

# Once again, on the filthiness of the makers of *Zero Dark Thirty*

David Walsh  
7 June 2013

We have written extensively on the WSWS, as recently as one month ago, about *Zero Dark Thirty* and the politically depraved conduct of its creators, director Kathryn Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal. The pair collaborated with the CIA and the US military at various stages in the process of making their film—a potted version of the search for Osama bin Laden, which presents torture as an unfortunate but necessary element of the “war on terror.”

Boal and Bigelow, the former in particular, met with various officials in the CIA and Defense Department and, we learned in May, allowed their script to be vetted and changed by intelligence officials. *Zero Dark Thirty* was conceived of as a paean to the “hard work” of the US military and CIA, and treated as such by their respective officials.

The ludicrous claim by defenders of the indefensible film that, taken as a whole, *Zero Dark Thirty* is intended to be “anti-war” and “anti-torture” has been dealt another blow by the revelation that Boal attended a 2011 CIA awards ceremony!

A draft report by the US Department of Defense’s Office of Inspector General, leaked to the media this week, reveals this along with other illuminating facts:

Bigelow and Boal got in touch with Defense Department officials the day after the execution of bin Laden to obtain information and solicit the assistance of the Pentagon in a film they were already making on the subject. They explained, according to the report, “that after the UBL [bin Laden] take-down, they decided to scrap their original project and create a more drawn-out script examining the hunt that lasted about a decade and ended with UBL’s killing. The Hollywood executives [sic] sought additional information from the Department about the UBL raid.”

In other words, from the outset of the newly planned

film, Bigelow and Boal were firmly in the pocket of and dependent on the US military.

Throughout May, June, and July 2011 Boal (in particular) communicated with and met personally with various intelligence and military officials. On June 15, a member of the White House National Security Staff emailed Boal, “I want to take you to the White House” and “we’ll have to do this during the June 27 time slot, I’ll set it up.”

On June 22, 2011, the internal Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs communications disclosed a meeting between the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Douglas Wilson, and the White House Deputy Press Secretary. According to the Inspector General’s report, “The communications noted, ‘We’ve got the green light to proceed’ and ‘the White House does want to engage with Mark [Boal] but it probably won’t be for a few more weeks.’” Wilson told the Inspector General’s office that “he communicated with the White House to request guidance on dealing with Mr. Boal and Ms. Bigelow.”

Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers, a former CIA operative who was heavily involved in the arming of Islamist forces in Afghanistan in the mid-1980s during the effort to destabilize the USSR, was one of those who met with Bigelow and Boal. On July 16, 2011, he emailed Wilson: “Had a very good meeting with Mark Boal and Kathryn Bigelow last night re: UB: movie. They came away very happy.”

The CIA award ceremony that Boal attended took place on June 24, 2011 at the agency’s headquarters to honor those who had taken part in the bin Laden raid. The Director of the CIA’s Chief of Staff told the Inspector General’s office that the event was attended

by “a huge enormous crowd, I mean they built a tent and it was not a sensitive, I would say it was not a highly sensitive event. It was pretty much a cattle call for a lot of folks and for around the community [sic] and obviously not open to the public per se.”

During the ceremony, then CIA Director Leon Panetta recognized the unit that conducted the killing of bin Laden and identified the ground commander by name, a piece of classified information.

Certain Republicans in Congress are making a fuss about the fact that Boal was in attendance and thus became privy to the commander’s identity.

They have nothing to fear. Bigelow and Boal have proven themselves to be devoted servants of the American military-intelligence apparatus. The CIA’s secrets are safe with these wretched people, the inventors of a new genre, the pro-torture “art film.”

Boal fit right in at the CIA ceremony apparently, hobnobbing with assassins and torturers. How many crimes, how many deaths, how much popular misery would those in attendance have been responsible for? It’s very difficult to calculate. We are fairly certain that was not a question Boal asked himself.



To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**