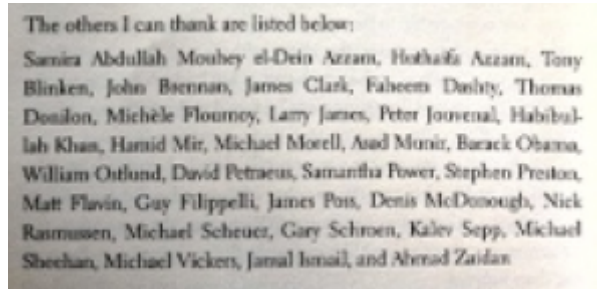


# BARACK OBAMA (AND THE THREE MUSKETEERS OF SELECTIVE LEAKING) SAYS BARACK OBAMA WANTED AN OBL TRIAL

The AP made some news yesterday with this



The others I can thank are listed below:  
Samira Abdullah Moubey el-Dein Azzam, Hothaifa Azzam, Tony Blinken, John Brennan, James Clark, Fabeem Daulty, Thomas Donilon, Michèle Flournoy, Larry James, Peter Jovenal, Habibullah Khan, Hamid Mir, Michael Morell, Asad Murit, Barack Obama, William Orlund, David Petraeus, Samantha Power, Stephen Preston, Matt Flavin, Guy Filippelli, James Potts, Denis McDonough, Nick Rasmussen, Michael Scheuer, Gary Schroen, Kaley Sepp, Michael Sheehan, Michael Vickers, Jamal Ihsail, and Ahmad Zaidan

Barack Obama quote from Mark Bowden's new book, *The Finish*.

Frankly, my belief was if we had captured him, that I would be in a pretty strong position, politically, here, to argue that displaying due process and rule of law would be our best weapon against al-Qaida, in preventing him from appearing as a martyr.

It's a quote repeated and expanded in this exclusive piece from *Vanity Fair*, which will have an excerpt of the book in its next edition.

Now, both of these excerpts make it clear: This is a direct quote of an Obama claim, made after the fact. But if that didn't already make you suspect the political efficacy of telling this story just weeks before the election, check out Bowden's acknowledgements, above.

Not only does Bowden thank the Three Musketeers of Obama's selective leaking, John Brennan, Tom Donilon, and Denis McDonough.

But it also thanks Obama personally.

(It also thanks CIA Director David Petraeus, a

man who never met press coverage he didn't like.)

Look, I'd love to imagine that Obama would have made the political effort to give Osama bin Laden a trial had he been captured alive. I've even rationalized how much easier that would be, given that we presumably would avoid the whole torture phase that has made trying Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

There are both political and legal reasons why it serves Obama's interests to say he considered the possibilities of a live capture followed by a trial. And given how closely Bowden worked with those trying to make the most of Obama's OBL killing, I don't see any reason to treat the claim as credible.

And this book—with Obama's top aides identified as sources so clearly—is yet another reason why I think Mark Bissonnette won't experience any legal troubles for publishing a book covering the same topic.