



COCK & BULL

GOTCHA!

A team of highly-trained seals has killed Osama bin Laden, the world's most infamous terrorist.

At last. Why'd it take so long?

He was hiding.

In a cave?

No, in a three-storey house in Abbottabad, Pakistan, with the wife and kids. Well, three of his wives and just a handful of his children, actually. And a cow. They moved in around 2005.

I bet they made a killing in the housing market...

Hilarious.

So, is Abbottabad some kind of tribal no-go zone?

Not really. It's just 80 miles north of Islamabad, on the Karakorum Highway, which the Guardian rates as Pakistan's third-best tourist destination. Plane trees line the town's broad streets, mountains reach up on all sides and the weather is pleasant all year round.

Sounds lovely.

The army certainly thinks so. The town started life as a military garrison under British rule and is now home to the country's prestigious military academy, Kakul. Former president Pervez Musharraf graduated from there, as did most of the current senior officers in the Pakistani army.

Really?

Yup. Bin Laden was living half-a-mile from the Pakistani equivalent of Sandhurst for five years.

Did the top brass know?

That's the billion-dollar question – or not. It seems like a no-brainer that the army or intelligence services knew where he was, but the Pakistanis are pleading incompetence rather than malfeasance.

Have they no shame?

To the contrary – they're all terribly embarrassed and ashamed that their tireless manhunt didn't produce better results.

I'm sure. How did the hit go down?

A team of 20 Navy SEALs flew in from Afghanistan during the dead of night, stormed the compound, killed bin Laden and then flew off to dump his body in the sea.

Hurrah!

Not everyone is so triumphant. Pakistan's political parties were wholly unimpressed. They claimed the raid was a breach of sovereignty and that the "burial" at sea was an offence to Islam and a breach of human rights.

Boo hoo.

That seems to be President Obama's line. He said in an interview on 60 Minutes that bin Laden got what he deserved and that anyone who disagrees "needs their head examined".

Is he starting to sound like Bush?

You might think so, but reporters have shown a greater tendency to confuse him with Osama. Fox News announced that "President Obama is dead", for example, while several other news outlets made similar gaffes, including the BBC and CNN.

Journalists, huh?

I blame the fog of war.

What does it all mean for the War on Terror?

Back to drone attacks, probably. Sure, you might bomb the odd wedding by mistake, but the paperwork is a lot lighter and dead civilians are somehow less disturbing from 60,000 feet.

Will bin Laden's lot retaliate?

Some analysts claim Al Qaeda's message is on the wain, not least because of the group's indiscriminate tactics, which invariably kill Muslims as well as infidels. Bin Laden's death will not change much organisationally for the group, but the loss of such an important symbolic figure could make it harder to spread the message.

What is the message?

That America is the Great Satan, basically, and that it's hell-bent on exterminating Islam. The answer to which, evidently, is to exterminate America and its Christian-Zionist allies before they complete their dastardly project.

They sound like bog-standard internet loons.

Except that they have rocket launchers and, instead of moping around playing Portal 2, are moping around making grainy videos of themselves.

Speaking of which, is there a video of the raid?

Most people seem to want to see a photo of bin Laden with a bullet in his head, but there is very likely a video of the whole thing as well. Even traffic wardens have cameras on their hats these days, so it's a sure thing elite Navy SEALs do too.

I look forward to its cinematic release.

It's a real riches-to-rags story, apparently.

