

CIA releases more files from bin Laden raid

WASHINGTON (AP) — Never-before-seen video of Osama bin Laden's son and potential successor was released Wednesday by the CIA in a trove of material recovered during the May 2011 raid that killed the al-Qaida leader at his compound in Pakistan.

The video offers the first public look at Hamza bin Laden as an adult. Until now, the public has only seen childhood pictures of him.

In recent years, al-Qaida has released audio messages from Hamza bin Laden. And to mark a recent anniversary of 9/11, al-Qaida superimposed a childhood photo of him over a photo of the World Trade Center. He is expected to rise to prominence in the jihadist movement and is being closely watched as the rival Islamic State organization suffers setbacks in the Middle East.

One hourlong video shows



In this image from video released by the CIA, Hamza bin Laden is seen as an adult at his wedding.

Hamza bin Laden, sporting a trimmed mustache but no beard, at his wedding. He is sitting on a carpet with other men. A man chanting Quranic verses can be heard in the background. Sporting a traditional white headdress, he verbally accepts his marriage to his bride "on the book of God and the example of the prophet. Peace be upon him."

"Takbeer!" the others shout, marking his marriage with a kind of religious hooray.

It was the fourth trove of documents, images and computer files recovered during the raid of bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Earlier materials were released in May 2015, March 2016 and in January of this year.

The CIA said the nearly 470,000 additional files offer insights into the inner workings of the terrorist organization responsible for 9/11 and detail its clashes with the Islamic State group, a spin-off of al-Qaida's operation in Iraq. They also shed light on hardships that al-Qaida faced at the time of bin Laden's death.

Included is a 228-page, handwritten personal journal of bin Laden and about 79,000 images and audio files, including practice reels of public speeches. Also released were home videos and more than 10,000 video files.

INSURANCE: Free help available to assist in the sign-up process

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That may be particularly true this year. Changes by the Trump administration, including a decision to end government payments to insurance companies to cover the cost of people who struggle to afford their co-payments and deductibles, have caused the insurance marketplace to behave differently than usual. Some "silver" plans will be more expensive than some "gold" plans with better coverage, for example.

Anyone shopping for insurance on the exchanges or seeking help to do so should be ready to provide information about their income, and should bring a list of any doctors that they want to continue seeing. Shoppers can enter

providers into healthcare.gov to narrow down their plan options to ones that include those providers in their network.

For those who want help navigating the system, a list of licensed health insurance agents in the area can be found online at oregonhealthcare.gov/gethelp. The website also lists community partners who will assist in the sign-up process for free, including Good Shepherd Medical Center, St. Anthony Hospital and Umatilla County Human Services offices in Hermiston, Pendleton and Milton-Freewater. Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace staff can also answer questions by phone toll free at 1-855-268-3767.

Repeated attempts by Republicans in Congress

to repeal the Affordable Care Act, as well as sharp cuts to advertising and "navigators" helping people enroll, have caused some confusion for consumers about whether they can still sign up for health insurance. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) said in a statement that it was "disappointing that people out there are sowing confusion and trying to dissuade fellow Americans from getting health coverage."

"It's critical that everyone in our communities knows that this is the window to sign up through the ACA marketplace," he said. "With the financial assistance available through the exchange, many Americans will be able to find affordable, quality coverage."

BILL: Will allow logging trees more than 21 inches in diameter

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The bill also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to create a pilot program for resolving lawsuits against forest management projects through arbitration, as opposed to going to court. Plaintiffs would not be able to recover their attorney fees in such cases under the Equal Access to Justice Act.

Finally in Eastern Oregon, the bill lifts the prohibition on logging trees more than 21 inches in diameter, a rule that county officials argue "has no basis in science."

Opponents of the Resilient Federal Forests Act criticize the bill as a way to maximize the interests of logging companies while severely undermining environmental

review laws. Andy Kerr, former conservation director for Oregon Wild, has written the bill would essentially gut the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act and Equal Access to Justice Act to advance the interests of logging.

Walden said the proposal now heads to the Senate with a strong bipartisan vote out of the House. Unlike the previous four years, he said the administration in Washington, D.C. seems more receptive to advancing the bill to the President's desk.

"I think we have a good opportunity this time," he said. "This time, we're not fighting the head winds of an administration that wasn't supportive. That changes the dynamics."

HOUFMUSE: Claims Cragun's death was accidental

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nian is declining to identify the officer because it can't substantiate them.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said he had not been made aware of the letters until last week, and neither the defense nor the prosecution informed him of the letters or their contents.

"I find it interesting that (Houfmuse is) reaching out to the judge, but I've seen that a number of times in my career," Edmiston said. "People facing charges have no problem throwing mud at a wall and seeing if it sticks."

Edmiston said he takes accusations against his staff members seriously, but that he was not in a position to disclose exactly what he'd do with the information from the letter other than he would follow up.

In the second letter, Houfmuse writes in the third-person to give an account of the night Cragun died and the events he says led up to it. He states he is not responsible for Cragun's death, which he claims was accidental.

Hermiston police officer Victor Gutierrez wrote the application and affidavit to collect Houfmuse's DNA after the shooting. In the document, Gutierrez asserted Houfmuse's statements to police about what happened "appear to be untruthful as they are inconsistent with the physical evidence and the trajectories of the bullets as they passed through Cragun's body and clothing."

In the document, Gutierrez also describes interviews he and other officers conducted with Houfmuse and witnesses of the shooting. In the interview, Houfmuse states that Cragun came toward him with a gun in his hand, and that the gun went off as they fought over it. The others interviewed say they do not remember Cragun having a gun in his hand.

Houfmuse's court-appointed attorney, Kara Davis, said she was aware of the letters. She said similar documents may have been public in other cases, but they have only been available online since last summer when the county switched to a new

e-courts computer system. Before that, she said, people had to go to the courthouse to look at a case file.

Davis said she didn't think the letters would have much of an impact on the case.

"It's too early to tell if the letters will have an effect or not," she said. "A lot of it was, frankly, irrelevant."

Deputy District Attorney Jaclyn Jenkins said the district attorney's office did not bring the letters to the attention of the Hermiston Police Department because they felt no need to do so.

"There's no truth to it, and (the claim) has been made by an individual who's been indicted for murder," said Jenkins. "If we had a complaint from a defendant that did cause concern, we'd talk to the agency. But there's no truth in this case."

Temple, to whom the letters were addressed, said she had read at least one of the letters, but could not comment on a pending case.

Roy Blaine, trial court administrator for the local circuit courts, said typically a judge makes a decision of what goes into the case file, but in this case, court staff made the decision.

Houfmuse has twice before been arrested for violent disputes in the area. In 2014, he was involved in a shooting outside a nightclub in Kennewick, which left another man paralyzed. He was arrested in Hermiston, but in 2015 a jury decided he acted in self-defense.

In 2005, Houfmuse allegedly fired shots into a moving vehicle with three people in it, and was charged with attempted murder. He pleaded not guilty. No one was injured in the incident and the attempted murder charge was dismissed, but Houfmuse was charged with menacing, assault in the third degree, unlawful use of a weapon against another, criminal mischief and unlawful possession of a firearm.

He also has an attempted murder charge from 2000 that was dismissed.

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