the hospital. We can all remember and reflect on that time in the weeks and months after 9/11 - how we all came together in our communities, how we came together as a nation and, um, being in the hospital for those months and and again trying to just make it through at times every day. Um, I had so many letters and cards that were sent to me, we had so many well wishes. We had so many expressions of healing and of hope, prayer that I I felt. So I was, uh, at home and still needing lots of physical therapy. I went home with what we call burn garments, which were compression garments that I wore all in my upper body and my arms to keep, uh, deep scarring from forming. And I worked really hard with this incredible physical therapist named Lon. She was my physical therapist from day one, and then after I got out of the hospital, she saw me maybe three or four times a week. She was maybe maybe 4 ft 6/8 inches. But man, she made me cry on a daily basis when I was there. It was excruciating, but we we went through it together. We were we were a great team and, uh, she was really special to me during that time frame. So I was getting stronger day by day and definitely focused in on current events in the news and national security developments, and what was going on in the war in Afghanistan and against Al Qaeda. As I was

a massive digester of news before 9/11, and having taken part in, was an interesting operation before 9/11 against Al Qaeda, it was close to home, obviously, from an operational sense and being, wanting to be plugged in and knowledgeable as much as I could. And really, my mindset during that time frame was getting strong enough, to healing enough to get back in the arena, to get back to making a difference. That's really how I had been wired and focused my choices in life up to that point. And again, I was 29 years old on 9/11, and I knew that though I was medically retired from the Navy, I was gonna heal, and then I was gonna start a new chapter, and that new chapter needed to be making a difference and making an impact.

Dee: So knowing you wanted to make that impact, relevant to what you just experienced, you found yourself on the 9/11 Commission. How did that happen?

Kevin: So I really felt a strong desire to to learn the lessons of 9/11 attacks. Congress, I think, with great wisdom, decided despite a lot of the political pitfalls and political dangers, you know, we we had to have a commission investigate the failures of 9/11, investigate the response to 9/11. And so, when that Commission was created, they were hiring, and I was basically kind of coming up near the end of my recovery period. I was at home. I was, I was still going through lots of physical therapy, And when they started hiring to be staff investigators for the Commission, I let it be known that I was very interested. I was almost able. I was gonna get able, if they said yes. And I secured, uh, through the assistance of Senator Lieberman and Senator McCain an audience and and expressed that it was my desire to start that chapter back in the arena making a difference on with the 9/11 Commission. I went to my first job interview. And when I sat down with the the executive management staff there, I remember well, them hearing me out, um, them complimenting my recovery and and, you know, thanking me for my interest being there. And I also remember being told that, on the other hand, you're not an Al Qaeda expert. You don't have decades of experience studying Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. You weren't an intelligence officer. Um, so that though your story is inspiring, we don't necessarily have a fit for you on the team. And I digested that for a minute or two. And I think I got my gumption up a bit and almost literally turned the tables and and replied that we don't have a survivor of the attacks, and I don't think you have anybody who's more motivated to learn the lessons of 9/11 than me. And if there's any role that I can help play on this Commission, that can make an impact, I'm here, and and and please bring me on. And so I left that interview and the next day I got the call that, uh that I've been hired as a staff. And it was an incredible staff, I mean, made up of, um, incredibly patriotic experts and professionals from all those areas that we had to investigate and study and learn from.

Walter: What was the day-to-day function like? What what skills did it rely on?

Kevin: Being a staff investigator for the Commission was just an eye-opening experience because it truly was at base an investigation. The team I was on was the team that was charged with learning lessons of all the emergency response actions. So the day of, and the first part of that, you really have to get ground truth to exactly what happened the day of, down to the minute or second even if you can. And then reconstruct the day and reconstruct every action and reaction to that and learn those lessons. So very early on our team took a strong investigation focus on what happened on the on board the planes. What happened with the FAA's awareness and response to what was going on with the hijackings. And then how that interfaced with increasing the situational awareness in Department of Defense and what we call our Northern Air Defense Command, NORAD. And we had fighter jets, of course, scrambling and we had communication going on. So our role was to make sense of all that and to investigate it. And it was a team made up of former uh, state investigators and federal prosecutors, and also some gumshoe detectives, and a medically retired Navy lieutenant. And, uh, that medically retired Navy lieutenant, um, didn't have that kind of street savvy sense at the time, and I was like a sponge because through the the

leadership that my teammates showed through their their unique skill sets, it was a quick vertical learning curve for me to kind of get into that headspace and that mindset to to be an investigator and dig deep, roll up your sleeves and in a way that I didn't have those skill sets, necessarily, as a naval officer and surface warfare officer. But I was a quick learn, and that's kind of the, through my training, and that's what officers are trained to do, is, is quickly ramp up and become a subject matter expert and and then go make a difference, make an impact. So that was my role on the staff, and, uh, and we relished it because we knew that the success of our effort would kind of form a foundation of truth for what happened that day of 9/11. And from that foundation, other findings and other investigations, um, into the attacks would also have strength.

Walter: Did you interact with any CIA or former CIA people during your work on the Commission?

Kevin: I did. Of course, that was the critical aspect of of getting right was the evolution of counterterrorism policy against Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. First time I ever walked into the Agency here at headquarters was, uh, was during the Commission time where I was at a couple of briefings but it was very, very much a sense of I didn't know what I didn't know. I was an observer, a very keen interested observer based on my experiences.

Dee: So the report comes out. At what point during that journey, or from that point on, did you make that switch and decide that the CIA might be of interest to you? What made you, you know, motivate you to join?

Kevin: Well, at that time, I had fully healed, really, in the sense that I was capable. I didn't have too many physical limitations. And I knew that I had to start thinking about yet another chapter and what that would look like. And I still had that deep desire to make a difference. Though I may have been able to get back to the Navy and and do work there, my heart was in, uh, the intelligence world. That's where I felt led and felt where I could make an impact. And so I started, um, letting that be known and and reaching out to friends and former colleagues and just gathering information on what that might look like and how I would go about doing it.

Dee: Was the motivation for you strictly counterterrorism or was it just the general intelligence work that CIA does?

Kevin: It wasn't strictly counterterrorism, but that was for sure was my focus early on and went through my training uh, and came on board. They let me know of the targeting officer career track, and that really resonated. Um and so that was kind of my "a hah" moment where I thought, yes, that is a good fit for for my background, for my training, and for my motivations.

Dee: So you, in fact, do become a targeter here at the Agency.

Kevin: Yes. Yes.

Dee: Knowing that you, as you just said, you came off the Commission with kind of that staff investigation background, did you find that the skill sets that you learned there were very transferable to CIA or was it a completely different nexus of of things that you had to learn here?

Kevin: That's a great question. I think it it absolutely was an evolution of skill sets and an evolution of requirements that I was in and the flow of it from the Commission work, learning how to, um, conduct interviews, learning how to put together an investigation, learning how to analyze a lot of data, learning how to essentially create leads to more and new information. Those were all skill sets that I worked on for a couple of years, and by the time it was coming over to the Agency, they really aligned with what

targeting officers do. And that opened up a whole new world. And, uh, of course, I needed specialized training on data sets and other skill sets uh, for targeting officers, but it was a good fit.

Walter: We were talking before about how to describe a targeting officer to someone on the outside, and you mentioned gumshoe detective. Do you think it'd be fair to sort of say it's something of a gumshoe detective with access to a really unique high tech set of tools?

Kevin: Indeed, gumshoe detective in the sense, too, that they often work from a from a headquarters or from an office standpoint. Although we do have targeters, um, who have been and will be deployed into the field to assist with their levels of expertise. But absolutely that kind of, uh, the gumshoe attitude for sure. You're always curious and always wanting to discover and you're always pushing for more, very much is the the trait of a successful targeting officer.

Walter: Really, the job is finding threads of intelligence importance and pulling on them. DCIA Burns has used this phrase - it's almost like you're responsible for finding the needle in a bed of needles.

Kevin: Right. And I think, so targeting officers, many people may hear the word targeting, and you think of kind of a a specific action and really targeting officers at the Agency, they're more of a catalyst for operations, and they fill this important role between case officers who are out in the field gathering intelligence, and then analysts who are assessing. And the targeting officer, they have to interface, communicate, collaborate with the analyst to to learn everything about it, but also bring these unique skill sets to the table. Um, skill sets like managing large data sets and doing these very much kind of, roll up your sleeves and gumshoe type investigations of data, of information, and then communicating to the field about potential lines for operation and collection and then having that kind of feed back to the analyst side. And then it's just a loop.

Walter: So, Kevin, you started your career at CIA actually working on counterproliferation issues—which is to say, trying to detect and stop the movement of certain especially dangerous weapons, weapons components, and other sanctioned materials across the globe. What path led you from counterproliferation to the Bin Laden team?

Kevin: There was an amazing targeting officer, uh, who worked with me and our team in the counterproliferation. And we developed a close friendship and working relationship, and he ended up going to the counterterrorism center, and he ended up working on the HVT two team, the Zawahiri team. He was working that and and making a lot of impact immediately and I was energized by who he was and and the actions that he was helping enable and the focus and the the motivations he brought to that and we would often have lunch together and stay in touch even though he worked in a in a different center. And one day he reached out to me and he said, I think it might be good timing for you to to think about over here. We've got uh, an opening on the HVT one Bin Laden team. It's something that we had talked about and and when the timing was right, because they really don't hire you off the street to work the Bin Laden team. I had to get trained. I had to prove my worth and prove my merit. I had to cut my teeth and when I was talking to him, I was excited about making that switch. The hunt was active, so with that I think it wasn't much of a surprise to the officers I was serving with in counterproliferation. That it, you know, I wanted to make a switch and and join that team and and lend my efforts over there.

Walter: And you were saying HVT, that's high value target, and and it sounds like the teams are divided up by Al Qaeda senior leader and finding and pursuing leads to those individual leaders.

Kevin: Correct. We had many teams, and, uh, we had an HVT one team that's focus, sole focus was Bin Laden, and we had an HVT two team whose sole focus was Zawahiri. By name and by mission and by by

task, we were the two teams across the government who really the sole responsibility, and the sole focus was to find those individuals.

Dee: Can you describe the day-to-day environment on a team like that with such a heavy mission?

Kevin: So the arrival to that team was really special, just the level of expertise on the analyst side that was immediately apparent and it was so clear to be able to see the collaboration and the closeness that they were, how they worked as a team. We were a small team. It was a single digit. You could count the number of teammates on on just over one hand. And it was made up of some senior analysts, analysts who were experts on Al Qaeda, experts on Bin Laden, and targeting officers. And so joining that very small team, it was very clear that how collaborative they were and how welcoming they were. If we go back in time and think about the hunt for Bin Laden, I like to describe it as as really a marathon. And on that long marathon, you have many runners, many officers and analysts who were running various mile markers along that path. You know, the the critical year ending 2001 at Tora Bora, when Bin Laden is able to escape and kind of slip out of our grasps, despite amazing efforts by personnel here and elsewhere. And then the trail goes cold from late 2001 for many, many years. So how does one create leads? And how does one approach this target? This very difficult challenge of finding the the world's most wanted man.

If Bin Laden's communicating to the public, which we knew he was, through media statements, video, or audio. If he's communicating, which we knew he was to Al Qaeda senior leadership, how was he communicating? And he wasn't doing it via electronic means. He wasn't sending emails and likely didn't have a phone. He was using couriers. And so kind of exploiting that. Looking at those who were assessed to be with Bin Laden, his wives, his children and really focusing on family. And, uh, if you could locate a family member, maybe that family member knew of or was with Bin Laden. Al Qaeda as an organization, as a network were being still led by Bin Laden and those communications, those actions, and the intent really of the Al Qaeda senior leadership all factored into what we thought would be exploitable leads to Bin Laden's location and also putting pressure on Al Qaeda's senior leadership as well, right, really seizing momentum and putting pressure, disrupting them and then therefore, disrupting that network of support for Bin Laden. When a media release came out, I remember very well, you know, we were happy because it was a proof of life, and we looked at those.

We had these analysts on our team. They were subject matter experts, walking, talking Bin Laden experts. The close communication collaboration with us as targeting officers created a great deal of synergy together. You've got this information, how are you gonna develop leads? What impact are you gonna be making? And and that's really was was part of my role and our, my fellow targeters, and how we tackled that.

Walter: When was the first indication that it was no longer cold, that you guys were back on the case and had found a thread?

Kevin: You know, after Tora Bora, through some key detainee reporting and information, some assessments were made that an individual by the name of Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti, "The Kuwaiti," was an important courier, could be still an important courier to Al Qaeda senior leadership and potentially, hopefully Bin Laden. And so, um, there were periods of time through various detainee reporting that key pieces of information or misinformation, disinformation, were put out by detainees. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed did acknowledge that Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti was a courier, was trusted. And so that was a data point. We had other data points from other detainees that he was a courier for Bin Laden himself. We had data points that he was, uh, retired, and out of the game. We had data points that, uh, from key

detainees that said they never heard of the individual, they never knew an individual by that name, and actually provided a fake name to not throw any attention to Abu Ahmed Al Kuwaiti.

Walter: Throw you guys off the scent, essentially.

Kevin: Exactly. And over time, the the key goal was to get the true name of that individual. And so with the true name of that individual, more targeted collection and and operations could be focused on that. So, really, up until the time from between to Tora Bora and late 2001 and the discovery of the true name of Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti. That was very much a watershed moment.

Dee: So at that point, you have true name in hand, what's going on in the team? What's the next step in the process here?

Kevin: So once the targeters were able to obtain the true name of Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti, they then focused on collection on that individual and how he would communicate and and wanting to locate him, of course. So some key first questions for them were, is he still alive? And if he's still alive, is he still active with the Al Qaeda network? And if he's still active with them, do you still perform a courier role? So this was a slow and steady strain. "Steady strain" is a Navy term where, you know we are taking a steady strain on this target and and factoring in everything that we can to create leads. And so once that name was found, there was a lot of leads generated for sure, and again, a key key trait of a targeting officer is knowing that you have these incredible resources at your disposal. And so a lot of those capabilities were put into motion um, by the team outside of CTC to direct it towards Abu Ahmed and find his location, and track his pattern of life, and hopefully track back to where he was living, and then prosecute that.

Walter: CTC being the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, where all these efforts are being run out of. Do you remember how it felt when the true name was discovered? Did the feeling in the air change the morale in the team maybe or the tempo of work? How did you feel?

Kevin: For me it was really when they started, uh, locating him. Obviously every one of us kind of had our eyes opened and our interest peaked incredibly.

Dee: Was there a moment for you or the team as a whole, as you're getting closer to Bin Laden, when when there's actual optimism that you are, you're on the right path and you're you're going to find the target?

Kevin: So finding the true name, being able to find out where the individual is located, and then tracking him, ultimately led with other leads to Abbottabad compound one.

So once Abbottabad compound, we called it AC one, was discovered, that was a such a tangible moment for the targeting officers, just great success in in accomplishing that. It really became an all hands on deck approach from the team. We still had our operations, and were generating leads and and working on. But whenever we needed to give assistance to that, we would. As the targeters needed to expand out the subject matter experts and different capabilities, other people were approached particularly the Directorate of Science and Technology but also out of the building to different agencies and organizations that had special capabilities, um, special resources to put towards this compound, and figuring out who was living there. So they had discovered that not only Abu Ahmed and his family were living there, but his brother and his family were living there. But additionally, a third family was living at the compound, and this third family didn't seem to have that direct close interaction, like a large collective family and uh, seem to have a pattern of movement, mainly inside the main structure and on the third floor. Assessing

then, you know, were the people that were being observed could they be family members and what family members might be with Bin Laden.

Dee: Just from a personal standpoint, what you went through - 9/11, your Commission, you start to the CIA. You, full circle, come to this Bin Laden moment. What's going through your head? I'm assuming, they're optimistically thinking that this could be the moment that you're gonna be finding the the main target and the angst for years past for you?

Kevin: Yes, um, though I'll say that I'm thankful. Maybe I have this way of compartmentalizing those experiences. It was very important to me, um, when I came on to the team that I reflected just professionalism and I was maybe aware, maybe overly aware, that I need to be that consummate professional and not emotional. And, uh, everyone close to me and on board the team knew of my history. It's not something I talked about. It's not something that I wore on my sleeve. And so I was really aware of that. And my focus was just to be an add, a value add to every single step along the way. So there was no jubilation. There was no celebration at any point in time. It was almost like you just roll up your sleeves and just like everybody else, we're professionals. And we're gonna prosecute this, uh, without emotion, um, because it's such an important target. It was such a high priority target. There wasn't room for an ounce of any of that.

Dee: And so that personal feeling aside and the ability to compartmentalize that, as a CIA officer now, you're in this moment where this as a potential "a hah" moment for you - finding the the main target that you've been working on. What was that moment like?

Kevin: I think then, the next key moment, of course, is the discovery and observation of "The Pacer." And so this individual who resided in the compound walking in the garden grounds, um, on a regular, semi regular basis and, um, taking strolls and and quickly name nicknamed "The Pacer." So much effort both inside the team and then external to the team with all those capabilities and resources that I was talking about, um, get put to bear. A lot of pressure from above on on coming up with solutions and creative ideas on how to identify "The Pacer." But really we ran in to challenges that were just insurmountable because of the physical nature of the compound, um, the nature of where it was located, how it was built, the perimeter walls, the operational security that that family at least showed by not leaving the compound. "The Pacer," um, showing himself only under the cover of some kind of shaded trees, and, you know, not really within a field of view. All these problems surmount, um, became very frustrating, I know, for not just the team, but for all levels of leadership inside the Agency, and then outside when it was ultimately briefed to the White House. That was a period of of great stress. It was a period of, again though, professionalism coming up with brainstorming ideas and creative approaches to how to get more information on this is was our job and just so many people being involved with that, again in a highly compartmentalized way. Um, we would laugh sometimes the you'd be talking to somebody outside of our particular office about a capability that they had and to leverage and exploit that. And they may not know why they were being tasked to develop something or tasked to bring something forward that was gonna be vital in that effort and then eventually sort of maybe growing a little in terms of, you know who was more read into the lead. And certainly it was all hands on deck then, not just amongst the team, but across the entire intelligence community. I don't think any single resource or capability at at the government level was, um, not put to bear to try to find out the identity of "The Pacer."

Walter: Were you and your team briefing CIA leadership, US leadership almost constantly, daily, weekly?

Kevin: The the key experts within CTC and the management leadership there, um were constantly briefing and keeping people informed both inside the Agency headquarters and outside. Again that level

and of expertise and continuity, those people were also every bit, um, experts on Bin Laden and experts on the Al Qaeda network and also experts with years and years and years of collective experience on utilizing, you know, special technologies and programs to solve this exact type of problem. We couldn't ultimately get a positive ID of "The Pacer" so that became the biggest challenge for sure.

Walter: You're not able to get confirmation on the identity of "The Pacer."

Kevin: Correct.

Walter: What happens next?

Kevin: Well and again, it wasn't for a lack of trying, and and I think importantly um, both for this effort, and then even though even leading up to the the courier lead, you know it really no point did anybody, uh, inside the Agency or outside the Agency ever have to tell those individuals on the HVT one team to work harder or to do more. That never needed to be said. I never heard it once, um, there was such a drive and such motivation on that team. You know, that team was made up of self-starters and experts. With that said, we could not identify "The Pacer." There were amazing ideas put forward. There were assessments made on his height to try to correlate that to known assessed height of Bin Laden. Um, we used shadows to do that. Um, we looked at things like um, trying to get the trash, but they would burn trash. We looked at even the media. Um, going back to if if this pacer is Bin Laden, and he is making media from Abbottabad compound, is there a way that we could detect on the receiving end of that media if it was made at Abbottabad compound. So we undertook a lot of maybe novel technologies and capabilities looking at those really closely during this time to see if that was something that we wanted to pursue and ultimately decided that from a feasibility aspect, it wouldn't be worth doing, and also from a timing aspect, not knowing if the time was there to wait for another public statement to come out. Um so that was shelved. So really, we couldn't identify family member there. We couldn't identify media statements coming from there. All we had was, uh, the visual observation of "The Pacer," and the assessment, and the analytical work done on who was living at the compound. The fact that Abu Ahmed was there, um, something nefarious was very likely going on, but again, did that in any way prove it was Bin Laden? No. Many, many people talk about the percent confidence, and how high of a confidence factor did anybody have, uh, if that "Pacer" was Bin Laden that was undertaken on the team level all the way up to the President of the United States, for sure. But it wasn't something that the team, I can tell you, spent much time dwelling on or arguing about. Um, our job was to create inroads to get that identity for everyone. It was gonna be a circumstantial case, regardless, until we could prove the identity of "The Pacer."

I will say that the targeting officer possessed and vocalized of an extremely high confidence that it was Bin Laden. And, that was born out of that individual's expertise on Bin Laden, expertise on the Al Qaeda network, expertise on developing that Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti lead, expertise on every centimeter of that compound and the pattern of life and pattern of movement, and so that to me personally carried a lot of weight. I saw that courage of conviction with that individual's confidence really carry the day in key moments all along the process, the long, kind of steady strain of developing Abbottabad compound as a lead over the course of months. So I I definitely think that that was critical to the success of the operation, critical to the synergy of the operation from beginning to end. There were a lot of factors that increase the confidence in one's mind. I think when, not just from a team level, but from all the way up in the leadership, the detainee statements, as I mentioned, his pattern of life and the kind of security precautions that he would take with his communications, definitely, um, were suspect. We did have increased confidence that he was still part of the Al Qaeda affiliated network. It wasn't explicit, but it was enough to peak some very, very strong suspicions. The building characteristics again going back to Abbottabad

compound and especially the the presence of that third floor with a patio that was covered and a patio that we had a ha high wall on it. That third floor and the third family existence really lent to higher levels of confidence that this was an individual that would potentially be Al Qaeda senior leader. Also could have been other nefarious leaders' criminal activity, scientific activity, all of those. But based on the totality of that circumstantial case, that's where one's individual percent factor came in. For me, it was always a preponderance of the evidence, personally, not something that I really voiced too much or vocalized, but.

Walter: Is planning for military courses of action also being undertaken in tandem during those months?

Kevin: Yes. So, very distinctly, when the team, the broader team, was aware of different courses of actions and they were called COAs were being formulated, that was exciting because it didn't stop any of the efforts to try to identify uh, "The Pacer" and try to, um also you know, pursue other leads against the compound and against the occupants. So all those were going on in tandem. But when the the courses of action started being formed, when the compartmentalization was broadened to bring in various aspects of the military for that planning, it was exciting. It was exciting to me personally as a burn survivor of the Pentagon attack, that something tangible is forming. And it was, um, there were very heady times in terms of getting that feedback. We would often as a team, hear from our management, our leaders within the CounterTerrorism Center, the feedback from these various meetings, whether they were with the director or down at the White House, in terms of how the the planning and thinking was going on the operation. And so when those Courses Of Action were formed, we were excited. When you looked at the Courses Of Action, there were three or four, and really only one made the most sense to us, or at least to me personally, because I had such a vested interest in knowing if any action was taken that it was Bin Laden or not. And that was the first COA. The first COA was, uh, a raid conducted by Navy SEALs. The second COA was a bomb strike utilizing a B-2 bomber and basically obliterating the compound and all the occupants there. A third COA was using a drone strike with maybe a smaller munition. Um, and the fourth COA was a flavor of a joint operation with the Pakistanis. I was a huge fan of the the raid option. I know at JSOC's disposal they had incredible operators who were doing those types of missions during the entire, uh, war on terror. When I think back to my story and my experiences, there's a definite arc and there's a definite Navy arc to this story. So once we became aware of the COAs that were formed and that the Navy was probably gonna take a role in that raid, I found that incredibly satisfying. Again, I felt it was yet another Navy thread to this storyline arc. I felt like I always had brought a a bit of personal karma, Navy karma to this. And when I first heard that the Navy SEALs were gonna be involved in that COA, I took a great deal of satisfaction knowing that, if that was selected how meaningful that would be to me, um, based on my experiences on 9/11. There were also many, many other layers of planning for the operation and that included actions and plans if we were successful in either capturing or killing Bin Laden. I took specific note when, um, a planning effort came together on what to do with Bin Laden's body if indeed he was killed in a raid. And one day finding out that the planning included burying Bin Laden at sea on board an US Navy aircraft carrier again to me was, um, further a Navy thread, uh, to this story and and something that I didn't dwell on, I didn't focus too much on, but it was definitely satisfying to know that during that planning phase there were some key Navy elements coming together.

(music begins)

Walter: This is where we will have to pause this conversation.

Dee: Join us on part 3, where Kevin will share what it was like being on the team that was responsible for finding Usama Bin Laden, and how Kevin's remarkable journey came full circle.

Walter: Until next time...

Dee: We'll be seeing you.

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