

MCCLATCHY DEBUNKS THE LATEST LIBYAN LEFT BEHIND NOVEL

McClatchy has done the long overdue work of



debunking the entirety of the 60 Minutes piece on Benghazi.

Much of their line-by-line debunking serves to point out that 60 Minutes' repeated claims that "al Qaeda" was responsible for the attack is not based in any known evidence (and in at least one case conflicts with what a Benghazi investigator had to say).

But I'm particularly interested in McClatchy's debunking of CBS' claim to have found a page from Chris Stevens' itinerary on an October visit to the compound.

But the compound owner, Jamal el Bishari, told McClatchy on Wednesday that he began clearing debris in April from the compound's four buildings and is still renovating the site. McClatchy visited the site in June and saw a pile of debris sitting outside the compound walls, but no documents were discernible among the broken concrete, clothing, furniture and soot.

Bishari said it is unlikely such a document could have been discovered recently.

"It is impossible to find a document now," he told McClatchy.

In "60 Minutes Overtime", an addendum to the piece that was available online and outlined how CBS spent a year reporting the story, the piece's producer, Max McClellan, explained how the program obtained the schedule.

"The person who shot this footage has a lot of experience in Libya and through his network of contacts on the ground in Benghazi, he was able to access the compound. It was closed, guarded, but through relatives of people he had gotten to know over the years, he was able to get in and take these pictures for us," McClellan said. "We did not expect that we would find the U.S. compound in the state that we found it. There was still debris and ammunition boxes and a whiteboard that had the day's assignment for the security personnel at the compound as of September 11, 2012."

El Bishari said that he could not remember when he removed the remnants of the attack as part of the renovation, but what McClatchy's June visit showed was that little debris remained inside the compound then. A local journalist who visited the site in September on assignment for Fox News told McClatchy Tuesday that any documents that remained at the site then would have been inconsequential. He returned to the site Tuesday at McClatchy's request and took photos, which showed that the debris piles evident in June had been removed.

CBS spokesman Tedesco declined to respond to a specific question of "whether it was a CBS News employee or someone else who went to the site" or "when and how exactly he/she found the document?" [my emphasis]

This evidence suggests the video 60 Minutes

claimed had been taken in October were taken at some other time. From the description of McClatchy's visit in June, it sounds like the images were taken even before June.

And all that addresses just the debris shown, not the paper that purportedly survived a fire and lay untouched for over a year.

But the underlying question is why? Why present a piece of paper as some kind of talisman? And where did they really come from, and why?