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## The Implausibility of the Official Explanation of 9/11: Science and Participatory Democracy\*

It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his *not* understanding it.

*U. Sinclair, 1935*

### 1. Introduction

On September 11, 2001 – a Tuesday – in New York City and Washington, D.C., a crime of enormous consequence occurred. In the morning, four terrorist events took place against US targets, causing the loss of nearly 3,000 lives, almost all civilians, and laying the grounds for a decade of violations of international law by the US government and its allies in the name of the “War on Terror”.

Two Boeing 767 from Boston each struck one of the two skyscrapers collectively known as the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City. The Towers, whose construction had ended, respectively, in 1972 (the North Tower, or WTC 1) and in 1973 (the South Tower, or WTC 2), had each

- 110 floors (above ground),
- 417 m (WTC 1) and 415 m (WTC 2) of height,
- a square basis of 63,4 m of side.

WTC 1 was hit by American Airlines Flight 11 (*Plane 1*) at 8:45 a.m. from the north at about the 93<sup>rd</sup> floor, and collapsed at 10:28 after burning for 102 minutes. Plane 1 had left Boston at 7:59.

WTC 2 was hit by United Airlines Flight 175 (*Plane 2*) at 9:05 a.m. from the south at about the 80<sup>th</sup> floor, and collapsed at 9:59 a.m. – thus earlier than WTC1 –, after burning for just 56 minutes. Plane 2 had left Boston at 8:14.

For the Twin Towers the total times of collapse have been estimated officially 11 seconds for WTC 1 and 9 seconds for WTC 2, although a precise figure is hard to pin down.<sup>1</sup>

A less well-known fact is that there was a *third* skyscraper in the WTC which also collapsed, in the late afternoon, namely the WTC building N.7 (WTC 7). This more recent building, whose construction had ended in 1987, had

- 47 floors (above ground),
- 186 m of height,
- an irregular trapezoidal basis, with its north side 100 m long, the south side 75 m long, and 44 m wide.

Very remarkably, WTC 7 was not hit by any plane, but nonetheless crumbled vertically on its footprint in less than 7 seconds – at 5:21 p.m., that is, roughly *seven hours* after the collapse of the Twin Towers.

On the same day, the Pentagon was hit at 9:38 a.m. by what the official version claims to have been a Boeing 757, American Airlines Flight 77 (*Plane 3*), which had departed from Dulles (in the Washington area) at 8:10, although what precisely was the object which struck the Pentagon remains to this day controversial.

A fourth hijacked passenger plane, a Boeing 757 of the United Airlines, Flight 93 (*Plane 4*), which had departed from Newark (in the New York area) at 8:42, fell at 10:03 a.m. (or

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\* Unless otherwise specified, all italics in the citations are added.

1 This is the estimate by NIST (cit. in [48, p. 36]); the dust clouds make it difficult to be very precise, and in fact a different estimate has been advanced, of 14 to 16 seconds for both Twin Towers [40].

more likely 10:06)<sup>2</sup> in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, supposedly after an upheaval of the passengers against the terrorists and before the aircraft could reach its target, which is supposed to have been the Capitol or the White House, in Washington D. C.

So everything – except for the WTC 7's collapse – occurred in 78 minutes, *without the US air defence succeeding in preventing even one of these terrorist attacks.*

Notice that each of the 4 planes were very little crowded, an unusual feature for those planes and those travel hours:

flight	aircraft	capacity	passengers	hijackers	crew
Flight 11	Boeing 767-223ER	158	76	5	11
Flight 175	Boeing 767-222	166	46	5	9
Flight 77	Boeing 757-223	188	50	5	6
Flight 93	Boeing 757-223	182	26	4	7

<http://911research.wtc7.net/planes/attack/index.html>

Overall only 36% of the total capacity was occupied.

The US government used immediately these events as an excuse for launching several illegal military campaigns, overturning the Iraqi government and occupying Afghanistan, with the help of allied governments sharing the reasons (most of them arguably or demonstrably unsound) and the responsibility for a pretended world war on international terrorism. *More than a million* people have been killed as a direct or indirect result (and possibly several millions) [36, pp. 287, 309n106], millions of people have been physically and/or mentally disabled, and multi-generational damage has been caused in the form of widespread pollution by carcinogenic agents in the invaded countries [43]. In the name of the War on Terror preventive war has been licensed again and international law has been reverted to the pre-Nuremberg stage,<sup>3</sup> including interrogation under torture. For these reasons alone, it is exceedingly important to have the most accurate information about 9/11.<sup>4</sup>

However, we also think that this is, among other things, a particularly enlightening example of the management of evidence and public opinion, showing how mainstream media, government agencies, scientists, pseudo-sceptics (usually calling themselves "debunkers"), and the academic world can and do cooperate in stymieing vital public debates and discrediting and/or silencing whistleblowers and, more generally, dissidents, in order to manufacture and solidify consent in favour of official opinions.

## 2. What is the official version?

The official version is contained in *The 9/11 Commission Report* [1], issued in 2004, and, as far as the mechanism of the collapse of the skyscrapers is concerned, first in the report of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), issued in 2002, and then in the *Final Report* of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), issued in 2005, with additions in 2008 [28]. Other ingredients of the official version can be found in statements by other official agencies, such as FBI, and interviews with members of the Bush administration.

The 9/11 commission was formed 441 days after the attacks, the Bush administration

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2 The first time is the official one, the second one is more likely, and the difference is important, as explained in [35, pp. 126-30].

3 The Nuremberg Judgment (1946) contained the following statement: «To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole» (cit. in [20]).

4 Many articles and books have been published criticizing the official version of 9/11; Griffin's books ([34, 35, 36]) are well argued, referenced, and readable.

having tried to avoid its formation for as long as possible.<sup>5</sup> It was chaired by Thomas Kean (the chairman, directly appointed by Bush, after his first choice, none else than Henry Kissinger, had resigned) and Lee Hamilton. Kean and Hamilton in 2006 wrote that the commission they chaired was «not allowed to interrogate any of these detainees» (the people arrested under the charge of being involved in the planning of the 9/11 attacks), or at least «to observe the interrogation of detainees through one-way glass», or even just to *talk to the interrogators* [35, p. 196]. Moreover, an outline of the final report of the Commission had been already drafted, including «chapter headings, subheadings, and sub-subheadings» by its executive director, Philip Zelikow, «essentially a member of the Bush White House», *before* the first meeting had been convened [36, p. 89].

In 2008 Kean and Hamilton wrote [50]:

The commission's mandate was sweeping and it explicitly included the intelligence agencies. But the recent revelations that the CIA destroyed videotaped interrogations of Qaeda operatives leads us to conclude that the agency failed to respond to our lawful requests for information about the 9/11 plot. Those who knew about those videotapes — and did not tell us about them — obstructed our investigation. [...] As a legal matter, it is not up to us to examine the CIA's failure to disclose the existence of these tapes. That is for others. What we do know is that government officials decided not to inform a lawfully constituted body, created by Congress and the president, to investigate one the greatest tragedies to confront this country. We call that obstruction.

But the obstructionism by the government was obvious in many ways from the start: suffice it to say that the investigation of Whitewater and Monica Lewinski had costed US taxpayers \$64 million, while the 9/11 Commission received only *about \$3 million* [80].

Now a bare but accurate outline of the scenario officially presented to the public would run as follows.<sup>6</sup>

According to the official version, a conspiracy was staged by a Saudi terrorist, Osama bin Laden, based in some caves in Afghanistan or Pakistan, leading 19 Muslim suicide terrorists to take control, by using knives and cardboard cutters, of four passenger planes in USA (5 terrorists for each of the first three planes, 4 in the last one) and to hijack them towards 4 symbolic national buildings taken as targets. The paths followed by Plane 3 and Plane 4 took them, unaccountably, hundreds of kilometres (about 400 and 600 km, respectively) far from their targets. And yet three of the targets (WTC 1, WTC 2, and the Pentagon) were actually hit, in what can only be ranked as *the* most successful terrorist plot ever designed in modern history. None of the terrorists had ever practised as Boeing pilot. Not a single one of the regular pilots of the planes sent the coded alarm signal for an hijack to controllers on the ground.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, as regards the WTC buildings, they all fell down, according to the official version, as a consequence of the structural damage induced essentially by the fires caused by the impact of the two planes, directly (WTC 1 and WTC 2), or indirectly (WTC 7) through ejection of debris from WTC 1 (that is, from more than 90 meters). Thus the terrorists succeeded in destroying *three* skyscrapers (WTC 1, WTC 2, WTC 7) after having targeted and hit only *two*. Nothing in the history of structural engineering could make them hope to destroy *even just one*, since the collapse of a steel structure skyscraper had *never* occurred as a consequence of fires.

A crucial ingredient in the official version is that the terrorists are supposed to have received no aid whatsoever by any individuals within either the US administration, or the US (or any other country's) intelligence, or the US air control authorities. Not only that, but Bush and others (including Kean and Hamilton [34, pp. 133-7]) repeatedly emphasized that the hypothesis of suicide hijacking of planes targeted to important national buildings had never been envisioned before 9/11.

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5 It has been pointed out that in the case of the sinking of the Titanic, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Challenger disaster, and the Pearl Harbor attack the corresponding delay has been, respectively, of 6, 7, 7, and 9 days [85, p. 26].

6 We shall come back in detail on several of the points listed here.

7 This is called "squawking the hijack code", and takes just seconds [36, pp. 29-30].

### 3. Conspiracy theories

Just to be faithful to the promise, in its preface, «to provide the fullest possible account of the events surrounding 9/11», the *9/11 Commission Report* did not even as much as *mention* the collapse of WTC 7. In fact the US government succeeded in locking the whole mainstream media system in a tacit agreement *not* to talk of the collapse of WTC 7. As a result, a poll in May 2006 found that 43% of the US citizens were still unaware that that collapse had occurred, and still in *June 2011* a poll found that 33% of *New York* citizens (!) *did not know about it* [36, p. 122]. This is an important fact to keep in mind when examining the evidence on 9/11, for two main reasons:

- it is a clear-cut example of a successful global conspiracy by the mainstream media to misinform citizens;
- the collapse of WTC 7 was as public and documented a fact as any conceivable, and yet it has been possible to keep it largely outside the public discourse on 9/11 for a decade.

Now, if the US administration has been able to erase, to most practical purposes, a publicly witnessed and easily checked fact, it is clear that it does not need to work too hard to defuse any particular revelations coming from the odd individual wanting to discharge his or her conscience...

As we have seen, also the official version of what happened on 9/11 is, in the strictest sense, a *conspiracy theory* – a peculiar conspiracy, in fact, involving just about two dozens Arabs, successfully pitting their wits against the uppermost world military power. It is different from other conspiracy theories on 9/11 mainly insofar as it insists, as we shall see, *on a chain of miraculous, or nearly miraculous, occurrences favouring the terrorist design*.

In other words, the official version is a conspiracy-blessed-with-miracles theory, where “miracle” stands, in some instances, for an extraordinary occurrence favouring the conspirators, and in others for a physical impossibility.<sup>8</sup> Occam's razor would therefore advise to accept it only in the very last resort, that is, if nothing else were shown to be able to explain the known facts about 9/11. So it is only by exploiting the hoariest of sophisms, *petitio principii* (i.e. to “prove” a claim... by assuming it) that the believers in the official version can shamelessly give their critics the name of “denialists” and “conspiracy theorists”. That a conspiracy did occur is not disputed by anyone. What is controversial is exactly *which steps were taken* in that conspiracy and *by whom*.<sup>9</sup>

In this article we offer no detailed hypothetical scenarios in substitution of the official one as to the actors and the planners of the terrorist attacks, although it is clear that, if the criticisms of the official version here outlined are on the whole correct (and we think this is by now out of question), the Bush administration cannot be exonerated from substantial responsibilities.

The idea that the US government may have planned a “false-flag operation”<sup>10</sup> is of course not at all far-fetched, as such operations have played an important historical role for well over a century, including the Gulf of Tonkin incident (1964), and the earlier and most famous<sup>11</sup> attack on Pearl-Harbor (1941). A by now relatively well-known description of

8 Or, if you prefer, an event whose probability, given the ordinary physical laws, is close to zero.

9 A not-too-bright apologist of the official version of 9/11 has written in a book that «All conspiracies theories – all of them – attract anti-Semites» [16]. From this it would immediately follow that the group of the supporters of the official version is rife with anti-Semites (whatever this charge amounts to).

10 That is, a criminal action in disguise, so to speak, that is falsely presented and advertised as having been performed by one's enemies, in order to have an excuse to start a prosecution, or a war, against them. Chapter II of Webster Tarpley's book (“The Theory and Practice of Synthetic Terrorism” [74, pp. 78-127]) is a useful historical and theoretical exposition of how this works.

11 Griffin's first essay on 9/11 is entitled “The New Pearl Harbor” [31]. The reference is to a document [62] published just one year before 9/11 by “Project for a New American Century” (an extreme right-wing think-tank, comprising several of the most prominent members of the Bush Administration: Dick Cheney, Lewis Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle etc.), where in a section on the importance for US to «preserve its technological edge on future battlefield» one could read: «The United

such operations is contained in the so-called "Northwoods memorandum", dated «13 March 1962», where several attacks against US were proposed to create a pretext for an US invasion of Cuba.<sup>12</sup> In particular two of the proposals were (our italics):

7. *Hijacking attempts against civil air and surface craft should appear to continue as harassing measures condoned by the government of Cuba. Concurrently, genuine defections of Cuban civil and military air and surface craft should be encouraged.*

8. *It is possible to create an incident which will demonstrate convincingly that a Cuban aircraft has attacked and shot down a chartered civil airliner en route from the United States to Jamaica, Guatemala, Panama, or Venezuela. The destination would be chosen only to cause the flight plan route to cross Cuba. The passengers could be a group of college students off on a holiday or any grouping of persons with a common interest to support chartering a non-scheduled flight.*

The "Northwoods" proposals were rejected by the Kennedy administration.

Notice that it is often possible to prove that a certain theory is wrong and at the same time to be unable to substitute it with a completely satisfactory alternative.<sup>13</sup> For instance, suppose that someone comes up claiming that the *Iliad* was written by Shakespeare. To show him or her wrong you need not know who was the true author of *Iliad* (as a matter of fact *nobody* knows the right answer). However, if the standard interpretation of *Iliad* had been based for years on the identification of its author with the author of *Hamlet*, refuting this claim would be a very valuable undertaking, insofar as it would free the public from a potential source of serious misunderstandings of both works.<sup>14</sup> After all, the most influential epistemological theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the one linked to Karl Popper's name, holds that this is the very way science progresses – that is, by showing the falsity of ("falsifying") proposed conjectures. Surely there is more than a grain of truth in this approach.

Similarly, in the case of 9/11 no one should feel that their doubts are somewhat groundless or misplaced simply because of an inability to provide a documented reconstruction which explains "everything". What we are confident enough to say is that the official explanation of 9/11 is far from satisfactory, and at some crucial points provably false. On the whole it so strains credulity that, should it turn out to be true, no responsible thinker would regret to be the last to believe it.

#### 4. Psychological resistances

As we have seen, an important difference between the official conspiracy theory and others is that the former *postulates* that the White House or any other political or military US authorities are not to be blamed for what occurred, and that therefore they had no reason for telling lies to the American people. In fact one of the reasons for the resistance of so many to give heed to sceptical arguments on 9/11 is that these arguments conflict with a deep-seated need to trust in the human representatives of the national unity: the president, the government, the army etc.

This type of will-to-believe also explains the strange attractiveness, to many people, of a totally flawed claim, rating as very unlikely that Bush and his close collaborators might

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States cannot simply declare a "strategic pause" while experimenting with new technologies and operational concepts. Nor can it choose to pursue a transformation strategy that would decouple American and allied interests. A transformation strategy that solely pursued capabilities for projecting force from the United States, for example, and sacrificed forward basing and presence, would be at odds with larger American policy goals and would trouble American allies. Further, 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*» [62, pp. 50-1].

12 See, for instance, [73, pp. 115-20].

13 One can agree with Falk, who wrote in 2008: «What has not been established by the "9/11 Truth Movement" is a convincing counter-narrative – that is, an alternate version of the events that clears up to what degree, if at all, the attacks resulted from incompetence, deliberate inaction, and outright complicity». And yet he added: «Any close student of 9/11 is aware of the many serious discrepancies between the official version of what took place and the actual happenings of that fateful day in 2001» [23].

14 See also footnote 7 of chapter 17 in this book.

have shamelessly and obdurately lied as regards their involvement in the 9/11 slaughter. There are two related remarks which, together, completely destroy this claim.

The first one is that those who have been to *any* extent complicit of such a heinous crime know full well that by confessing even a small fragment of the compromising truth they have everything to lose – including their life. Any minimally rational being in their place would adopt the only viable strategy, namely that of denying charges *to the bitter end*, and to excuse any surfacing inconsistencies with failures of memory, emotional shock, gaps in the chain of command, even plain stupidity etc. – anything is good, except for inactive awareness of, let alone active complicity in, the plan behind that crime.

Some commentators seem to believe that it would be impossible, or nearly so, to keep all conspirators in a sufficiently complex plot silent for a long stretch of time. This supposition fails to consider that: 1) not all actors in a conspiracy have the same degree of awareness of what is going on; 2) whistleblowers or other witnesses willing to contribute crucial evidence can easily be silenced, dismissed, or downplayed;<sup>15</sup> 3) there are several historical examples of terrorist actions for which no one has been sentenced guilty during several decades<sup>16</sup> (and virtually during the whole lifetime of those more directly involved).

There is another point strengthening our first remark. People indicted with serious criminal offences are generally not believed at face value by a prosecutor in what they say in their own defence, because *lying is in general a lesser crime with respect to that of which they are (rightly or wrongly) suspected*. This is particularly true with such crimes as high treason or slaughter. So no sensible person would ever believe in untested professions of innocence by people that may be held responsible for crimes of this kind.

## 5. Ascertained criminal lies of the Bush administration

The second remark is that the US authorities in the Bush administration *did* tell criminal lies to the American people and to the world, and that, moreover, *this has occurred not once, but several times*. Since most mainstream journalists seem to assume we live in a fairytale world where government's members never lie knowingly to their citizenry about serious matters, it is useful to dwell on this point in some depth.

An especially notorious case is the Bush administration fabricating the black legend of the weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq in order to support their previous decision of invading that country. Everybody remembers Secretary of Defence Colin Powell wielding a model vial of anthrax in front of the Security Council of the United Nations on February 5, 2003, as evidence of Iraq hiding WMDs. Powell said:

“My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed by sources, solid sources. These are not assertion. What we're giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence”.

Notwithstanding this assurance, it can be proved that Powell was lying, and that he knew it.<sup>17</sup> In terms of criminal consequences the nearly 3,000 victims of the four attacks pale if compared to the death toll of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – actually they are less than *half* the *American* victims of those wars, let alone the 130,000 psychiatric casualties.<sup>18</sup> But

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15 Or put on trial and threatened with life imprisonment, as shown in the case of Bradley Manning, who has transmitted cables to Wikileaks related to the Iraq and Afghan wars.

16 To cite just one important instance, in Italy five major terrorist bombings between 1969 and 1980, resulting in the slaughter of dozens of innocent people, have remained unpunished to this day.

17 «[...] there's no question that Powell was consciously lying: he fabricated “evidence” and ignored repeated warnings that what he was saying was false. [...] Clearly, Powell's loyalty to George Bush extended to being willing to deceive the world: the United nations, Americans, and the coalition troops about to be sent to kill and die in Iraq. He's never been held accountable for his actions, and it's extremely unlikely he ever will be» [69]. See also chapter 1, section 9.2.

18 «Here are indications of the lingering costs of 11 years of warfare. Nearly 130,000 U.S. troops have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and vastly more have experienced brain injuries. Over 1,700 have undergone life-changing limb amputations. Over 50,000 have been wounded in action. As of Wednesday, 6,656 U.S. troops and Defense Department civilians have died» [3].

these are not the only proven criminal lies of the Bush administration against their people – and in saying this we have also to include *the two stolen presidential elections in 2000 and 2004* [59, VIII], which have been the necessary premise for all other crimes.

Another example is closer to 9/11, both by its nature and because of temporal contiguity. Starting from September 11, 2001 about 40,000 people (firemen, ambulance technicians, soldiers, policemen, doctors etc.) worked for weeks, night and day, on the remains of the WTC buildings on “ground zero” (the Pile, as was to be known), immersed in a cloud of toxic dust, «approximately one million tons of pulverized concrete, glass, asbestos, PCB's, lead and more than 400 chemicals» [71]. They were called the “First Responders”. The 30-year-old policeman Joseph Zadroga was one of them. He died in 2006 of lung failure, following a sickness begun after a few days of work. For the first time in Zadroga's case, a death was «officially linked to inhaling the dust created when the towers fell».

Public officials, and in particular the New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, had insisted that there was nothing to worry about the New York air. Giuliani had stated: «As you get beyond the epicenter of recovery site, the asbestos levels are either safe or nonexistent».

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Christine Todd Whitman, had said, while holding up a respirator mask:

“Everything we've tested for, which includes asbestos, lead and VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds), have been below any level of concern for the general public. Obviously for those working down here, these are very important”.

However respirators were at first not available, and when available they turned out to be useless, because they were cumbersome and often clogged. On September 18, Whitman in a press release added: «Given the scope of the tragedy from last week, I am glad to reassure the people of New York and Washington, DC that their air is safe to breathe and their water is safe to drink». She explained later that she meant not the Pile, but «lower Manhattan». According to a government investigation, however, her reassurances were premature, since the EPA test results on the air «were not yet in and EPA press releases were changed by the White House Council on Environmental Quality to sound more reassuring».

Through Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor, the White House had the final word on the release of these EPA's statements [22], so the White House was ultimately responsible for any falsely reassuring claim concerning the health risks of the Pile. The reason the White House pressured EPA into making reassuring claims and thus endangering the life of *many thousands of people*, was to enable Wall Street to start working again as soon as possible [82]:

On June 25, 2007, Whitman testified before a House of Representatives committee chaired by Jerrold Nadler. She said that a White House official informed her that *President Bush expected that the Financial District would reopen within three days*, that is, by September 14. She said that she replied that this would be cumbersome, since the EPA was still judging the health situation in the area. Investigations after the attacks suggest that *the Bush administration pressured Whitman and Giuliani to provide health reassurances in order to keep Wall Street operating*.

The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act was passed only on December 22, 2010 – that is, *nine years later*, during the first term of the Obama administration. This shows both the low regard of the Bush administration for American lives, and the readiness of its members to tell potentially lethal lies in order to protect financial interests of special groups.

The above has a general relevance as regards 9/11, as it establishes a basic rule: if to support a claim one needs to assume the essential trustworthiness of Bush and/or of his collaborators, then the claim is *not* adequately supported and should be declared invalid.

Moreover, it is crucial here to remember what everybody knows, which is that Bush, Rice, Powell, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and others did not have to suffer any serious consequences from their *ascertained* criminal lies. Indeed they *thrived* on them (as we said, they succeeded in stealing the presidential election *twice*), and *they have never been indicted, let alone tried, for those lies*. This is enough to show how little in touch with

reality are those who surmise that the Bush administration would have refrained from being involved in a conspiracy against their own citizens for fear of revelations coming from some “deep throat”: if you can get away with proven lies of that size, lies on which you have justified wars of aggression, that is «the supreme international crime» (cf. footnote 3), then you know you can get away with lies of *any other kind*.

## 6. An experiment in mass brainwashing

The 9/11 coverage by the mainstream media represents one of the biggest experiments in the engineering of belief and public opinion. Of course not everybody, and in fact not even a majority of the world's population, has been convinced by the official version. As has been explained very well 11 years later, you do not need to be a scientist to appreciate that the official version simply does not hold water ([67], italics are ours):

You only have to know two things.

One is that according to the official story, a handful of Arabs, mainly Saudi Arabians, operating independently of any government and competent intelligence service, men without James Bond and V for Vendetta capabilities, outwitted *not only the CIA, FBI, and National Security Agency, but all 16 US intelligence agencies, along with all security agencies of America's NATO allies and Israel's Mossad*. Not only did the entire intelligence forces of the Western world fail, but *on the morning of the attack the entire apparatus of the National Security State simultaneously failed*. Airport security failed four times in one hour. NORAD<sup>19</sup> failed. Air Traffic Control failed. The US Air Force failed. The National Security Council failed. Dick Cheney<sup>20</sup> failed. Absolutely nothing worked. *The world's only superpower was helpless at the humiliating mercy of a few undistinguished Arabs*.

It is hard to image a more far-fetched story – except for the second thing you need to know: the humiliating failure of US National Security did not result in immediate demands from the President of the United States, from Congress, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and from the media for an investigation of how such improbable total failure could have occurred. *No one was held accountable for the greatest failure of national security in world history*. Instead, the White House dragged its feet for a year resisting any investigation until the persistent demands from 9/11 families for accountability forced President George W. Bush to appoint a political commission, devoid of any experts, to hold a pretend investigation.

When an accurate description of an opinion sounds so much like a satirical exposure of that opinion, you are on safe ground if you think of it as a lost cause.

Incidentally, the author of this passage (and of several other valuable sceptical contributions on 9/11, e.g. [66]) is Paul Craig Roberts, formerly associate editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, contributing editor for *National Review*, and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration (the «Father of Reaganomics», as he has been called) – a good counterexample to the standard mainstream media misrepresentation of 9/11 scepticism as tendentious expression of left-wing leanings. In fact no more than common sense and honesty is needed to realize that the official version on 9/11 is untenable.

We may add, on the other hand, that several well-known left-wing commentators have aligned themselves with the official version, for different reasons. Perhaps the silliest reason (unfortunately including among its adherents even Noam Chomsky) is that looking for alternative explanations of 9/11 would divert the attention of activists from other, genuine goals. Chomsky said [13]:

One of the major consequences of the 9/11 movement has been to draw enormous amounts of energy and effort away from activism directed to real and ongoing crimes of state and their institutional background, crimes that are far more serious than blowing up the WTC would be, if there were any credibility to that thesis.

“Far more serious than blowing up the WTC”? It is hard to take *this* claim seriously, as it involves a huge underestimate of the extraordinary emotional value of 9/11, as a tool to

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19 [North American Aerospace Defense Command]

20 [Vice President of the United States from 2001 to 2009, under President George W. Bush.]

make acceptable to citizens of US and its allies any violations of human rights that the US government chose to engage in during the following decade, including wars based on utterly inadequate or faked evidence and, on top of it, lacking the authorization by the United Nations. Since the fall of 2001, virtually every international crime, and some major domestic ones (like the USA Patriot Act of October 2001), by the US government has been justified as legitimate defence against a supposedly ubiquitous terrorist army, on the assumption that 9/11 was indisputable evidence of "America under attack" by *foreign* enemies, rather than an "inside job".<sup>21</sup>

Notwithstanding the prima facie unbelievability of the official version, so clearly exhibited in Roberts' outline, and the wealth of circumstantial evidence against it, the mainstream media have succeeded in disqualifying all different opinions, and labelling them, preposterously as we have seen in section 3, as "conspiratorist" and "denialist". This is quite a remarkable achievement in itself, since it shows that in our complacently styled "free" countries it is unnecessary to censor heterodox opinions, so long as authorities can put a social stigma on them: this is functionally equivalent to censorship, but without the bad-looking accompaniment of formal prohibition and legal enforcement.

## **7. Silencing the dissidents, and the rise of the movement for 9/11 truth**

However, there is no denying that, in the case of 9/11, censorship and, particularly, self-censorship have been thriving for more than a decade in the academic world and in the mainstream media.

A well-known case in point is that of Steven Jones, a renowned physics professor at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah.<sup>22</sup> Jones, based on his speciality, advanced very serious arguments against the official reconstruction of the dynamics of the collapse of the Twin Towers and of WTC 7 [45, 46, 47]. Now in September 2006 his university placed him on paid leave «in connection with controversial statements and writings he has made on the 2001 destruction of the world Trade Center in New York» [5]:

Jones's work on the subject includes a recent paper in the online *Journal of 9/11 Studies*,<sup>23</sup> which he co-edits. That paper includes a disclaimer labeling it "the sole responsibility of the author". But the university is anxious to dissociate itself from Jones's hypothesis, saying it has "not been published in appropriate scientific venues".

Jones's outrageous mistreatment by his university administration is a clear example of prosecution of dissidents in the contemporary US academic world, whenever they dare to question really politically sensitive topics – such as the official version of 9/11. The failure of the academic community to stage a mass protest against this infringement of academic freedom gives a measure of the decline of standards and professional dignity in the US university.<sup>24</sup>

Jones's is not the only scientist who got into trouble for voicing concerns about the official version of 9/11. Kevin Ryan, Site Manager at the Underwriters Laboratories (South Bend, Indiana), where the steel components used in the construction of the WTC buildings had been certified, was fired as soon as he published an e-mail he had sent in November 2004, in which he had pointed out that the tests performed on models of the floor assemblies indicated «that the [WTC] buildings should have easily withstood the thermal stress caused by pools of burning jet fuel» [68] – a fact, by the way, that was to be admitted in the final NIST report [57, p. 141].

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21 See also [9]. A useful, detailed analysis of some of Chomsky's historical blind spots (including Pearl Harbor and the John Kennedy's assassination) and of his role as a "left gatekeeper" can be found in [85, pp. 179-224]. Another left-wing author unwilling to take up the 9/11 data as evidence of an inside operation is Naomi Klein, author of an interesting essay on how special interest groups profit on the mass shock provoked by bloodsheds and natural catastrophes. Of course she also discusses 9/11 ([51, pp. 295-8] and elsewhere) as an example, but carefully refrains from any suggestion that it might have been engineered or aided by people inside the Bush administration (see [84] for confirming evidence).

22 A self-presentation is contained in [46].

23 [www.journalof911studies.com]

24 Jones decided to retire and become "Professor Emeritus", from January 1, 2007.

Other university professors have been harassed by local authorities for dissenting from the 9/11 official version [44].

As to the physical events involved in the destruction of the Twin Towers and WTC 7, an independent statement from non-governmental professional bodies in engineering and physics has never been produced concerning the *sheer scientific plausibility* of the official account of the collapses of the Twin Towers and of WTC 7. It is comforting, though, that several organizations with membership in those and other relevant professional bodies have been created in order to criticize in very strong and thoughtful terms the official version. Here is an incomplete list:<sup>25</sup>

- Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (with over 1,900 professional members at the time of our writing)<sup>26</sup>,
- Scientists for 9/11 Truth,
- Scientists for 9/11 Truth and Justice,
- Scholars for 9/11 Truth,
- Lawyers for 9/11 Truth,
- Media Professionals for 9/11 Truth,
- Medical Professionals for 9/11 Truth,
- Pilots for 9/11 Truth,
- Firefighters for 9/11 Truth,
- Political Leaders for 9/11 Truth,
- Military Officers for 9/11 Truth,
- Intelligence Officers for 9/11 Truth etc.

In fact the following remark gives an encouraging appraisal of the situation:

Among scientists and professionals in the relevant fields who have studied the evidence, the weight of scientific and professional opinion is now overwhelmingly on the side of the 9/11 truth Movement. Whereas over 1,000 such people have publicly supported the stance of this movement, *there are virtually no scientists or professionals in the relevant fields who have gone on record in defense of the official story – except for people whose livelihood would be threatened if they refused to support it*. This caveat is important, because, as Upton Sinclair famously observed: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his *not* understanding it”. [36, p. 77]

Moreover, a wide citizen movement for the truth on 9/11 has been growing in several countries, showing the importance of the contribution that critical and participant citizens can make in a situation where the so-called experts have been to a large extent co-opted to defend, mostly by their silence, the government's version of the facts. Important contributions have been made by non-scientists, like an Italian filmmaker, screenwriter, and journalist, Massimo Mazzucco [X], and a theology professor, David Ray Griffin. The latter between 2004 and 2011 has published 10 books on 9/11 (plus one on Osama bin-Laden), which provide an authoritative and scholarly source for most of the critical evidence and arguments against the official version.<sup>27</sup> Not unexpectedly, notwithstanding the high quality of this body of writings, they have been essentially ignored by mainstream journals and magazines, let alone radio and television programs [36, pp. 248-51].

Many well-known people have voiced their disagreement with the official version. Among them, we may cite: Andreas von Buelow, former German Defense Minister and Minister of Technology [V]; Michael Meacher, British Member of Parliament [XI, 55]; Charlie Sheen,

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<sup>25</sup> Most internet addresses can be found in [www.911truth.org](http://www.911truth.org).

<sup>26</sup> Chomsky is on record for saying: «If you look at the evidence [advanced by the 9/11 Truth Movement], anybody who knows anything about the sciences would instantly discount that evidence» (cit. in [36, p. 34]), which in view of the high number of sceptical engineers and architects is surely mistaken. From an intellectual of Chomsky's stature and public standing one should not expect anything less than a public retraction of this factually false statement.

<sup>27</sup> A sympathetic portrait of Griffin is contained in [85, pp. 303-20].

actor [15]; Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* [27]; Lynn Margulis, biologist [54]; Richard Falk, professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton University [23].<sup>28</sup>

An important recent development in the fight for truth on 9/11 has been the creation, advertised in a press release of September 9, 2011, of the website "Consensus 9/11: The 9/11 Best Evidence Panel" [17], whose purpose is «to provide the world with a clear statement, based on expert independent opinion, of some of the best evidence opposing the official narrative about 9/11». To the material assembled in this website and to the separate contributions by the members of this panel (they are 22, including Griffin, Mazzucco, Jones, David Chandler, Niels Harrit) and by other writers (see in particular [30, 84, 74] and the invaluable referenced chronology [77]) this chapter is largely indebted.

## **8. Some examples of facts which do not fit the vulgata**

To those entering for the first time the 9/11 cluster of problems, the most striking feature is the very low level of accuracy and consistency in the official statements concerning it. In fact one of Griffin's contributions is a 350-page scholarly book simply documenting the *internal* contradictions in the official version of what happened before and after the 9/11 events [35]; and, as to the 9/11 Commission report itself, he has defined it, with very good reasons, «a 571-Page Lie» [32]. In fact, as we shall see more in detail, the official version of what happened in US on September 11 is rife with contradictions, explanatory gaps, and incredible "exception-to-the-rule" claims.

In this section we record a very small sample of facts which are at variance with what the mainstream media have reported to their audiences. Then, in the following four sections we shall concentrate on four crucial issues. Until a really convincing explanation of these puzzling features will be found, the official version can be said to have been *refuted*, and the need for a truly independent and thorough inquiry established.

We warn the readers that the list of contradictions in the official version could have been made much longer<sup>29</sup> and that the more one learns about 9/11 the more unlikely that version becomes. In fact, from the point of view of the general public, there may even be a danger in "overkilling" the official version, since the addition of ever new arguments and facts may be perceived as an implicit admission that there are not really decisive arguments yet. Actually, in our opinion the facts described in the present article provide *overwhelming evidence to the effect that the Bush administration has systematically lied to the world as to the nature of 9/11*. The only reasonable explanation for those lies (in themselves amounting to complicity) is that *that administration was involved at an earlier stage in the 9/11 conspiracy*.

### **8.1 Bush and the pet goat story**

The 2004 documentary by Michael Moore, *Fahrenheit 9/11* [XII], has made the whole world acquainted with a video featuring the US President, George W. Bush, who during the terrorist attacks was participating in a reading drill at an elementary school at Sarasota, Florida. Bush had been told about Plane 1 hitting WTC 1 just before he was entering the school (at 8:55 a.m.). Between 9:06 and 9:07 the chief of staff, Andrew Card, whispered in his ear: «A second plane hit the second Tower. America is under attack».

Now, whoever in Bush's place would have been deeply shocked *at least* by the second piece of news, and would have immediately called a stop to the drill. Instead the video proves that Bush remained quietly at his place for seven minutes as children read aloud the story "The Pet Goat", and then stayed at the school for other twenty minutes. This is in itself a very bizarre reaction under the official assumption that the news had caught the president entirely by surprise. And yet it is not nearly as bizarre as the reaction of his staff, who failed to apply what was the standard procedure in the circumstances, that is rushing the president out of the school as soon as possible to hide him in some safe place.

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<sup>28</sup> Many other names are listed, with pertinent quotations, in [80].

<sup>29</sup> See also chapter 14.

<sup>30</sup> In an interview on September 16, 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney gave the following description of how he was

In case they had failed to do so out of negligence, they should have been severely punished in due course: but this did not happen, so we have all reasons to think that they were following orders.

Sure enough, at the White House it was realized quite soon that what had happened in the Sarasota school was incompatible with the official notion that neither Bush nor his staff could be certain that the life of the president *was not at serious risk* in those dramatic moments. After all, terrorists who could stage the WTC attacks might well have taken the little trouble of getting informed about the president's widely advertised public encounters. In fact Card told in 2002 the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Bush

“looked up – it was only a matter of seconds [sic!], but it seemed [sic!] like minutes. [...] And he just excused himself very politely to the teacher and to the students and he left”.

Clearly the White House in 2002 had decided to conceal the truth; they corrected their account only after the video had appeared in the public domain (in 2003, and in a reduced version since June 2002) [35, p. 4].

So here we have a proof that:

- the White House lied in order to avoid raising suspicions as to the extent of the president's and his staff's awareness of what was happening;
- in the Florida school Bush and his staff behaved as if «America is under attack» did not imply that the US president had to stop immediately the comparatively irrelevant task he was performing in those minutes.

### **8.2 Were suicide hijackings unexpected?**

Three years later, on April 13, 2004 Bush said at a press conference (cit. in [35, p. 134]):

“[T]here was [...] nobody in our government [...] [who] could envision flying airplanes into buildings on such a massive scale [...] Had I had any inkling whatsoever that the people were going to fly airplanes into buildings, we would have moved heaven and earth to save the country”.

At least by that time, however, both Bush and the members of the 9/11 Commission, which in the same year stood by Bush's statement, should have been perfectly aware that *the opposite was true*. Ten years earlier, in 1994, a Pentagon expert had written (cit. in [35, p. 136]):

Targets such as the World Trade Center not only provide the requisite casualties, but, because of their symbolic nature, provide more bang for the buck. In order to maximize their odds for success, terrorist groups will likely consider mounting multiple, simultaneous operations.

This is so precise as to sound as a *prediction* of 9/11. And yet it was not the only report advising the government to take very seriously the threat of suicide hijacking targeting the «symbolic» buildings that were in fact hit in 2001. Indeed, the hypothesis of airplanes used by terrorists as missiles targeting national buildings was the basis for *military exercises* performed in October 2000, May 2001, and July 2001! So Bush and the 9/11 Commission engaged in shameless misinformation – obviously to play down the Bush administration's responsibility in 9/11.

### **8.3 Telephone calls from the planes**

An especially disturbing inconsistency in the official version [36, pp. 124-70] has to do with the telephone calls which were supposedly made by passengers and crew members using cell phones from Planes 2,3,4 (that is, from all planes except for the one targeting the WTC 1). In particular it is reported that there were at least 11 cell phone calls from Plane 4 alone, out of a total of more than 15 calls from all flights.

The reported content of these phone calls has been the foundation of the worldwide advertised story concerning a few al-Qaeda hijackers wielding box cutters and knives, and

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treated in his office at the White House after it was clear that Plane 3 *might* aim at the White House: «[...] my Secret Service agents came in and, under these circumstances, they just move. They don't say “sir” or ask politely. They came in and said, “Sir, we have to leave immediately”, and grabbed me and...»; the interviewer asked: «Literally grabbed you and moved you?» and Cheney confirmed: «Yeah. And, you know, your feet touch the floor periodically [...]» [36, pp. 172-3]. Something very, very different from what happened in the Sarasota school.

taking control of the planes, where they supposedly succeeded in subduing a group of passengers and crew members eight to seventeen times more numerous – by using only those primitive weapons. To evaluate the intrinsic likelihood of such scenario one has just to think, in particular, that «The so-called muscle hijackers [of Plane 3] were not physically imposing, as the majority of them were between 5'5" and 5'7" in height and slender in build» (this is from the 9/11 Commission report), a circumstance to be contrasted with the fact that the pilot of Plane 3, a former Navy pilot and boxer (a «really tough one»), «even up to his death [...] enjoyed boating, in-line skating, and weightlifting, and was "in great shape", according to his friend [...]» ([70], cf. [36, p. 153]).

Now in 2006 the FBI presented a report at a trial against Zacarias Moussaoui (supposedly the "20<sup>th</sup> terrorist") which shows that *no cell phone* calls (as opposed to calls by *onboard* phones) had ever been made from *any* of the four hijacked flights! Most strikingly, both calls from Plane 3 by a well-known conservative commentator, Barbara Olson, supposedly alerting her husband, Ted Olson (the US solicitor general during the first term of the Bush administration), went *both unconnected* according to the FBI: and yet Ted Olson had told CNN that in these calls his wife had informed him that

"all passengers and flight personnel, including the pilots, were herded to the back of the plane by armed hijackers. The only weapons she mentioned were knives and cardboard cutters".

A little too much to be explained in a mere... 0 seconds. Popular movies have been produced having as their subject the situation of the people in the hijacked planes, based on the accounts coming from cell phone calls – which, according to the FBI, were never made.

Moreover, the telephone calls allegedly coming from the 4 planes have an unmistakable touch of unreality: no background noise, a strange calmness in the voice of people supposedly talking from the hijacked planes, speakers refusing to talk to their children in what they had very strong reasons to think that would have been their last contact with them, etc. The hypothesis that all the phone calls may have been faked, for instance by using voice-morphing technology [36, pp. 134-9], seems plausible.

## **9. Collapse of the WTC towers**

On 9/11, three steel-structure towers suffered total collapses: WTC 1, WTC 2, and WTC 7. Knowing exactly how these steel-structure buildings collapsed is obviously very important, even from a strictly technical point of view – engineers cannot build better buildings in the future without knowledge regarding the precise circumstances under which these towers collapsed. All three buildings fell vertically – rather than on a side – and with an acceleration of the same order of magnitude as free fall, suggesting that lower floors provided little to no resistance to the floors above.

### **9.1 Three unprecedented events... all during the same day, all in New York City**

The official theory posits that fire, initiated by jet fuel, triggered the collapse of the Twin Towers. However, there appears to be no example, before or after the three WTC towers, of steel structure highrises collapsing due to fire. There may also be no other cases of highrise buildings, which were not deliberately demolished using explosives, falling at near free-fall speeds – other than on 9/11. It is worth emphasizing that if *one* exceptional and unprecedented event is in itself worth investigating in detail, *three of them*, and of the same kind, occurring the same day and at the same place, are something very suspicious.

Two structural engineers siding with the official version still had to concede, in 2007, that what happened at the WTC on 9/11 according to the orthodox version was *unprecedented and unexpected from the viewpoint of their whole profession* [6, p. 308]:

The destruction of the World Trade Center (WTC) on September 11, 2001 was not only the largest mass murder in US history but also a big surprise for the structural engineering profession, perhaps the biggest since the collapse of the Tacoma Bridge in 1940. No experienced structural engineer watching the attack expected the WTC towers to collapse. No skyscraper has ever before collapsed due to fire.

So all those who have been suggesting (and among the "debunkers" there are quite a

few) that “real” experts in structural engineering should have found nothing particularly to wonder at have been seriously misleading the public.<sup>31</sup>

Crucially, what can explain the symmetrical, and in part strictly free-fall, kind of collapse of WTC 7 (which may be viewed online in [I, II]), a 47-story skyscraper with 24 core columns and 57 perimeter columns, *that was not hit by a jet*? What is the probability that this could have occurred unintentionally? What is the probability that such an event could have occurred the same day and within 100 meters of the collapse of other two skyscrapers?

So difficult to explain is, in particular, the collapse of WTC 7 that the *New York Times* wrote [29]:

Almost lost in the chaos of the collapse of the World Trade Center is a mystery that under normal circumstances would probably have captured the attention of the city and the world. That mystery is the collapse of a nearby 47-story, two-million-square-foot building seven hours after flaming debris from the towers rained down on it, igniting what became an out-of-control fire.

Notice that the fires supposedly weakening the steel structure of WTC 1 and WTC 2 were necessarily short-lived – since the two towers took respectively 102 and 56 minutes to totally collapse (cf. section 1). To appreciate from this viewpoint the triple miracle of the WTC it is enough to consider the following examples [33]:

In 1988, a fire in the First Interstate Bank Building in Los Angeles raged for 3.5 hours and gutted 5 of this building’s 62 floors, but there was no significant structural damage [...]. In 1991, a huge fire in Philadelphia’s One Meridian Plaza lasted for 18 hours and gutted 8 of the building’s 38 floors, but, said the FEMA report, although “[b]eams and girders sagged and twisted [...] under severe fire exposures [...], the columns continued to support their loads without obvious damage” [...]. In Caracas in 2004, a fire in a 50-story building raged for 17 hours, completely gutting the building’s top 20 floors, and yet it did not collapse [...]. And yet we are supposed to believe that a 56-minute fire caused [WTC 2] to collapse.

As to the structural strength of the WTC towers, this is what the construction manager of WTC said to a journalist in October 2001 [8]:

I spoke with Hyman Brown, a University of Colorado civil engineering professor and the World Trade Center's construction manager. Brown had watched in confusion as the towers came down. “It was over-designed to withstand almost anything including hurricanes, high winds, *bombings and an airplane hitting it*”, he said.

And in the same month Robert McNamara, president of the engineering firm McNamara and Salvia, said that «the World Trade Center was probably one of the more resistant tall building structures [...] nowadays, they just don't build them as tough as the World Trade Center» [4].

In fact in 1993, after a bomb had exploded in WTC 1, a leading structural engineer for the WTC, John Skilling, had explained (cit. in [48]):

“We looked at every possible thing we could think of that could happen to the buildings, *even to the extent of an airplane hitting the side*”, said John Skilling, head structural engineer [...] Concerned because of a case where an airplane hit the Empire State Building [which did not collapse], Skilling's people did an analysis that showed the towers would withstand the impact of a Boeing 707. “Our analysis indicated the biggest problem would be the fact that all the fuel (from the airplane) would dump into the building. There would be a horrendous fire. A lot of people would be killed”, he said. “*The building structure would still be there*”.

The experts of FEMA concluded in their 2002 report [26]:

The specifics of the fires in WTC 7 and how they caused the building to collapse remain unknown at this time. [...] *the best hypothesis has only a low probability of occurrence*. Further research, investigation, and analyses are needed to resolve this issue.

It seems obvious that if the *best* hypothesis is improbable (which means that “best hypothesis” is used here in a pickwickian sense!), then we are very far from being entitled

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31 Some fires *did* cause the collapse of smaller steel structures which, however, cannot be compared with the WTC skyscrapers [74].

to dogmatize on what really happened. And yet this simple methodological point seems to have been missed by most apologists of the official version.

In any case not a single one of the engineers in charge of the structural stability of the WTC buildings has been indicted and prosecuted, let alone sentenced. Leslie E. Robertson, one of them, stated in an interview that «the circumstances of the 11 September were outside of that which we considered in the design» [X], which, as we have seen, is simply not true – unless the “circumstances” Robertson is referring to are even “outside” the official version.

## **9.2 The hypothesis of controlled demolitions**

On the other hand, an intentional, *controlled demolition* of the building agrees very well with the physical evidence, as was first argued in detail by Jones [45, 46, 47] (section 7), and is also consistent with several independent facts. We list just a few:<sup>32</sup>

- (1) many witnesses reported having heard explosions *before* the beginning of the fall of each of the three skyscrapers ([35, pp. 237-52], [64]);
- (2) «Squibs are rapidly ejecting high pressure material outside of the building. When WTC 7 collapsed, seven of these squibs were observed coming from different floors. [...] They provide the direct evidence for explosions on those floors»<sup>33</sup>;
- (3) for several weeks *pools of molten steel* in the Pile have been observed and described by reliable professionals, which implies that a much higher temperature with respect to that which may possibly be reached in office fires had been reached;
- (4) concrete and other materials were reduced to dust, and the collapse created big dust clouds;
- (5) independent researchers have found on all the examined samples of steel from the Pile some very similar and «distinctive red/gray chips», recognized as «unreacted thermitic material» (the thermite is a substance used to cut steel columns in controlled demolitions)<sup>34</sup>;
- (6) samples of sulfidized steel and samples of steel with holes have been found, suggesting that melting and even evaporation of steel should have occurred.

When mention is made of samples of the WTC debris it is important to remember that the NIST examined only «236 structural steel elements», since only «0.25 percent to 0.5 percent of the 200,000 tons of steel» from the Twin Towers was recovered (cit. in [48]). Why? This was denounced at the beginning of 2002 in very strong terms on an international magazine for fire and emergency services personnel [53]:

For more than three months, structural steel from the World Trade Center has been and continues to be cut up and sold for scrap. Crucial evidence that could answer many questions about high-rise building design practices and performance under fire conditions is on the slow boat to China, perhaps never to be seen again in America until you buy your next car. [...] *Fire Engineering* has good reason to believe that the "official investigation" blessed by FEMA and run by the American Society of Civil Engineers is a half-baked farce that may already have been commandeered by political forces *whose primary interests, to put it mildly, lie far afield of full disclosure.*

An Iranian engineer Hassan Astaneh, who was trying to understand how the Towers had collapsed, said in March 2002 [11]:

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32 See [X] presenting a visual comparison with actual controlled demolitions. A detailed and referenced exposition, with other relevant points strengthening the case for a controlled demolition, is provided in [36, pp. 36-65].

33 This is a quotation from a video interview to Crockett Grabbe, a physicist, in 2007 (transcript of the relevant passage in [61]).

34 «That thermitic reactions from the red/gray chips have indeed occurred in the DSC [=Differential Scanning Calorimetry] (rising temperature method of ignition) is confirmed by the combined observation of 1) highly energetic reactions occurring at approximately 430 °C, 2) iron-rich sphere formation so that the product must have been sufficiently hot to be molten (over 1400 °C for iron and iron oxide), 3) spheres, spheroids and non-spheroidal residues in which the iron content exceeds the oxygen content. Significant elemental iron is now present as expected from the thermitic reduction-oxidation reaction of aluminum and iron oxide. The evidence for active, highly energetic thermitic material in the WTC dust is compelling» ([38, p. 21]; see also [47]).

"When there is a car accident and two people are killed, you keep the car until the trial is over. [...] If a plane crashes, not only do you keep the plane, but you assemble all the pieces, take it to a hangar, and put it together. That's only for 200, 300 people, when they die. In this case you had 3,000 people dead. You had a major machine, a major manmade structure. My wish was that we had spent whatever it takes, maybe \$50 million, \$100 million, and maybe two years, get all this steel, carry it to a lot. Instead of recycling it, put it horizontally, and assemble it. You have maybe 200 engineers, not just myself running around trying to figure out what's going on. *After all, this is a crime scene and you have to figure out exactly what happened for this crime, and learn from it. But that was my wish. My wish is not what happens*".

It is hard to disagree with Griffin when he sums it up as follows: «*This removal of an unprecedented amount of material from a crime scene suggests that an unprecedented crime was being covered up*» [33].

A planned demolition requires explosives and incendiaries to be installed in strategic locations within a building, thus ensuring that the building will collapse in a predictable, regular, symmetrical fashion – rather than toppling over on a side. If WTC 7 came down due to the use of explosives, then these explosives were likely already placed in the building prior to September 11,<sup>35</sup> and this raises a number of logistical questions: who could have placed such explosives in the buildings?; who would have access?; could security have been breached?; were explosives placed by architects during construction of the building to make eventual demolishing of the buildings easier?

Whatever the answers, the fact that these very high buildings did not fall over but rather fell downwards, nearly on their own footprints, suggests the intention to destroy them without causing further damage to other buildings and people nearby. This is not the kind of outcome that is likely to have happened *by chance*: in fact there are only a few demolition firms *in the world* which can be relied upon to achieve it [36, p. 44]. To admit that a symmetric fall which normally requires a very careful and competent preparation might have occurred as a result of buckling of steel columns provoked by casual and asymmetric fires amounts to believing in something very close to a miracle (like, say, a monkey typing a Shakespeare's sonnet).

### **9.3 Free-fall?**

A metaphorical collapse which, as physicists, we consider as particularly worrying is that of scientific literacy induced by the mainstream media and government committees insisting on a very peculiar, to say the least, account of the destruction of WTC 7. Almost all persons have been taught at high school that the acceleration of falling bodies is approximately equal to the gravity acceleration ( $9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$ ) only when the bodies are near the earth's surface and all forces acting on them, other than the earth's gravitational field, are negligible. Now a vertically collapsing sky-scraper is by any criterion *not* an example of a freely falling body, so it would be exceedingly strange if such a collapse occurred, *even for a short time span*, with gravity acceleration, *unless other energy sources were involved*.

To put it in another way, free-fall means that the gravitational energy of the falling body is gradually transformed uniquely into its kinetic energy: so where did the energy needed to win the resistance of the lower structural elements come from?

NIST tried to deny until a few months before the publication of their final report that WTC 7 had collapsed in free-fall for any span of time. The preliminary Draft for Public Comment of their report they put forward in August 2008 stated that the time of fall for WTC 7 «was approximately 40 percent longer than the computed free fall time and was consistent with physical principles». A high-school physics teacher, David Chandler [VII], challenged NIST

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35 As Jones explained, «I've had people say, "well maybe Al Qaeda ran into WTC7 that morning and planted explosives..." This is unsupportable since this was a highly secure building: WTC 7 housed a secret office of the CIA, as well as a Department of Defense office and so on. (It is worth noting that records of ENRON and other businesses under investigation were destroyed when this building collapsed.) Furthermore, it takes time and considerable skill to do a demolition of a skyscraper in the manner we observed» [46, p. 64].

at a "WTC 7 Technical Briefing" on August 26, saying that the "40% longer" estimate was refuted by a «publicly visible, easily measurable quantity» from the WTC 7 collapse videos, which showed that «for about two and a half seconds [...] the acceleration of the buildings is indistinguishable from freefall». In the final report [57] issued in November 2008, NIST modified its previous account by distinguishing three different stages in the 5.4 seconds of the collapse of WTC 7 which can be observed in the videos:

The analyses of the video (both the estimation of the instant the roofline began to descend and the calculated velocity and acceleration of a point on the roofline) revealed three distinct stages characterizing the 5.4 seconds of collapse:

- Stage 1 (0 to 1.75 seconds): acceleration less than that of gravity (i.e., slower than free fall).
- Stage 2 (1.75 to 4.0 seconds): gravitational acceleration (free fall)
- Stage 3 (4.0 to 5.4 seconds): decreased acceleration, again less than that of gravity

This analysis showed that the 40 percent longer descent time—compared to the 3.9 second free fall time—was due primarily to Stage 1, which corresponded to the buckling of the exterior columns in the lower stories of the north face. During Stage 2, the north face descended essentially in free fall, indicating negligible support from the structure below.

Thus NIST eventually admitted that for 2.25 seconds (Stage 2) WTC 7 had collapsed in «essentially free fall» – hundreds of tons of concrete, steel and other materials falling as if they met *no resistance* for about 25 meters or 8 stories! –, thus confirming Chandler's objection (apart from the trivial difference between «about two and a half» and 2.25). However NIST added that «This is consistent with the structural analysis model which showed the exterior columns buckling and losing their capacity to support the loads from the structure above», which is at least disingenuous.<sup>36</sup> In fact:

(i) the supporting capacity due to the buckling of the exterior columns (for its very nature a gradual process) is very unlikely to have *suddenly vanished*;

(ii) even under such an assumption, the reduced capacity of support would be not enough to explain why the upper, falling section, whose mass increased by accretion of floors during the fall, should have reached and maintained for 2.25 seconds a free-fall acceleration.

As to (ii), standard Newtonian physics, namely the *second principle of dynamics* applied to a varying mass system, implies that the progressive increase of mass of the falling section should have produced a *deceleration with respect to free fall*, no matter what the supporting capacity of the lower structure had become. This is a basic result which we explain more in detail in the Appendix.

As a second example of violation of laws of classical mechanics which is implied by the official version, one may cite the collapse of WTC 2: in the initial part of its collapse WTC 2 can be seen to stop the initial rotation of about 34 of its upper floors, which all of a sudden are turned into dust [III]: a very enigmatic phenomenon which, if we refuse to accept that explosives were used, comes very close to *an empirical falsification of the law of conservation of the angular momentum* [45].

#### **9.4 Educational implications**

One reason that prompted us to write this article is that as scholars working in the fields of physics and physics education, we are disturbed by the fact that believing in the official version amounts, from a physical point of view, to nothing less than renouncing one's laboriously developed physical sense in favour of an act of faith in an unprecedented and virtually miraculous series of events. In view of the energy that many self-styled free-thinkers put into dismantling religious dogmas, creationism and such like, it is surprising that no comparable assault has been made *by those same writers* against what is in effect only slightly different from a new cult – indeed, most of them have become *apologists* of this cult, under the cloak of "debunkers".<sup>37</sup> In fact during the last few decades the term

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36 Notice that NIST did not say "consistent with physical principles", as in their previous draft; all three occurrences of this phrase have been deleted in the final report [36, p. 48].

37 See for instance [75].

“debunker” has increasingly come to signify the exact *opposite* of its natural meaning. A debunker should be a writer showing the inconsistencies or mistakes of official accounts; today a self-styled debunker is as a rule a writer trying to *defend official accounts from legitimate and sometimes cogent criticism*. From this point of view, 9/11 is a very good litmus test to tell apart fake from true sceptics.

We think it important to confirm as sound the common-sense physical explanation of what occurred at the WTC (that is, the existence of further energy sources apart from fire and gravity), until any really stronger alternative hypothesis is put forward. The risk for the public understanding of science is that people may get the misleading and depressing message that one thing is what they are taught in the physics classes, and quite another what happens in the ordinary world – a very dangerous doctrine, which, if unimpeded, will eventually destroy all confidence in schooling and textbook science.

It would be useful to make a poll among eminent physicists all over the world (including, but not restricted to, Nobel laureates) as to the physical plausibility of the official explanation of the WTC's collapses. The results of such a poll, whatever its outcome, would give much food for thought to both sociologists of science and lay people. In fact it is puzzling that while physicists boast of being able to fathom – by very tortuous routes, admittedly – the mysteries of the universe or to classify and measure the ultimate blocks of matter, they might be divided concerning the real cause of those very accessible events and/or the compatibility of their official explanation with the known laws of physics. Our best guess is that most eminent physicists are loath to be involved in a politically sensitive controversy which is likely to damage their public persona.<sup>38</sup> And as shown in the way Steven Jones has been wronged by his own university, their fear is far from groundless.

Another reason which may promote “not taking a stand on 9/11” may be the way scientists are professionally trained not to tread on ground outside their speciality, lest they be charged with infringement of disciplinary divides – which have been effectively transformed into sacred boundaries. Now 9/11 is a very good example of an historical episode which needs a multidisciplinary approach for a proper weighing of the evidence. Conversely, it indicates that the standard training of scientists can work as a tool, enforced in different ways by the power system, to prevent scientific understanding to be freely applied where it would most enlighten and count.<sup>39</sup>

## **10. Who planned 9/11 and the identity of the hijackers**

Two days after the attacks it was clear that the Bush administration was at the same assuring the world that Osama bin-Laden had planned them, and unable to substantiate this claim with any evidence that could be accepted in a court for much lesser crimes.

### **10.1 Osama bin-Laden?**

The following is a transcript from the ABC News television show, “This Week”, on September 23, 2001 [2]:

*Sam Donaldson (ABC News):* All right. Let me show you something you said the other day, and just see whether you've changed your view on it, concerning proof. You said, "We are assembling the evidence that will tell us, in a way that the world will fully confer with us – concur with us, who is responsible for this." Are we going to present before the world evidence of Osama bin Laden's guilt?

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38 [XIII] shows the 2001 Nobel Laureate for physics, Carl Wieman, having no better answer than «No opinion» to an interviewer asking him about 9/11 in 2009. It is amusing that Wieman, in his autobiography for the Nobel Foundation, writes: «Over the past several years I have become increasingly involved with trying to improve undergraduate physics education and have been balancing my time between that and my research. I have been examining alternative curricula and learning about the research in physics education as to how students do and do not learn. A particular concern has been improving how physics is taught to students who are not planning to become physicists, in the hope of one day making physics understandable, useful, and interesting to a large fraction of the population» [82]. Indeed: what about making the WTC collapses understandable in terms of undergraduate physics? A good illustration of how fruitful 9/11 can be in a philosophy class as a discussion topic is given in [79].

39 See chapter 1, section 4.

*Secretary of Defense, Colin Powell:* Yes, and I think his guilt is going to be very obvious to the world. I mean, he has been indicted previously for terror activity against the United States, and so this is a continuing pattern of terrorism, and we are putting all of the information that we have together, the intelligence information, the information being generated by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. And I think we will put before the world, the American people, a persuasive case that there will be no doubt when that case is presented that it is al- Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, who has been responsible for this terrible tragic [inaudible].

*Donaldson:* So you're talking about something beyond simple assertions by US leaders. You're talking about assertions backed up by the evidence.

*Powell:* Yes.

*Donaldson:* OK.

The very same day, US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was interviewed on CNN. The following is an excerpt of that interview, in which Rice explains the US response to Taliban demands for evidence showing Osama bin Laden is behind the September 11 attacks [14]. A video clip was first shown the full transcript of which is:

*Sohail Shaheen, Taliban Deputy Ambassador to Pakistan:* There are many probabilities who are the real culprits behind this. There is no evidence and proof given to us. We will not be ready to give Osama bin Laden without proof.

Then the following exchange followed:

*Wolf Blitzer, CNN host:* And just to nail down the point, he says he needs proof, he needs evidence, before they hand over Osama bin Laden. Will you give the Taliban regime in Afghanistan any evidence, any proof behind what is in the public domain out there?

*US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice:* Well, again, let's be realistic. This is not a government given to western jurisprudence. So these calls for proof are somewhat misplaced. But clearly, we do have evidence, historical and otherwise, about the relationship of the al-Qaeda network to what happened on September 11. We will begin to lay out that evidence, and we will do it with friends, allies, the American people and others.

In fact, unbelievable as it might appear to newcomers to the 9/11 issue, the FBI *has never named Osama bin-Laden as responsible for the 9/11 attacks*. Moreover Osama bin-Laden from September 12 to October 7 consistently denied having anything to do with 9/11 (although he implied to be happy about the outcome), and surely the uncommon way the towers fell (that is, nearly on their footprints) seems to suggest a desire to *limit* suffering. Neither behaviour fits the picture of bin-Laden as the main culprit of 9/11: usually terrorists are more than willing to *claim* successful actions (sometimes even actions they are *not* responsible for!), and most certainly they are not careful to spare their targeted enemy's lives.

When on May 2, 2011 president Barack Obama (recipient of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize) announced that a US military team had killed Osama bin-Laden in Pakistan that same day, he said, with reference to bin-Laden's supposed responsibility as regards 9/11: «[J]ustice has been done». Apart from the many doubts on the whole CIA-directed military action, including basic uncertainties as to the very identity of the person murdered by the Navy SEALs (Navy Sea, Air and Land forces), let alone the ethical value of killing an unarmed person, the judicial absurdity of Obama's claim should be clear.

## **10.2 Hijackers?**

Most people believe the planes used on 9/11 were flown into their targets by hijackers. If true, their identity is crucial to know.

On September 14 the FBI published a list of 19 hijackers (none of them coming from Iraq or Afghanistan) [24], but neither the FBI nor any other branch of the US government has ever provided any evidence to justify how they came to that list. At the time, FBI director Robert Mueller first stated that he had «a fairly high level of confidence» that they knew the true identities of the hijackers. Subsequently, on September 20, Mueller stated that «We have several others that are still in question. The investigation is ongoing, and I am not certain as to several of the others» [50].

Despite the seeming initial uncertainty over the real identity of the hijackers, the FBI list

has never changed. It has been published and cited as complete, not tentative. However, what makes the list problematic is that several of the accused hijackers are alive: the *Los Angeles Times* [24] lists six; the BBC [7] lists four. If some (or all) of the hijackers stole the identity of innocent citizens, who are the real hijackers? The story told by the FBI of the passport of a terrorist in Plane 1 being discovered on the ground *after* the destruction of WTC 1 is much too incredible to be worth a detailed refutation (see, however, [36, pp. 26-7]).

But what is worse is that, contrary to what anyone would suppose, *none of the names in that list, and not even any other Arab name, appeared in the passenger manifests for any of the four flights!* [36, p. 28]. The fact that the mainstream media have succeeded in making such an outrageous inconsistency invisible is evidence enough of their magician's ability to substitute reality with fiction in the public awareness.

In the 9/11 Commission report Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who had been arrested in 2003 in Pakistan by CIA and Pakistan intelligence agents, is described as «the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks», and is quoted 211 times. He is the main source of the reconstruction contained in the report, and yet the reliability of his alleged revelations is more than doubtful, as they have been elicited by torture<sup>40</sup>.

Another serious piece of misinformation involves the cultural identity of the terrorists: they have been systematically described as «devout Muslims» and yet they have been reported by several reliable sources as having patronized lap dancers, gambled, got drunk, and used drugs like cocaine. Not even the most extreme anti-Islam prejudice might suggest a compatibility between these behaviours and Muslim devotion, particularly if we assume that the terrorists were so keen on their religious creed as to be ready to sacrifice their lives to honour it.

## 11. The Pentagon

The whole official account of the Pentagon attack is worse than paradoxical: it is substantially meaningless, starting from the very fact that *the Pentagon* – that is, «probably the best protected building in the world» [36, p. 189], surrounded by an airspace where «civilian flying is prohibited at all times» [34, p. 77] – should have been chosen as one of the targets. In other words, the terrorists are supposed to have aimed at a building against which the probability of a successful exploit was *infinitesimal*. Here is how Griffin describes, quite accurately, the official account of the Pentagon attack [36, pp. 195-6]:

[T]he al-Qaeda “mastermind” behind the attack on the Pentagon would have been the stupidest mastermind conceivable: besides selecting a completely incompetent pilot to attack the Pentagon, he ordered [Hani] Hanjour [the supposed terrorist pilot] to attack Wedge 1, thereby forcing him to fly an impossibly difficult trajectory, to get through an obstacle course, and to spend extra time for the approach, during which his plane could have been shot down. The choice of Wedge 1 also resulted in the least damage and the fewest deaths, including no deaths whatsoever among the Pentagon's leadership.

In other words: too much even for a work of fiction. Whatever hit the Pentagon (Plane 3, or a missile, or a bomb), virtually nothing of any importance in the official version comes even close to making sense. Let us consider two main issues.

### 11.1 How could the Pentagon be hit by Plane 3?

Griffin says the manoeuvre that Plane 3 should have done to strike the Pentagon the way it supposedly did was «impossibly difficult». In fact here is what Russ Wittenberg, first a

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40 «In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, the US government authorized “enhanced interrogation” techniques (EITs) (i.e., prolonged sleep, sensory deprivation, forced nudity, and painful body position) that were routinely applied to detainees in US custody in at least three theaters of operation and an unknown number of secret “black sites” operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). They did this despite the fact that each EIT was considered torture by the United Nations, and the United States recognized them as such in its reports on human rights practices. Although legal sources and trained interrogation experts warned of the unreliability and questionable legality of coerced confessions, EITs were authorized by the CIA in January 2003 and the Department of Defense (DoD) in April 2003» [42].

military and then, for 35 years, a commercial pilot was reported saying in 2005 [73]:

Knowing the flight characteristics of the "big birds" like the back of his hand, Wittenberg convincingly argued there was absolutely no possibility that Flight 77 could have "descended 7,000 feet in two minutes, all the while performing a steep 270 degree banked turn before crashing into the Pentagon's first floor wall without touching the lawn."

Wittenberg claimed the high speed maneuver would have surely stalled the jetliner sending it into a nose dive, adding it was "totally impossible for an amateur who couldn't even fly a Cessna to maneuver the jetliner in such a highly professional manner", something Wittenberg said he couldn't do with 35 years of commercial jetliner experience.

"For a guy to just jump into the cockpit and fly like an ace is impossible – there is not one chance in a thousand", said Wittenberg, recalling that when he made the jump from Boeing 727's to the highly sophisticated computerized characteristics of the 737's through 767's it took him considerable time to feel comfortable flying.

"I had to be trained to use the new, computerized systems. I just couldn't jump in and fly one", he added.

Wittenberg is not alone in this claims. Another former 757 pilot, Ralph Omholt, said: «The idea that an unskilled pilot could have flown this trajectory is simply too ridiculous to consider» [34, p. 79]. Other aviation sources commented upon that manoeuvre as being the work of a «great talent», that should have flown with «extraordinary skill» [36, p. 190].

Now the unexpected fact is that Hanjour did not simply lack a "great talent" in flying, but was «a trainee noted for incompetence», who, according to one of his instructors, «could not fly at all» [19].<sup>41</sup> So we have an unbelievable fairy-tale, which the 9/11 establishment would have us to swallow unreflectingly as historical fact.

### **11.2 The official video of "Flight 77 hitting the Pentagon" does not show Flight 77 hitting the Pentagon**

There are many other very basic, commonsensical questions on the attack on the Pentagon which still wait for an answer. Here are a few:

- Why no damages have been caused by the wings and the tail of Plane 4 on the external walls and windows of the Pentagon?
- Why did the plane that supposedly impacted the Pentagon not leave some wreck of the right form?
- How could a fragile plane like Plane 4, mainly in aluminium, break a hundred columns and perforate all three walls of three other buildings, making a hole of 2 meters of diameter in the third building?
- Why, in contrast with what happened with the Twin Towers, when the plane remained virtually inside the building, did the plane that impacted the Pentagon (a building built in a much more robust way, with more concrete columns) spread out all over the other three buildings?
- Consider what happened in the plane crash [78] of TAM in Brazil on July 17, 2007, when the plane, an Airbus A-320 carrying 187 people, hit the company warehouse building, provoking a fire lasting several hours, and yet all the corpses (199, including those of victims on the ground) were recovered and almost all of them (195) were identified (it took two months, however). Why in the case of the Pentagon no remains of bodies were found inside the damaged buildings?

In May, 2006, a Department of Defense website for Freedom of Information Act requests (FOIA) listed the following headline: "Videos of American Flight 77 striking the Pentagon on September 11, 2001" [IX]. Nearly five years after 9/11, this was the first official release of any videos in conjunction with the 9/11 Pentagon attacks.

Despite the Defense Department's title, the videos do not show Plane 4 (or any other plane, for that matter) hitting the Pentagon. What can be seen is ambiguous, and cannot be said to confirm what struck the Pentagon. See the videos for yourself to confirm this –

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<sup>41</sup> Compare with the following old joke. There are two people. One asks: "Can you play violin?", and the other replies: "I don't know, I have never tried".

or just consider that if the videos did show the plane approaching the building, a still frame from the video would have been captured and printed in newspapers across the world. But no such still photographs have ever emerged. If Plane 4 did indeed strike the Pentagon, surely security cameras watching the headquarters of the world's most formidable military would have caught the plane on tape. Under what conditions would the Pentagon release videos alleging to show a plane that in fact do not show a plane? And if the Department of Defense has no video of Plane 4 hitting the Pentagon, why would they simply not say they have no such video?

Whether Plane 4 really hit the Pentagon is an interesting and important question, but it is not the question we wish to raise here. Rather, the question is: how can the Department of Defense claim to release "Videos of [Plane 4] striking the Pentagon" when the videos show no such thing? Did they forget to review the videos before releasing them? Did nobody realize the videos lacked a key element – a plane? Or did they make an heroic attempt to exploit the mass-psychology effect famously described in Andersen's story on the Emperor's New Clothes?

Considering the importance of 9/11, it is surprising that the release of a mislabelled video has not triggered an investigation.

### **13. Some general remarks on 9/11 and the power system**

It might be said of 9/11 what has been said of a famous result in the foundations of quantum mechanics: that those who are not bothered by it must have rocks in their head. This article has argued that believing the official version is very close to believing a number of miracles, including the trustworthiness of government members that have already been proved to be liars in matters criminally comparable to 9/11 (section 5).

On the positive side, if we can call it so, the propaganda effort around 9/11 is a global, and so far substantially successful, sociological experiment in passing off to the world's peoples as historical reality what is essentially a piece of *bad fiction*, in order to justify a criminal domestic and international political project. We say "bad fiction" because of the too many inconsistencies and unbelievable assertions contained in it, and which would defeat any literary ambitions in a real work of fiction.

A natural question is: given the implausibility of the official story, is it plausible that the US government has ever been truly committed to investigating the biggest crime scene in American history? We have seen (sections 2, 9.2) that there is ample direct evidence for a negative answer. The 9/11 affair shows that no amount of contrary evidence is sufficient to dismount an establishment claim on sufficiently sensitive political matters. To be more precise, while obstinate independent researchers and journalists may succeed in convincing most of the world population that the official version is untenable, this is not enough to provoke a formal retraction by, let alone indictment of, the liars. While the nature of the conspiracy behind 9/11 is contentious, the conspiracy of the mainstream media supporting unanimously the official version is rather easy to see through, as regards both means and ends.

Eleven years have passed since 9/11. With each passing day, fewer people may feel that the truth regarding 9/11 is important, its political relevance being diminished in the myriad of events that have occurred since. With more current concerns, such as the Middle East political instability and a nuclear North Korea, people may feel that attention should not be diverted to past events like 9/11, especially since they have already been addressed by the 9/11 Commission (or haven't they?). Thus, people who want to know what happened on 9/11 may increasingly find themselves not taken seriously.

It has happened before. Knowing who killed President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 was considered critically important at the time – a matter of national security. Decades later, three quarters of Americans believe that there was a government cover-up of the truth [56] – yet majority views hold little sway over officially sanctioned truths.

## 14. Epilogue

We close by reporting two news that have been ignored by mainstream media, and that suggest there may be some room for hoping that one day the official version will be openly rejected.

A very strange coincidence in the thoroughly strange story of 9/11 (at least in its official representation) is the fact that the BBC reporter in New York, Jane Standley, announced the fall of WTC 7 *over 20 minutes before the event*.<sup>42</sup> You need not be unduly prone to suspecting the integrity of the mainstream media in order to be puzzled by this feat of clairvoyance. Five years and a half later [63], on the BBC website a very lame explanation of this was published, including the statement that they had *lost* the original tapes of the broadcast – of course «for reasons of cock-up, not conspiracy»...

At the beginning of 2013 a British citizen, Tony Rooke, was tried for not having paid the TV license [21]. Speaking to the district judge he declared that the reason for this evasion was the following:

“I believe the BBC, who are directly funded by the licence fee, are furthering the purposes of terrorism and I have incontrovertible evidence to this effect. I do not use this word lightly given where I am”.

Rooke had with himself a video that he wanted to show in court as evidence, but the judge «said it was not relevant to the trial». So Rooke went on explaining:

“The BBC reported it 20 minutes before it [i.e. WTC 7] fell. They knew about it beforehand. Last time I was here I asked you [the judge]: 'Where you aware of World Trade Center 7?' [...] You said you had heard of it. Ten years later you should have more than heard of it. It's the BBC's job to inform the public. Especially of miracles and laws of physics become suspended [...] They have made programmes making fools of and ridiculing those of us who believe in the laws of gravity”.

During the trial the judge replied: «Even if I accept the evidence you say, this court has no power to create a defence in the manner which you put forward». There were a hundred supporters who had come to attend the trial, although only about 40 could come in; it is reported that «[t]here was cheering and applause as Rooke put his case forward in court».

In September 2012 Ferdinando Imposimato, the Honorary President of the Supreme Court in Italy and a member for three administrations of the Italian Parliament Anti-Mafia Commission, wrote [41]:

The only possibility for achieving justice is to submit the best evidence concerning the involvement of specific individuals in 9/11 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and ask him to investigate according to the articles 12, 13, 15 and 17, letters a and b, of the Statute of ICC [...]

The truth about September 11, 2001 is vitally important, but unless discussion and debate over the plausibility of the official story is taken seriously up to and including prosecution for international crimes of those held responsible, 9/11 – the geopolitical watershed of our time – will become another Kennedy Assassination, a piece of trivia, a cultural category which is not taken seriously, no matter how many people may not believe the government. In other words, in the case of 9/11 as in several others it is up to us, the citizens – both laypeople and scientists –, to prevent democracy from dissolving into a rhetorical trick masking the vested interests of a rapacious and ruthless minority.

## Appendix – Conservation of Momentum and Variable Mass Systems

The following account agrees with some remarks in [12, 65, 46]. In elementary physics the 2nd principle of dynamics for a point particle is commonly expressed in the form

$$(1) \quad \mathbf{F} = m\mathbf{a} ,$$

where  $\mathbf{F}$  is the force acting on the particle, and  $m$  and  $\mathbf{a}$  are, respectively, the mass and the acceleration of the particle. However, this is not the more general form of the principle, insofar as it assumes that the mass of the particle does not vary with time. Even

<sup>42</sup> In [VI] you can see WTC 7 (or «Salomon Brothers Building», as both BBC journalists call it) standing behind Standley, while she talks of its collapse *as having already occurred*.

in very commonplace situations this is not necessarily the case. (Take for instance a bucket of water with a hole at the bottom: the more natural assumption, if we want to model it as a particle, is to give it a variable mass). In these cases (1) must be substituted by the more general momentum law:

$$(2) \quad \mathbf{F} = d(m\mathbf{v})/dt$$

where  $\mathbf{v}$  is the velocity of the particle. By computing the derivative we obtain

$$(3) \quad \mathbf{F} - (dm/dt)\mathbf{v} = m\mathbf{a}.$$

Now let a point particle with variable mass model the system of all floors in WTC 7 which are reached by the progressive collapse of the building: the more floors are reached, the bigger the mass of this *upper section*. We can consider only the component along the vertical direction. Assume, according to the official version, that the only forces acting are two: 1) gravity (with free fall acceleration  $g$ ), 2) the resistance  $R$  of the lower structure (which may also be non-constant, but is always directed against gravity). By substitution in the vertical component of (3) we have:

$$(4) \quad mg - R - (dm/dt)v = ma,$$

all quantities involved being positive. Therefore:

$$(5) \quad a = g - (R/m) - (dm/dt)(v/m),$$

which shows that even under the official (and hardly believable, unless explosives had been used) hypothesis that the resistance of the lower structure be negligible ( $R = 0$ ), we should have *always*  $a < g$ .

In particular the transition from NIST's "Stage 1" ( $a < g$ ) to the more-than-2-seconds- long "Stage 2" ( $a = g$ ), that is, an *increase* in the acceleration up to essentially free-fall acceleration, cannot be understood unless some other force was acting in the direction of gravity.

One might object to assuming  $m$  to be a differentiable function. However, by using a discrete model of progressive collapse, and exploiting the law conservation of momentum (under the hypothesis of a totally inelastic collision of the upper section with every single lower floor) in the form of

$$(6) \quad m_{n+1} v_{n+1} = m_n v_n$$

where  $m_n$  is the total mass of the upper section up to and including the  $n$ -th floor from the top, and  $v_n$  is its velocity, one finds immediately that

$$(7) \quad v_{n+1} = (m_n/m_{n+1}) v_n < v_n,$$

which means that a sudden deceleration must occur every time a new floor is reached, which is incompatible with the gravity acceleration being ever reached and maintained (cf. [52 (a)-(b)]).

Needless to say, by computer simulations based on ad hoc assumptions one can mimic some part of the process as documented in the videos, but the issue of the compatibility with physical principles was not tackled by NIST, since NIST's «probable collapse sequence» [...] does not actually include the structural behavior of the tower after the conditions for collapse initiation were reached [...]» (NIST report as cited in [45]). In other words ([57, p. 142], cit. in [45]):

The results were a simulation of the structural deterioration of each tower from the time of aircraft impact *to the time at which the building became unstable, i.e., was poised for collapse*.

As so often with the official statements on 9/11 you have to read it twice before believing that you have not misunderstood it. Yes, the NIST experts are just saying that they did not bother with the details of the actual collapse: they stopped when they had succeeded in simulating the «conditions for collapse initiation»! As to the computer software used by NIST, here is what «a leading US structural engineer» said to *New Civil Engineer* in 2005 (cit. in [46]):

A leading US structural engineer said NIST had obviously devoted enormous resources to the development of the impact and fire models. "By comparison the global structural model is not as sophisticated", he said. "*The software used has been pushed to new limits, and*

there have been a lot of simplifications, extrapolations and judgement calls. [...]".  
Is this science?

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