

AS BUSH DID WITH JUDY MILLER, OBAMA INSTA-DECLASSIFIES FOR DAVID IGNATIUS

One more point about the David Ignatius wankfest today.

In his story pitching OBL as a still-ambitious terrorist rather than an out-of-touch idiot, David Ignatius claimed the documents he based his article on had already been declassified.

The scheme is described in one of the documents taken from bin Laden's compound by U.S. forces on May 2, the night he was killed. I was given an exclusive look at some of these remarkable documents by a senior administration official. They have been declassified and will be available soon to the public in their original Arabic texts and translations. [my emphasis]

But National Security Council spokesperson Tommy Vietor says that's not yet the case.

A White House spokesman confirmed that the documents found in the raid are in a declassification process that is "still ongoing," and National Security Council spokesperson Tommy Vietor said it "would likely be a few months before they're fully available" to the media and public. (The CIA had no comment.) [my emphasis]

Either these documents are declassified, in which case the White House should be handing them out to anyone who asks, or they're not yet declassified, in which case, someone should be prosecuted for handing them to Ignatius.

The most likely explanation, however, is that

the Administration is playing the same game the Bush Administration played with Judy Miller, sharing still-classified documents with a reporter who will spin things in a favorable light, so as to pre-empt any response a more open assessment of the documents will have. That the Obama Administration is doing it to support his reelection and not an illegal war doesn't make the ploy any less cynical.