

Deconstructing Deceit: 9/11, the Media, and Myth Information

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*They say goldfish have no memory
I guess their lives are much like mine
and the little plastic castle
is a surprise every time
and it's hard to say if they're happy
but they don't seem much to mind.*
—Ani DiFranco, *Little Plastic Castles*

For the past eight years, American culture has seen an outburst of media-driven mythmaking. Corporate mainstream media organizations, the pundits they sponsor, and politicians from both major parties have formed a new contextual chorus singing the same refrain: “On September 11th, 2001, everything changed.” From cable TV to AM radio, from the blogosphere to the town-hall meeting, Americans repeatedly hear that “this is a post-9/11 world.”

Although there is some truth to this platitude of pivotal change, independently minded citizens may also wonder whether such mass media messages have become self-fulfilling prophecies. This provides an interesting point of debate about what has or has not changed in America since 9/11.

This chapter concerns itself with the ongoing phenomena of media mythmaking and how, like many Americans surmised just after 9/11, everything has not changed.¹ Corporate mainstream media have resurrected powerful myths from America’s past to shape public perception in the present. Through the prism of 9/11, one can see how the corporate mass media

are in fact doing more mythmaking than news reporting. Here, the authors will examine central historic American myths the corporate media and even much of the alternative independent media have extended into the post-9/11 era. This analysis looks at how media mythmaking surrounding the events of 9/11, exploiting the strong emotions these events aroused, has prevented a dispassionate inquiry of its causes or of those responsible.

Telling Only the Official Story: An Act of Censorship

Both the corporate and independent media have typically not approached the events of 9/11 with open inquiry. With very few exceptions, the corporate mainstream media and their independent alternatives have dismissed critical 9/11 questions as “conspiratorial” or “unpatriotic.” Even the left press, including *The Nation*, *In These Times*, *Mother Jones*, and *The Progressive*, among others, have repeatedly demonstrated resistance, even hostility, to full and free inquiry into the attacks. Perhaps some muckraking progressives have forgotten the words of one of their own icons, American anarchist and feminist Emma Goldman, who aptly remarked, “The most unpardonable sin in society is independence of thought.” Like their mainstream corporate counterparts, journalists in the independent press have often highlighted eccentric personalities and extreme statements rather than focus on the troubling evidence skeptics have brought forth. This practice institutionalizes acts of self-censorship based upon America’s historical mythology, which will be discussed later in this article.²

Traditional American mythology was used to exalt the official story of 9/11, a story that has become the *only* story. New York University historian Tony Judt recently lamented that today’s discourse centers almost exclusively on “official accounts as officially rendered and

received.”³ Nowhere is this truer than in the case of 9/11. The mainstream corporate media and even the progressive press have repeatedly endorsed the government-sponsored official story formalized in the *9/11 Commission Report*. This narrative tells us that nineteen Islamic extremists conspired and outwitted the best-defended country in the world. Because government agencies ignored the many pre-warnings, these terrorists were able to catch American defenders by surprise, hijack four airliners, and ram three of them into targets symbolic of American economic and military might.⁴

But is this the full and true story? Are there other narratives that square better with the evidence? Are significant details being ignored? These are not questions that the American news media have asked, or encouraged the public to ask. Resistance from the news media, both corporate and independent, has effectively prevented adequate reportage, fact-based discussions, and in-depth analyses of 9/11. This paradoxical suppression has made the full story of 9/11 a recurring concern in the publications of Project Censored.⁵

In fact, some pundits have actively attacked those who have challenged the official story of 9/11, as if they were blasphemers, and continue to rely upon strong religious overtones in defense of American mythology and government-endorsed interpretations of 9/11. MSNBC’s Tucker Carlson exemplified this tendency during an interview with 9/11 scholar and theologian Dr. David Ray Griffin. On the program, Carlson attacked the professor for challenging the official narrative of 9/11. As soon as Griffin claimed he rejected the government’s explanation for the events of 9/11, Carlson interrupted and attacked: “. . . it is wrong, blasphemous, and sinful for you to suggest, imply, or help other people come to the conclusion that the US government killed 3,000 of its own citizens because it didn’t.”⁶ In this case, as in many others,

the interviewer attacked even the prospect of discussion concerning alternative ideas about 9/11 before it began, thus framing the rest of the interview and reinforcing the official myths of 9/11.

Here we arrive at a crucial corollary: media mythmaking discourages pluralistic perspectives on reality, and thus involves a form of censorship.

A Culture Deeply Rooted in Its Myths

Myths which are believed in tend to become true. —George Orwell

Even before it became a country, America relied heavily on cultural mythology to provide a sense of meaning and purpose. This was evident in the belief, expressed by several early colonial leaders, that America and the New World were “virgin lands,” places free of the historical taints left behind in Europe. Early Puritan leader John Winthrop stated that America “shall be as a city on a hill,” to be looked upon and revered as the new Promised Land.⁷

As their needs changed, Americans told themselves new stories. To create a new republic, Americans needed defining beliefs in their own uniqueness bolstered by a sense of national mission. By the nineteenth century, this constellation of ideals came to dominate the minds of most Americans under the rubric of Manifest Destiny. This term, coined by nineteenth-century journalist and media mythmaker John O’Sullivan, assumed that America is both exceptional and triumphant in all endeavors; that America, divinely inspired, is destined to become the worldwide beacon for democracy; and that the new republic would act militarily only in defense of its national interests.⁸

Since intellectuals, politicians, journalists, pundits, and radio/TV/Internet personalities have long reinforced these mythic motifs, they have become part of America’s historical grand

narrative. However, there exist alternatives more grounded in the historical record that often contradict the official narratives.

The Aftermath of 9/11: A Frenzy of Media Mythmaking

In times of psychological trauma, societies tend to revert to their myths. After 9/11, many distraught Americans looked to their traditional mythology for personal meaning and national purpose; no one wanted to appear unpatriotic. Always attuned to popular moods and trends, politicians also framed subsequent events in familiar terms of traditional myths. In turn, the media, echoing powerful political forces, resurrected the myths of national purpose and loyalty, moral exceptionalism, and triumph over adversity, to make sense of recent events.

Leading the way for others in the media, *CBS News* anchor Dan Rather proclaimed, “I’m going to do my job as a journalist, but at the same time I will give them [the Bush administration] the benefit of the doubt, whenever possible in this kind of crisis, emergency situation. Not because I am concerned about any [public] backlash. I’m not. But because I want to be a patriotic American without apology.”⁹ Rather later regretted such a stance, but at the time, this reinforced the power of blind nationalism in a time of crisis. Most in the corporate press relinquished their role as watchdogs and became mere lapdogs to those in power.

President George W. Bush continued this trajectory of nationalist mythology after the 9/11 attacks by claiming that the world had changed and was now divided into binary forces of good and evil. People and nations around the globe had to choose a side. In this dualistic conception, “enemies” were not just abroad, or “over there” as in the two previous world wars, but were also domestic, possibly including American citizens.

Not long after 9/11, Bill Maher, ABC's host of *Politically Incorrect*, responded to a statement by President Bush claiming that the 9/11 terrorists were cowards. Maher quipped, "We have been the cowards. Lobbing cruise missiles from two thousand miles away. That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building. Say what you want about it. Not cowardly."¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, Maher lost his show at ABC. In response to Maher, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer warned that in a post-9/11 world, Americans needed to "watch what they say."¹¹

Such Neo-McCarthyism demonstrated the consequences of straying from the nationalist narrative.¹² Ironically, journalists should have been the ones leading a national policy debate after 9/11, promoting pluralistic viewpoints. But, like Dan Rather, many became stenographers for those in power, marginalizing and even demonizing "deviant" critical perspectives.

Resurrecting Traditional American Myths

Just days after 9/11, Bush revived the enshrined myths of the Wild West and frontier days to normalize the War on Terror. Bush resorted to false dilemmas such as "you are either with us or against us," and "this is a battle of good and evil," in addition to notions of vigilante justice, employing phrases like "Wanted: Dead or Alive" to express national security policies. Few in the media exposed the president's simplistic, emotionally charged, even macho posturing.

Bush's Wild West allusions further allowed the administration to substitute al Qaeda terrorists for previously demonized Native Americans, outlaws, and other stereotyped villains, including Osama bin Laden. But, bin Laden not only lacked any connection to Iraq, according to the FBI; he was not a suspect in the crimes of 9/11 due to lack of evidence. Still, a \$25 million reward for bin Laden in connection with 9/11 was offered by the Rewards for Justice Program,

administered by the US Department of State, a non-investigatory body. This contradicts the FBI's position on the matter.¹³

Furthermore, this mythical path of Wild West justice paved the way to later justifications for preemptive wars, torture, and seeing the Geneva Conventions as “quaint.”¹⁴ Again, the mainstream media did not question this mythically defined path; instead, they heralded it as necessary in a post-9/11 world.¹⁵ America hurtled headlong into an abstract War on Terror while watching a Western melodrama in the rear-view mirror.

Suppression, Distortion, and Denial Based on Collective Historical Amnesia

Another factor that has blocked discussion of the events of 9/11 is the denial that a supposedly democratically elected government could have played a role in the attacks. This denial has largely precluded analyses of the attacks beyond the official conspiracy theory pointing to government unawareness or incompetence exploited by nineteen al Qaeda jihadists. The “blowback” theory pointing to the resentments generated by decades of misguided US foreign policy remains inflammatory. This became apparent in the recent media-driven outrage over the “America has blood on its hands” remark, attributed to James Wright, former reverend of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, when interviewed on Bill Moyers's PBS program.¹⁶

Other interpretations of 9/11 events have rarely received fair and open treatment in the American press. Both of these alternative hypotheses suggest possible involvement by elements within the American government: letting the attacks happen on purpose to enable a war, or making the attacks happen on purpose to enable a war. A better knowledge of American history

might have helped both journalists and the public to consider these additional possibilities in a broader context. Looking to relevant history, one can see the 9/11 attacks in a pattern of contrived provocations.¹⁷

Historical Precedents for Unofficial Alternative Interpretations

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past. —George Orwell

Historical precedents can operate as counter narratives to national myths. When looked at inclusively, they can be a great teacher. Mainstream corporate media have largely excluded historical context of the type that might generate critical inquiry surrounding the tragic events of 9/11 and the War on Terror. The facts surrounding certain important historical events have virtually been written *out* of history. A walk down this “memory hole lane” can be an antidote to another kind of censorship, the sin of omission.

One may find stunning the following US foreign policy events, especially given that that they are historically and factually based. Given this pattern of provocations, pretexts, and false-flag operations, the alternative hypotheses about 9/11 fit the pattern of government deception, while the standard mythic narrative becomes the anomaly. While this does not prove anything outright about 9/11, it should at least pave the way for open inquiry by the media.¹⁸ Observe:

1846: The Mexican-American War: After annexing “The Lone Star Republic” of Texas, pushing the US border with Mexico southward, President James Polk turned his sights toward Mexico’s vast lands. These included California, which he had long wanted to “appropriate”. To invade Mexico, Polk needed a pretext, an incident enabling the US to invade a far weaker country and seize much of its land. For this purpose, he sent an army led by Gen. Zachary Taylor to build a

fort below the Rio Grande. This provocative incursion drew a predictable response: the Mexicans tried to repel the American incursion, killing or capturing soldiers. Although President Polk had initiated the provocation, he sent an indignant message to Congress demanding a declaration of war. In Congress, the war found ready supporters among Southerners fiercely dedicated to expanding slavery. The war itself was short, but the gains were huge. As a price for halting its drive southward, the US forced Mexico to sign over a vast area, including all of what is now New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, and part of Colorado. A pattern of provocation had begun.¹⁹

1898: The Spanish-American War began after an accidental explosion took place on the *USS Maine* as it was moored in the Havana Harbor. Though the Spanish attempted to avert war, major US news outlets, with the Hearst papers taking the lead, claimed that Spain had attacked a US warship despite a lack of evidence. Waving the bloody shirt, the “yellow” press popularized a well-known battle cry: “Remember the Maine and to Hell with Spain!” In the war that ensued, the US seized not only Cuba, but also the other Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines.²⁰

1915: At the outset of World War I, other “trigger incidents” occurred. Among the most well known was the sinking of the British luxury liner *Lusitania*, which also served as a pretext, this time for entry into WWI. Though the US government was aware that the liner would be secretly carrying munitions, it did little to alert the public. The stowaway munitions included shells and cartridges intended for English forces fighting the Germans. When a German U-boat sank the great liner, 1195 passengers and crew perished. As public outrage in response to the German

atrocities mounted, and as propaganda efforts intensified, President Woodrow Wilson brought the US into World War I.²¹

1941: The alleged sneak attack at Pearl Harbor is one of the most powerful mythic tales in US history, a cataclysmic event that has been used as propaganda to manipulate public opinion to this day. While Pearl Harbor was and has long since been billed as a sneak attack, evidence amassed by historian Robert Stinnett shows that the event was in fact provoked by the US government and allowed to happen in order to manipulate public opinion. America's mythical Day of Infamy, long enshrined in the American psyche, strongly reinforces the idea that America only attacks when attacked.

Pearl Harbor provides another example in a long line of deceptive events used to marshal public support for wars throughout American history.²² Utilizing the power of the Pearl Harbor myth, the neoconservative Project for a New American Century used this historical analogy in its *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, published in 2000. In it, they hypothesized what might be necessary to justify a radical shift in US foreign policy. The authors stated that a transformation in US policy promoting a projecting force would be difficult, as “ . . . the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”²³ The Bush administration, along with the corporate press, used the events of 9/11 to revive the myth that America doesn't strike first and fights only to promote liberty.²⁴

1964: The Gulf of Tonkin “Incident” sparked mass escalation of the Vietnam War. To ready a reluctant public for war, American planners executed several raids along the North Vietnamese

coast but became frustrated when American ships took no return fire. President Lyndon B. Johnson, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, and other top officials concluded that some flashpoint, some pretext would be needed to arouse public outrage. If there was no attack, then one must be contrived.²⁵

The “response” took the form of purported North Vietnamese torpedo-boat attacks on two US destroyers. In August 1964, the first of these ships was supposedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.²⁶ Two days later, the news media announced that the North Vietnamese had attacked a second American ship. Although the Pentagon insisted that its warships frightened off the attackers, officers on the destroyers later revealed that “our destroyers were just shooting at phantom targets—there were no PT boats there.”²⁷ Nevertheless, within days Congress passed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, based on events that did not happen, plunging the United States into a disastrous “police action” that lasted for a decade, killed over two million people, and disgraced the United States.²⁸

Observations

Those in the media reporting on relevant matters in the present should recount these historical examples. Instead, important events that counter official American mythologies are often ignored, a trend that was formalized in the early twentieth century.

The advent of World War I catapulted the new science of propaganda to the forefront of government operations. President Woodrow Wilson established the first official propaganda system, placing public relations wizard George Creel in charge of the Committee on Public Information. The role of the CPI was to selectively inform the public to a desired end. The program was a success. With the help of Edward Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud and an

early proponent of propaganda, the government developed new ways to persuade a pacifistic American public into “The War to End all Wars” and “The War to make the World Safe for Democracy.” In his 1928 classic, *Propaganda*, Bernays observed that “The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.”²⁹

As it analyzes the role of the media in popularizing myths in the public mind, this chapter will further deconstruct the denials and deceptions of the official narrative of 9/11.

Instant Mythmaking on 9/11

I. Immediate Construction of an Official Narrative

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. —John F. Kennedy

On September 11, 2001, government officials and media outlets began to construct an official account with unprecedented dispatch. Even before the attacks were over, the counterterrorism division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was telling National Security Advisor Richard Clarke it was al Qaeda operatives who had attacked the World Trade Center. This account was adapted and amplified in the days, weeks, and months following the attacks.³⁰ On the one hand, top officials were claiming that these were sneak attacks and that they were caught completely off guard. Yet by 11 a. m. on 9/11, the FBI had started releasing the names, nationalities, and photos of the nineteen suspected hijackers. Before the smoke and dust settled,

media mythmakers were ready to supply instant meaning, relying heavily on traditional mythology and popular history.

But if the federal establishment knew so little as to be taken completely by surprise, how could they so rapidly come up with an exact list of those responsible? Had federal agencies been keeping close watch on these al Qaeda operatives? Adding to the contradictions, the accuracy of this roster proved suspect. In the weeks immediately following the attacks, several news outlets, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), reported that individuals on the FBI's list were still alive.³¹ Those reports had to raise doubts about the validity of the official story, which may be one reason why they received scant media coverage in the US.

II. News Networks Lead 9/11 Mythmaking

History is the present. That's why every generation writes it anew. But what most people think of as history is its end product, myth. —E. L. Doctorow

If the rapidity of these initial identifications was amazing, the instant involvements of the news media were even more so. Just two hours after the Towers came down, Senator Orin Hatch (R-Utah) of the Senate Intelligence Committee implicated bin Laden in the events of 9/11, even though few facts pointed to his involvement then or later.³² Through media mythmaking, bin Laden became the ready-made, chief suspect of the 9/11 attacks. The FBI would later drop him from the Most Wanted list, citing lack of evidence.³³

But, if these were surprise attacks, then how, on the very day of the attacks, could the government and some corporate media outlets have known who was responsible? For example, CNN, at four o'clock in the afternoon on 9/11, blamed bin Laden "based on new and specific information developed since the attacks."³⁴ Corporate media and the federal government were

peering through the smoke of the day with amazing clarity, fashioning a larger-than-life villain, foreshadowing future policy, and perhaps generating a self-fulfilling prophesy in the ensuing War on Terror. President Bush wrote in his diary the night of the attacks, “The Pearl Harbor of the twenty-first century took place today. . . We think it’s Osama bin Laden.”³⁵

The received myth about the Twin Towers also had its genesis in the immediate aftermath. After the destruction of the Towers, FOX News cut to a “man on the street,” an eyewitness who foreshadowed what would later become the official story born at Ground Zero. FOX News interviewed the “passerby”, who somehow explained, “. . . I witness[ed] both Towers collapse, one first and then the second, mostly due to structural failure because the fire was just too intense.”³⁶ This, too, seems odd. In a state of near shock, using the jargon of structural engineering, this man speculated on the cause of the catastrophe. In doing so, he foreshadowed what later became the official view. Alternative narratives were offered that first day and afterwards, but were crowded out by this tale, born in the chaos of the street, which would later become the official narrative of the *9/11 Commission Report*.

Alternative Narratives: Suppression of First Responder Testimonies

Instead of simply interviewing a passerby, the news media might have interviewed first responders about what might have brought down the buildings. When news teams did interview first responders, however, they typically focused on their accounts of heroism or the horror of their experiences. Almost without exception, news coverage did not report the vast number of first-responder testimonials about explosions before and during the fall of the Towers.

Anticipating the importance of their eyewitness observations, some first responders made a tape of their testimonials. On this tape, dozens of firefighters spoke of hearing explosions,

particularly “boom, boom, boom” sounds just as the Towers began to come down. In 2002, similar reports emerged in interviews with firefighters. Firefighter Thomas Turilli recalled that it “sounded like bombs going off, like boom, boom, boom, like seven or eight, and then just a huge wind gust just came and my officer just actually took all of us and threw us down on the ground and kind of just jumped on top of us, laid on top of us.”³⁷ This was only one of literally dozens of similar first-responders testimonials, all of them speaking of explosions.

Right after the attacks, the City of New York impounded the firefighters’ tape and the Fire Department forbade anyone to discuss its contents because, it claimed, the tape might later become evidence in court trials. This suppression of evidence continued under mayors Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg. Only three years later, after ongoing pressure from the families of victims and a suit by the *New York Times*, would the city finally release the taped oral histories.³⁸

Because of the way the buildings disintegrated and dropped, other observers also suspected that the Towers had not simply “collapsed.” In fact, *CBS* news anchor Dan Rather reported on 9/11 that the collapse was “reminiscent of . . . when a building was deliberately destroyed by well-placed dynamite to knock it down.” *ABC News with Peter Jennings* also pointed out this resemblance. Since 9/11, however, no one in the corporate media has ever made such a comparison again.³⁹

III. Premature Reports on WTC Building 7

Odd journalistic practices also surrounded the fall of a third skyscraper, World Trade Center Building 7 (WTC-7). That CNN’s breaking story about the “collapse” of WTC-7 aired a half

hour before it happened, and BBC's coverage, twenty-six minutes before it came down, should have generated considerable media buzz at the time, but they were immediately forgotten.⁴⁰

Since no plane had hit this forty-seven-story, steel-framed skyscraper, and since its fires were far smaller than those in the Towers, why would anyone anticipate its disintegration and collapse? Once again, an unbelievably early journalistic report anticipated the official story. Thus media mythmakers offered what later became the official narrative prior to the event and then expanded it in the days and months following.⁴¹ How likely is it, though, that two networks would make the *same* mistake while covering the *same* event? Here we have instances in which the timing of news reports either seems highly improbable or completely incredible. Regardless of one's interpretation, why has this issue not been explored by the mainstream media in the US? Very recently, the London-based *Financial Times* published one of the most detailed pieces on WTC-7 in the corporate press to date. Otherwise, few in that genre have covered this controversial story.⁴²

In the context of narrative myth building, this reportage should be questioned and debated within the media. Virtually no one in the American mainstream media and only a few brave souls in the independent press have investigated these stories. This malpractice of the corporate mainstream media alone merits investigation. Reporting by major TV networks in the initial hours contributed immensely to instant mythmaking; in retrospect, it has also stirred serious questions.

IV. The Last Moments of Flight 93: Old Myths Find New Applications

Not all the myths contextualizing 9/11 came from the American past. The calamity of a homeland attack called for new myths to be developed and allowed the opinion-formation industry to exploit this cultural vulnerability. Not only did corporate media fail to adequately explain these tragic events, but they generated mythic tales in their stead (e.g. the popular TV film *Flight 93*).

Best known of these myths is that of the heroic passengers on Flight 93, who, by revolting against their captors, reportedly prevented another strike on Washington, DC. In so doing, the passengers not only provided a model of how Americans could fight back, but they launched the first counterattack in the War on Terror. While few would deny that rising up against captors on an airplane is heroic, assuming that this action necessarily prevented another “hit” on the nation’s capital requires other assumptions—such as that multi-trillion dollar US air defenses would somehow continue to fail. To believe the myth of Flight 93, one also has to ignore significant amounts of forensic evidence, including the fragments of the plane found fully eight miles from its crash site.⁴³

Networks Script Story of Unselfish Heroism

All myths need heroes. In the case of Flight 93, several possible heroes were identified by networks through alleged cell phone calls. Although there is ongoing controversy about whether some calls could be placed by cell phones at that time, this detail is immaterial to the construction of the myth of Flight 93.⁴⁴

Whether the calls actually went through or not, the “Let’s Roll” flight, as it came to be known, occasioned an unprecedented outburst of instant media mythmaking. Over the next few days, well over a dozen people reported receiving calls from loved ones—mostly calls to new

widows whose spouses had died when Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Poignant stories told by these survivors of the victims entered a public consciousness already engulfed with pathos and anxiety.

Looking for sensational human-interest stories, the mainstream networks immediately focused on the life-and-death heroism aboard United Flight 93.⁴⁵ In the complete absence of empirical proof, the major networks became involved in scripting stories they apparently intended to tell. Although passengers' calls to loved ones had not been verified, the corporate news media jumped on the story. Several networks rushed the story on the air, devoting enormous amounts of time to survivors' relatives who had reportedly received calls. The networks indelibly imprinted a story of heroic sacrifice. Given the need for both affirmation and emotional identification with the bereaved spouses, these shows achieved sensational ratings. Software salesman Todd Beamer's enigmatic last words, overheard by an Airfone operator, have become legendary: "You ready? OK. Let's roll." As most of us recall, the passenger revolt reportedly began in response to this battle cry.⁴⁶

Few viewers seemed to care that Todd Beamer never spoke to his wife, but rather talked for fifteen minutes with GTE Airfone/Verizon operator Lisa Jefferson. Ms. Jefferson promised to call Todd's wife Lisa if he didn't make it home. However, Jefferson failed to follow GTE company protocol: she did not record the emergency call from Todd Beamer. The networks had no way to verify the call.⁴⁷ Once the call went public, media outlets deluged Lisa Beamer with invitations: over the next year or so, she granted over two hundred interviews. CNN's Larry King provided a platform from which Beamer could advocate the Bush administration's \$7 billion victim-compensation plan.⁴⁸ Again, rather than report in the context of a possibly unknowable reality, corporate media presented a heroic myth.

Further traumatizing the public, this came at a time when the country was still reeling in shock from the horrific images of the falling Twin Towers. It wasn't just that images of the falling Towers ran hundreds of times on prime-time TV; it was also that these images were so hauntingly suggestive. Ever attuned to the power of metaphor, linguist and cognitive psychologist George Lakoff has pointed out that many Americans saw the disintegration of the Towers much as they perceived the fall of the people who jumped from them: as the "falling bodies" of themselves and their compatriots. Even more graphically, Lakoff remarked, "the image of the plane going into [the] South Tower was for me an image of a bullet going through someone's head, the flames pouring from the other side like blood spurting out. It was an assassination."⁴⁹ This further buttressed the myth of the official story: that on 9/11, freedom itself, personified in the Towers, was attacked.

Many observers have also pointed out that, in the popular mind, the Trade Towers were symbols of American capitalism and global interventionism. This was why al Qaeda "mastermind" Khalid Shaikh Mohammed claimed they were repeatedly selected as targets.⁵⁰ An interesting counter myth in corporate media can be seen in a book by *Time* magazine's Mitch Frank, in which he claims the Towers were global symbols of peace, and the "evildoers", as Bush called the terrorists, were attacking not only American freedom, but the concept of peace itself. The latter myth would become a powerful justification for the War on Terror, as it plays upon the mythology of American exceptionalism.⁵¹

As though planned to accord with Naomi Klein's book *Shock Doctrine*, the alarming images of 9/11 prepared the public for new policies—the War on Terror, Homeland Security, and the USA PATRIOT ACT—policies that were unthinkable before the psychic cataclysm of 9/11.⁵²

The Need for an Affirmative Tale of Heroism

In this time of national trauma and humiliation, another account with immense appeal began to emerge. It told of a passenger revolt that, after several minutes of struggle, either took back the cockpit and/or caused the hijackers to lose control of the plane.⁵³ This cockpit-takeover story told Americans that heroic passengers had not only fought back, but prevented another attack on Washington. Even before the last plane went down, the first battle in the War on Terror had begun.

But this was not just a feel-good, patriotic myth; it also distracted and crowded out another story, one with more sinister implications. The Pentagon's initial accounts of Flight 93 disclosed that F-16 fighters were tracking the troubled flight, and some military accounts had even indicated that an F-16 shot it down. On 9/11 and in the days that followed, military sources had reported a shoot-down in Pennsylvania, and considerable forensic evidence pointed to one.⁵⁴ In sum, a variety of sources—from local news media to top Pentagon officials—had initially reported that Flight 93 was shot down, only to drop or change their stories soon afterward.⁵⁵ However, this supporting evidence was far from what the public wanted to hear. Again, regardless of what one concludes about the fate of Flight 93, the corporate media focus was on tales of heroism and American might, not the forensics on the ground.⁵⁶

Ongoing Media Reinforcement of the Flight 93 Myth

Whatever the truth about the final moments of Flight 93, they were highly charged, dramatic material with mass appeal. Four movie reenactments soon followed: *Let's Roll: The Story of Flight 93* (2002), *The Flight That Fought Back* (2005), *Flight 93: The Movie* (2006), and *United*

93 (2006).⁵⁷ Studios and networks immediately understood that the potential for suspense, conflict, heroism, and human interest was enormous.

Rewriting History, Revising the Myth Through Film

The fifth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy provides an example of how a quasi-historical account can both reinforce and/or revise an earlier account. A docudrama can also shape public perceptions, in this case shifting blame for the catastrophe onto the Clinton administration—and, by extension, onto the Democrats, despite the fact that the events of 9/11 happened on the Republicans' watch. The result, baldly stated, was pseudo-history as partisan propaganda. An ABC/Disney docudrama, *The Path To 9/11*, generated controversy behind the scenes. Promoted by full-page advertisements that depicted dark eyes peering through a slash in the American flag, this TV special occasioned a big flap. It was co-produced by former Commission Chairman Thomas Kean, who apparently was eager both to promote the official story he'd helped to write and to place more blame on the Clinton administration than it had received in the Commission's *Report*. Thus the docudrama's content was determined by politicians with partisan axes to grind.⁵⁸

Shock Jocks Discover Pop History

Conservative talk radio hosts discovered recent history after the ABC/Disney docudrama aired. They spotlighted what US intelligence agencies had known and what the White House hadn't done about al Qaeda—though only during the *Clinton* years.⁵⁹ Republican spokespersons and shock jocks spoke as though reading from the same study guide. Suddenly the pundits were discussing significant issues that the 9/11 Commission hadn't covered—and that they had never

before faulted anybody for failing to address. Rush Limbaugh started citing al Qaeda's Bojinka Plots of 1994 as evidence that it was Clinton's administration, not Bush's, that should have stopped the 9/11 attacks. The timing and shift of this selective historical focus by some radio personalities is noteworthy in the context of mythic narrative construction.

As the 9/11 mythmaking, myth revision, and myth reinforcement continues, so does the search for a story that makes more sense. Although the myths persist, they now face increasing logical analysis. While the mainstream corporate media and even many in the progressive press perpetuate historic myths, many Americans are calling for a fact-based narrative. A Zogby International poll taken in 2007 showed that 51 percent of Americans wanted President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney to be further investigated and scrutinized about the events of 9/11, and that 67 percent wanted the 9/11 Commission investigated for ignoring altogether the collapse of WTC-7. This suggests that many Americans, despite the bombardment of media mythologizing, are still curious about what might have actually happened on 9/11.⁶⁰

Heroes And Victims

In a time of doubt, vulnerability and fear, mythologizing the heroism and victimization did make many Americans feel better about themselves and their compatriots. Enemies were identified and wagons were circled, imparting the impression that everyone was "standing tall together." This was otherwise ubiquitously expressed in the ready-for-bumpersticker phrase, "United We Stand." Yet fixating on heroes and victims also had other effects: it reinforced a simplistic notion of uncomplicated goodness, intensifying a sense that the US was merely a blameless victim—that its foreign policy bore no responsibility for its being targeted. In addition, media

preoccupations with heroes and victims tended to distract from other more complex, more unsettling, less uplifting dimensions of the catastrophe.

Media mythmakers have succeeded thus far in preventing a national discussion on the crucial matters of 9/11. The power of myth to suppress the quest for truth can be great. However, the movement to understand these events and offer counter narratives is growing as part of a larger Truth Emergency movement. As University of California, Berkeley Professor Peter Dale Scott recently remarked, “. . . we are in an ongoing state of emergency whose exact limits are unknown, on the basis of a controversial deep event—9/11—that is still largely a mystery.”⁶¹

The Power of Re-Framing and Reinforcement

Mythmakers are seldom content with the existing degree of public belief, however high. At the summer 2008 Republican Convention in Minneapolis, MN, first lady Laura Bush, hardly a neutral observer to the Bush administration, restated one of the most self-serving, least noted myths for the early 21st Century: that the War on Terror has been a success: "Let's not forget," the first lady said, "President Bush has kept the American people safe."⁶²

Laura Bush's statement contradicts the obvious fact that her husband's administration did not keep the American people safe. In terms of American constitutional principles, Bush ushered in significant restrictions of civil liberties, from the gutting of the first and fourth amendments in the USA PATRIOT Act to the suspension of Habeas Corpus in the Military Commissions Act. In the cost of actual human life, nearly 3,000 people died on 9/11, more than 6,000 were injured that day, and hundreds more first responders fell ill and continue to do so by

the year from the environmental fallout of Ground Zero in NYC and subsequent EPA cover up.⁶³ Further, additional thousands of American soldiers have died and tens of thousands have been wounded in the resulting wars not factually linked to 9/11 in Afghanistan and Iraq. This does not include the possibly one million plus Iraqi deaths tabulated by Britain's Opinion Research Business, nor the other victims throughout the region, including roughly 4.5 million refugees reported by independent journalist Dahr Jamail that are part of the post 9/11 wars in the Middle East.⁶⁴ The Bush administration failed not only to keep the American people safe, they also caused great harm to millions of people across the globe as a result of 9/11, arguably bringing even further, greater risks to the American public in the future as a result.⁶⁵ Still, the myth that the Bush administration kept Americans safe persists.

Yet the administration's spinmeisters, abetted by the corporate news media, ask us to believe that the events of 9/11 were so anomalous as to not really count, that no one was in charge when they happened, thus no one should be held accountable. Such rhetoric involves an amazing rewrite of history during its first draft and illustrates ongoing acts of censorship, that is, the adoption and persistence of myths over facts. British political analyst Muhammad Cohen insightfully observed that, "It's the greatest political mystery of the 21st century, perhaps in American history: how have the Republicans avoided responsibility for 9/11? How can they keep claiming the deadliest attacks on the American mainland as a badge of honor, rather than a stain on their record?"⁶⁶

While the answers are complex, they involve conceptual framing, reframing, and reinforcement that have been going on since the toxic smoke of 9/11 cleared. Aside from counterterrorism expert Richard Clarke, no member of the Bush administration, the FAA, or the military has taken any responsibility for the gross failures of national security. It's been as though the cataclysm just happened, bolt from the blue, and as the 9/11 Commission claimed, in effect, that “everyone was responsible just a little, so no one will be held responsible.”⁶⁷

The reinforcement of this skewed framing is ongoing through the end of 2008. PBS Talk show host Charlie Rose provided one instance among many. His guest, Nassim Nicolas Taleb, author of *The Black Swan*, argues that when it is assumed that anomalous or rare events cannot occur, they become more likely to do so. With no prompting, Rose responded, “like 9/11 was a black swan.” When Taleb, himself from Islamic background, did not express agreement, Rose was able to reinforce a myth promoted by the Bush administration, particularly Condoleezza Rice, and valorized by the 9/11 Commission: that “no one could have imagined” such suicide-hijacking attacks.⁶⁸

This is clearly not the case based on the known facts of the Presidential Daily Briefing alone dated a month prior to the events of 9/11 in 2001, leaving aside multiple other pre-warnings and historical examples. Rice herself testified to the 9/11 Commission that while no one had any inkling airline terrorist attacks could happen, she was in charge of delivering that very brief to the president that stated just such an attack was about to occur. We are expected to

believe this myth that no one was responsible, it was a sneak attack, many political leaders, including Democrats in then President-elect Barack Obama's administration, were warning already that Obama would be tested significantly in the early days of his presidency. Then Vice Presidential candidate Joseph Biden while at a Seattle, WA, fundraiser in October said, "Mark my words. It will not be six months before the world tests Barack Obama like they did John Kennedy. The world is looking. We're about to elect a brilliant 47-year-old senator president of the United States of America. Remember I said it standing here if you don't remember anything else I said. Watch, we're gonna have an international crisis, a generated crisis, to test the mettle of this guy."⁶⁹ The framing and myth of no accountability apparently continues. Attacks will happen. No one will be responsible. The "test" will be reaction, not prevention. This has worked well for the Bush administration. President Obama has little reason to challenge that myth as it easily could behoove his administration as well come another 9/11 event.

Further, this historical myopia has allowed the Bush administration and the 9/11 Commissioners to avoid the implications of not one but two stark previews to the 9/11 attacks: both the deadly, "near-miss" WTC bombing of 1993 and also the thwarted Bojinka plots of 1994. Both were the work of al Qaeda, and both targeted iconic buildings, but the similarities go far beyond these. Had the WTC bombing of 1993 and the abortive Bojinka plot of 1994 received more scrutiny, it would have become obvious that these earlier terrorist schemes were planned by the same group, by many of the same individuals, using the same means, aircraft, to strike the very same targets. The Trade Towers had always topped al Qaeda's list, and their operatives had

been taking flying lessons for years. Moreover, in the case of the Bojinka plot these same thugs were going after the same targets by the exact same tactic: hijacking airliners. Unaware of this history, the public wasn't able to see these startling parallels, and the administration could avoid an especially embarrassing question: How could the same alleged terrorists plan two shots at the Towers and still be given a third?

What is particularly telling politically in the US, is that the Democrats, historically sensitive to Cold War mythic charges that they are "soft on national security," have throughout the post -9/11 period failed to challenge this conventional wisdom, even though Republicans have often wielded it as a rhetorical club to pummel them. Apparently, Cohen observes, they're afraid to rebut the myth "lest they be accused of politicizing 9/11, while Republicans keep flaunting the tragedy for partisan gain." It is an amazing dance of mythology and disinformation to behold by any in the historically literate public. "The Bush administration's steadfast refusal to take any responsibility for the attacks," argues Cohen, "is absolutely mind-blowing. No appointee was fired for the most glaring national security cock-up since Pearl Harbor, if not the British torching of the White House in 1814."⁷⁰ In fact, several key administration officials were actually promoted after 9/11, including Richard Meyers and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, who later became Secretary of State. It seems that, at the very least, incompetence in high places was in fact rewarded after the tragic events of 9/11. Again, the official report on 9/11 chose to blame everyone, and hence no one at the same time. No one was held responsible for such colossal incompetence or gross failures. This raises other questions. Perhaps incompetence is not the only possibility. Perhaps these myths should be deconstructed further and the reality of 9/11 itself be based upon transparent, factual information.

Drawing Conclusions

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. —James Madison

Two conclusions emerge from this examination of media mythmaking and the varied narratives, official and alternative, surrounding 9/11: 1) corporate and even alternative media outlets draw selectively on a mythic past to shape the present, and 2) the US has not yet undertaken a serious inquiry into the role played by major media institutions and government in obscuring the actual events of 9/11.

Given how much the shock and trauma of 9/11 have been used to justify major policy changes over the past eight years, one would imagine that a serious and transparent investigation of such an important event would have been completed years ago. In light of the known contradictory facts, it is apparent that the 9/11 Commission was largely an exercise in the refinement and enshrinement of an official myth, not a probing inquiry into the who, what, when, and why of those tragic events. Could we imagine that individuals, beyond the dead suicide bombers, might actually be held accountable?⁷¹

In a democratic society, it is essential that the people can become well informed through a free press so as to make government accessible, accountable, and thus legitimate.

Unfortunately, examining 9/11 as part of a pattern of historical precedents, one can see how these American ideals have long been subverted. The media have continually failed to perform their constitutionally protected objective—to accurately inform the public and act as the true fourth estate.

Alternative narratives to mythic history that have been overlooked, actively ignored, or censored offer many paths to knowledge and to help understand the present. Media mythmakers and their political allies continue to project their grand narratives on the world, anchored in fear, xenophobia, and unaccountability, rather than to report or reflect a complex, chaotic, frightening reality. Thus they present only one acceptable analysis. Although Internet alternatives are increasingly available, this is hardly the role of a free press in a democratic society.

As Americans, we owe it to ourselves to insist on open and honest inquiry unattached to conclusions, unswayed by ideologies, and unafraid of what the truth may be. While we deserve a media that will lead by example, we may, as never before, find ways to “be the media.”⁷² A key step toward achieving this end is to understand how dominant media myths crowd out alternative historical and factual perspectives that the public desperately needs to consider. Through analyzing media mythmaking, we can forge a clearer path toward more genuine, pluralistic accounts of reality.

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—Frances Capell is a Project Censored intern and Teaching Assistant for Mickey Huff at Diablo Valley College. Ms. Capell assisted in editing and researching the online-version revisions of this article which was originally published as Chapter 14 in *Censored 2009*.

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 3. Rose, Charlie. PBS, June 6, 2008. Online at <http://www.charlierose.com/home>.
 4. The website of the 9/11 Commission, <http://911commission.gov>.
 5. See *Censored 2003*, Chapter 1, Story #4 and all of Chapter 2; *Censored 2005*, Chapter 1, Story #9; *Censored 2006*, all of Chapter 4 entitled “Unanswered Questions of 9/11” or see <http://www.projectcensored.org/articles/story/unanswered-questions-of-9-11-july-2005/>; *Censored 2007*, Chapter 1, Story #18; *Censored 2008*, Chapter 1, Story #16, Chapter 2 updates p. 139, and Chapter 7, pp. 233–251.
 6. Carlson, Tucker. MSNBC, August 9, 2006, Interview with Dr. David Ray Griffin, quote at 1:40 into the clip. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxKW3EqbfRE&mode=related&search>.
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 8. McCrisken, Trevor B., *Exceptionalism: Manifest Destiny, Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002. p. 68. Journalist John O’Sullivan stated, “And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.” *New York Morning News*, December 27, 1845. These formative myths of origin have been well examined in standard scholarship, such as Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* and Perry Miller’s *The New England Mind*, among many other standard historical texts.
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10. Maher, Bill. *Politically Incorrect*. See the story online at <http://thebigstory.org/ov/ov-politicallyincorrect.html>.
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 12. Though not the focus here, other examples of attacks on those who questioned the War on Terror and the official accounting of 9/11 included the firing of Professor Ward Churchill at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the corporate media blacklisting of the country group, the Dixie Chicks. On Ward Churchill see: <http://wardchurchill.net/>. For the Dixie Chicks blacklisting and many others see: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/McCarthyism/Dixie_Chicking.html. On the recurrence of McCarthyism post-9/11, see Matthew Rothchild's "McCarthy Watch" at <http://www.progressive.org/list/mccarthy>.
 13. Phillips, *Censored 2008*. Chapter 1, Story #16, p. 93. For more on the contradiction between the FBI and State Department, see http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=Bin_Laden&language=english
 14. American Progress. Online at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/kfiles/b79532.html>.
 15. This thesis is explored at length in the documentary film *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear, and the Selling of the American Empire*, Media Education Foundation, 2004. Online at http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/Hijacking_Catastrophe and <http://freedocumentaries.org>.
 16. Moyers, Bill. *Bill Moyers' Journal*. PBS. April 25, 2008. <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04252008/watch.html>.
 17. Petras, James. "Provocations as Pretexts for Imperial War: From Pearl Harbor to 9/11," Centre for Research on Globalisation, online at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=9063>. Petras has a detailed accounting of historical precedents for 9/11 focusing heavily on Pearl Harbor. Additionally, author Mickey Huff has remarked on this topic at his blog and in several national radio interviews available at <http://mythininfo.blogspot.com/2007/09/manifest-tyranny-propaganda-grand.html> and <http://mythininfo.blogspot.com/2007/08/911-and-weaponization-of-information-in.html>. Further, considering 9/11 research, among the most thorough online sites dedicated to alternative theories of 9/11 are researcher James Hoffman's <http://911research.wtc7.net/> and the Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice with Dr. Steven Jones at <http://stj911.org/>.
 18. For a brief overview of this, see Griffin, David Ray. *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*, Louisville: John Knox Press, 2006. pp. 3–15.
 19. Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty: An American History, Volume 1, Seagull Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006. pp. 402–405; and Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. Abridged teaching ed. New York: New Press, 2003. pp. 113–124.
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 21. Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty, Volume 2, Seagull Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006. pp. 629–632. Also see Zinn, *A People's History*, pp. 263–274.
 22. Stinnett, Robert. *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor*. New York: Touchstone, 2000. pp. 1–5. Petras, James. "Provocations as Pretexts for Imperial War: From Pearl Harbor to 9/11," Centre for Research on Globalisation, online at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=9063>.

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- Robert Stinnett demonstrated that President Roosevelt provoked war with Japan. Deliberately following a program of harassment and embargo against Japan developed by Lt. Commander Arthur H. McCollum, head of the Far East desk of the Office of Naval Intelligence, FDR ensured that the Japan would attack the US. In the run-up to the attack, explains sociologist/historian James Petras, FDR ordered “eight specific measures which amounted to acts of war, including an economic embargo of Japan, the shipment of arms to Japan’s adversaries, the prevention of Tokyo from securing strategic raw materials essential for its economy, and the denial of port access, thus provoking a military confrontation.” Also see, Thomas, William. *Days of Deception: Ground Zero and Beyond*. Carson City, Nev.: Bridger House, 2006. Chapter 1. Citations in Thomas are not as good as Stinnett, but the first chapter is of worth on this topic.
23. Project for the New American Century. *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*. Washington, D.C., September, 2000. pp. 50–51. Also, see Griffin, David Ray. *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11*. Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2004. p. xi. Note: The Project for the New American Century website was closed down in spring of 2008. See <http://www.blacklistednews.com/view.asp?ID=6647> for details.
 24. See aforementioned works by Stinnett and Griffin for more on this. It should also be noted, PBS documentarian Ken Burns went on to make a film in 2007, simply called “The War” about WWII that further elevated the sneak attack myth to new heights, perhaps subconsciously to remind Americans that the War on Terror, like WWII, was a just war. For more analysis on this, see author Mickey Huff’s blog piece, “Myth America: The War, 9/11, and the Propaganda of Grand Historical Narratives.” October 1, 2007. Online at <http://mythinfo.blogspot.com/2007/10/myth-america-war-911-and-propaganda-of.html>.
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 30. Clarke, Richard. *Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror*. New York: The New Press, 2004. pp. 2, 13–14.
 31. Thompson, Paul. *The Terror Timeline*, New York: Regan Books, 2004. pp. 496–98.
 32. Thompson, *The Terror Timeline*, pp. 462–63.
 33. Phillips, *Censored 2008*, Chapter 1, Story #16, p. 93.
 34. Thompson, *The Terror Timeline*, p. 465.
 35. Thompson, *The Terror Timeline*, pp. 462–468. Bush was quoted in Thompson from the *Washington Post*, January 27, 2002. For a detailed look of network news activity on the day of 9/11, see <http://cnparm.home.texas.net/911/911/911b.htm>.

36. The Fox interview was archived and shown in the film *911 Mysteries* available at <http://video.google.com/videosearch?client=safari&rls=en-us&q=911%20mysteries&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&um=1&sa=N&tab=vw#> and at <http://freedocumentaries.org/film.php?id=147>. Note that one does not have to agree with the premise of the film to observe and analyze the role of the corporate media on 9/11.
37. World Trade Center Talk Force Interview. Firefighter Thomas Turilli. January 17, 2002. Available online at http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110501.PDF. For more extensive coverage on first responders see MacQueen, Graeme. "118 Witnesses: The Firefighters' Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers." *The Journal of 9/11 Studies*. II August, 2006. pp. 37–56. Available online at http://www.journalof911studies.com/articles/Article_5_118Witnesses_WorldTradeCenter.pdf.
38. Faludi, Susan. *Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007. p. 67. Chapter 3 in this work, "The Cowboys of Yesterday" is of particular interest here as well.
39. See a collection of Dan Rather's statements archived at the Cooperative Research History Commons available at http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/entity.jsp?entity=dan_rather. See the Rather clip in context at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nvx904dAw0o> and the Peter Jennings clip in context at <http://www.archive.org/details/abc200109110954-1036>. Further, see the online slide presentation of architect Richard Gage of www.AE911Truth.org which shows the clips as part of a larger presentation, and includes more first responder testimony left out of corporate media coverage, at http://www.ae911truth.net/ppt_web/slideshow.php?i=263&lores=1.
40. For footage of CNN see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1LetB0z8_o and for the BBC see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7SwOT29gbc>. See further documentation at researcher James Hoffman's site at <http://www.wtc7.net/foreknowledge.html>.
41. When questioned about the premature coverage, Richard Porter, Head of News at BBC World, offered an equally bizarre explanation: the reporter, he claimed, "doesn't remember minute-by-minute what she said . . . and what was being told to her by colleagues in London . . ." See www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2007/02/part_of_the_conspiracy.html. Even if it were true, all this seems irrelevant. Porter's statement skirts the obvious questions: If honest mistakes were made, the BBC could simply issue a correction. Instead, the network not only withheld a transcript of its faulty report, but its video footage was pulled from Google Video and YouTube. Even more remarkably, BBC would claim that all of its archives on 9/11 had disappeared because of a "cock-up"! See www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2007/02/part_of_the_conspiracy.html.
42. Barber, Peter. "The Truth is Out There." *The Financial Times*. June 7, 2008. Available at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8d66e778-3128-11dd-ab22-000077b07658.html?nlick_check=1. The original print version displayed remarkably objective accounts about the WTC-7 controversy, atypical in the corporate media. It should also be noted that the *911 Commission Report* did not mention WTC-7 once in its 571 pages.
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44. O'Brien, Tim. "Wife of Solicitor General Alerted Him of Hijacking from Plane," CNN, September 11, 2001.

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46. *The 9/11 Commission Report*. New York: Norton, 2004, pp. 12–13.
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53. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 45.
54. Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor*, pp. 51–53.
55. Morgan *Flight 93 Revealed*, pp. 31–36, 43–45.
56. *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. PBS. September 14, 2001. Online at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/search_results.html?q=9-14-01&x=0&y=0. For more independent press coverage of this controversial event and fact based alternative interpretations outside the official narrative, see researcher James Hoffman’s <http://911research.wtc7.net/planes/attack/flight93.html#course> and Christopher Bollyn’s http://www.americanfreepress.net/html/flight_93.html.
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63. See Jenna Orkin's work at the World Trade Center Environmental Organization, <http://wtceo.org>; also see Juan Gonzalez, *Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center Collapse*, 2002, W.W. Norton, NY; and Michael Bowker's *Fatal Deception: The Terrifying True Story of How Asbestos is Killing America*, chapter 16 "Cover-Up at Ground Zero?"
64. *Censored 2009*, Chapter 1, Story #1.
65. See Georgetown law professor David Cole's August 2007 piece "Bush's War on Terror Tactics Make America Less Safe, Less Free" online <http://www.truthout.org/article/bushs-war-terror-tactics-make-america-less-safe-less-free>.
66. See Muhammad Cohen's piece "Seven years on, three big 9/11 lies." Asia Times 9/11/08 online at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/JI11Ak01.html.
67. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. xiv.
68. PBS, *Charlie Rose*, 12/3/08.
69. See Joseph Biden's quote online at <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalradar/2008/10/biden-to-support.html>.
70. Muhammad Cohen, "Seven years on, three big 9/11 lies" Asia Times 9/11/08, online at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/JI11Ak01.html.
71. This seems to be more the case in other countries, like Japan, see Phillips, *Censored 2009*, Chapter 1, Story #24 in this volume for details. Also, major problems with the 9/11 Commission have been the demonstrated in the notable scholarship of Griffin, David Ray. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*. Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2005. For an analysis of global power structure, this following study looks at "who wins, who decides, and who facilitates action inside the most powerful military-industrial complex in the world." See Phillips, Peter, "The Global Dominance Group: 9/11 Pre-Warnings & Election Irregularities in Context" online at http://s31076.gridserver.com/assets-managed/pdf/Global_Dominance_Group.pdf.
72. See Dave Mathison's *Be the Media* at <http://www.bethemedia.org/>.

(Note: Originally, all websites were accessed between June 10 and June 15, 2008 for the text version of this chapter. However, this piece, as of February 2009, has since been edited, expanded, updated, and this more detailed version is now posted here online by the authors at <http://www.projectcensored.org>).