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A New Theory on 9/11



By Sander Hicks

Do you remember how Bush spoke right after 9/11? He repeatedly used a collection of phrases like "they hate freedom" and "these cowards." He called the terrorists "folks" in a forcedly casual moment. Live on CNN, he was taken to the smoking wound at the Pentagon and asked what he felt: "Sad, Angry" were his answers. And who can forget his inspiring speech, on 9/13, back in the White House: with a nervous smirk, "I'm a lovin' guy. And I am also someone, however, who's got a job to do and I intend to do it. And this is a terrible moment. But this country will not relent until we have saved ourselves and others from the terrible tragedy that came upon America."

Not a very convincing display of leadership or vision? Maybe there's a reason for that. Let's look at the creation of "Bush as Real Leader."

After 9/11, senior adviser Karl Rove arrived back on the public scene. Up till then, it seemed Rove had been cloistered from the media following his imbroglia over peddling political favors (Intel, Enron) from his White House office. (In August, analysts thought Rove would be fired for his conflict of interests over holding Intel Stock while meeting with Intel executives in the White House about their impending merger.) The week after the September 11 disaster, he was back out front, spinning, repairing and countering the claims that the President was a deer stuck in the highlights. Media critics asked why the President ran like an animal from flames, flying in Air Force One and touching down at various air force bases before returning to Washington DC. Rove took out his yellow legal pad and claimed that his notes read that the President had originally stated "I don't want some tinhorn terrorists keeping me out of Washington." Did Bush really say this? Or is this one of the pragmatic political machinations that Nixonite Karl "Dirty Tricks" Rove is famous for?

If one looks past the deceptive simplicities of CNN and the White House, we see the air strike (most likely) from Osama bin Laden is the result of a career of secret deals and sooty political machinations. It's a story you won't get in the corporate media, where the *New York Times* International desk has all too often run with the edicts of the State Department.

When Bush was raising money for his first company, Arbusto Energy, he took \$50,000 from his Texas National Guard buddy James Bath. The problem was, Bath had "no substantial money of his own" at this time, according to *Time* magazine reporters Jonathan Beaty and S.C. Gwynne. James Bath was later sued four times by his former real estate business partner Bill White, in an effort to expose where he got his money.¹ Bath was working at that time for Saudi Sheikhs and was later indicted in the B.C.C.I. (Bank of Credit and Commerce International) Scandal. Bath was a middleman for rich Saudis who wished to gain political influence the old-fashioned way in the USA: by strategically spending money. In this case, investing \$50,000 in the high-risk Arbusto Energy was a sure thing in the sense that it would get them closer to political power: Bush's father was director of the CIA at the time. The Saudi Sheikhs in question were Sheikh Kalid bin Mahfouz and Sheikh Salem M. bin Laden. The latter is the brother of Osama bin Laden. Although some bin Laden brothers have distanced themselves from Osama since the World Trade Center massacre, Salem's untimely death in 1988 is a clue to understanding the present foreign policy debacle. Salem was a bit older than Osama, and the two were very close. Osama attended Salem's funeral in 1988. It could be that on 9/11, George W. Bush, formerly of Arbusto Energy, found himself haunted by that \$50,000.

Under oath, Bath testified in 1991 that in the late '70s he was the only director of Skyway Aircraft Leasing, LTD, a Houston company owned by Khaled bin Mahfouz. (Mahfouz was also a major shareholder in the B.C.C.I. at the time.) Around this time, in 1976, Bath told his Venturcorp business partner Bill White that he was acting as a "liaison" for the CIA, reporting on Saudi Arabia.² Note that George Herbert Walker Bush was director of the CIA from 1976 to 1977, when the Carter administration took over. In 1977, Bath bought the companies that run Houston Gulf Airport on Salem bin Laden's behalf. Bath's commission was 5% on all deals for the Saudis.³

Like his father 20 years earlier, Salem bin Laden's life ended in an aviation disaster. In 1988, Salem was flying a BAC 1-11 that crashed under suspicious circumstances. According to PBS, the aircraft disaster was investigated but the results of the inquiry never revealed. According to one of the pilots of this BAC 1-11, the American Heinrich Rupp, the aircraft had flown Vice Presidential candidate George Herbert Walker Bush and future CIA director William Casey to Paris on October 18, 1980. There, they allegedly negotiated with the Iranians to refrain from releasing the 52 American hostages until Reagan was inaugurated. Although this "October Surprise" theory often meets with rancor from Bush loyalists in the establishment media, it does pass the journalistic code of reportability: it has at least two sources. It has three, in fact, one of which testified before Congress. Not only did the aforementioned pilot Rupp state that the plane

Sander Hicks founded Soft Skull Press in 1992 and has published ground-breaking literature, poetry and political science, including work by Upski Wimsatt, Michael Stipe, Sparrow, Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo, Eileen Myles, Cynthia Hopkins and Dennis Cooper. Under his leadership, Soft Skull became best-known for Upski's *No More Prisons*, and the infamous *Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President*. Hicks' has written five plays that are tragi-comic, absurd, and political. As the lead singer of *White Collar Crime*, Hicks performed at the D.I.Y. Fest at the Warped Tour last year. This is how Brandon Stousy, curator of Buffalo NY's *Prose Acts Festival*, recently described them: "When Hicks called for revolution-at the time he was spinning from a ceiling fan-the band clicked immediately into tight punk cabaret and a friend turned to me and said, 'this is the best band ever.' I believed him: my neck was shivering and I was ready to storm the White House." (illustration by Graphic Havoc)

had been used by Bush and Casey, but Israeli intelligence operative Ben-Menashe told Congress he had seen Bush in Paris before they met with radical Iranian cleric Mehdi Karrubi [see "Towards the Brink", by Robert Parry, 9/17/01, ConsortiumNews.com]. The *Chicago Tribune's* John Maclean heard from a prominent Republican in mid-October: Bush was flying to Paris to meet the Iranians. Maclean asked about this at the State Department, and the State Department told him they dated this trip "October 18, 1980."

No surprise, then that Reagan/Bush were elected. Jimmy Carter looked powerless with the economy in recession and America's hopes held hostage with our 52 countrymen in Tehran. Reagan promised America he had a "secret plan" to release the hostages, but he never had to pretend to use it. Reagan was inaugurated January 20, 1981. That same day, Tehran released all 52 hostages.

What was in it for the Iranians? Advanced American weaponry. They finally had a chance to get a strong advantage over Iraq in the long, bloody, Iran/Iraq War. Up till then, the conflict had been gruesome and protracted; neither side was above the use of chemical warfare.

When a C-123 cargo plane was shot down by the Sandinistas in 1986, the Iran/Contra/Cocaine scandal began to unravel. The Reagan administration was exposed for violating its own laws, selling arms to the Iranians in exchange for the release of hostages in Lebanon, and then diverting the funds to the Contra counterrevolutionaries in Nicaragua. Vice President Bush maintained at the time (and later throughout his Presidency) that he was "out of the loop." But late into his disastrous 1992 presidential re-election campaign, General Richard Secord testified that Bush did know all about the operation. The best that President Bush's campaign strategist (his equivalent of Karl Rove) Mary Matalin could do at this point was to panic. Already suffering 15 points down in the polls, she realized that this news would sink them permanently. With four days to go before the election, she tried to desperately spin: she claimed that Iran/Contra was old news, the people didn't care. Quoting the famed Republican operative Lee Atwater, she stated, "people's capacity to focus on politics is about the depth and breadth of their thumbnail."

"The people's capacity" to sense when they were being lied to was underestimated by Bush and Matalin. They suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Bill "Slick Willie" Clinton, and more eligible citizens voted in this election since 1972. In an often forgotten move, on Christmas Eve, 1992, Bush pardoned Caspar Weinberger, Robert McFarlane and four other CIA and U.S. intelligence operatives. Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh stated, "President Bush's pardon of Caspar Weinberger and other Iran-contra defendants undermines the principle that no man is above the law." Later in his statement, Walsh pointed out that Bush had withheld evidence, refusing to hand over his personal notes on high level meetings. This cowardly move to save his own skin and not cooperate with the special prosecutor was a deliberate contempt of Congress and due process of law.

Straight Talk on Afghanistan

Ever since the young Iranian radical Muslim students overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah, the United States was without a foothold in the oil-rich South Asia region. The State Department turned to Afghanistan, a country with a long history of turmoil that had recently resulted in a 1978 spring coup. In April of 1978, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), a nationalist revolutionary group, overthrew aristocrat Mohammad Daoud. The United States began supporting Afghan fundamentalist Muslims a year later, despite the fact that in February 1979 these same fundamentalists had

pulled off a kidnapping that resulted in the death of the American ambassador in Kabul. According to historian William Blum in his book *Killing Hope*, at this time "Afghanistan was a backward nation: a life expectancy of about 40, infant mortality of at least 25 percent, absolutely primitive sanitation, widespread malnutrition, illiteracy of more than 90 percent, very few highways, not one mile of railway, most people living in nomadic tribes or as impoverished farmers in mud villages, identifying more with ethnic groups than with a larger political concept, a life scarcely different from many centuries earlier." The PDP was not communist, but it did institute badly needed reforms. It didn't abolish private property or religion, rather it "declared a commitment to Islam within a secular state" according to Blum. On the domestic political front, the PDP mixed a social democratic agenda with some market regulating initiatives. In perhaps the sharpest contrast to the past and to Muslim fundamentalists, the PDP supported the education and equality of women.

By May 1979, British political scientist Fred Halliday stated "more has changed in the countryside over the last year than in the two centuries since the state was established." However, counter-revolution from the large landowners, tribal chiefs, businessmen, and the former royal family began to build in the hills. Although the *Economist* reported that "no restrictions had been imposed on religious practice," a band of Mujahedeen or "holy warriors" claimed the PDP had secret plans to curtail freedom of religion. Even the *New York Times* stated plainly that the religious issue was a prop. It was "being used by some Afghans who actually object more to President Taraki's plans for land reforms and other changes in this feudal society."

The United States and Pakistan, a recent convert to orthodox Islam, began training the Mujahedeen at camps in Pakistan. President Taraki begged Moscow for serious military aid to help put down this insurrection, but Moscow demurred, scared of creating an international incident. Six months later, Taraki was murdered in office by his deputy Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin, a hard-line reformist who, according to Blum, ran "roughshod over tradition and tribal and ethnic autonomy." There were also allegations from the Soviets and others that the power-mad Amin had a past association with the CIA. The Soviet army entered the country, and on December 8, shot Amin in his palace and helped install Babrak Karmal, an original revolutionary from the 1978 uprising. On December 23, *The Washington Post* clarified "There was no charge [by the State Department] that the Soviets have invaded Afghanistan, since the troops apparently were invited."

Yet, the conflict turned into a Cold Warrior's ideal: direct confrontation with the troops of the "Evil Empire" through the use of non-American forces.

Rep. Charles Wilson of Texas expressed the mood in Washington: "There were 58,000 dead in Vietnam and we owe the Russians one ... I have a slight obsession with it, because of Vietnam. I thought the Soviets ought to get a dose of it ... I've been of the opinion that this money was better spent to hurt our adversaries than other money in the Defense Department budget."

Then, as now, the corporate media fell in line, calling for tough reactions, military force, and a removing of the limits on the CIA. The *Wall Street Journal* said, "Clearly we ought to keep open the chance of covert aid to Afghan rebels" although the CIA had been funneling supplies and military advisors since 1978.

At no point in all of the bluster and rhetoric of the hawks in the White House or Senate, did anyone have the foresight to think what the result

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would be if the rebels won. Although the US at this time demonized the fundamentalist revolutionaries in Iran, no one thought that the Mujahedeen should be labeled "extremist" although many Mujahedeen devotedly carried holy pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeini with them into battle. Today, the US demonizes "terrorists" but the Mujahedeen shot down passenger airplanes and bombed airports. In 1986, the British hard-liner Margaret Thatcher met Abdul Haq, a Mujahedeen leader who confessed to planting a bomb at Kabul airport in 1984, which killed at least 28 people. In a gruesome and farcical repeat of history, the *New York Times* reported on September 25, 2001, that Haq was coming out of retirement to join the new coalition of U.S.-backed anti-Taliban forces in the North of the country. He had been living in Rome, the same home city of the "exiled 86-year-old king of Afghanistan" and he indicated that he had been communicating with the National Security Council.

The entire Foreign Policy establishment in Washington for the past two decades has a lot to answer for. But Bush brings it all to a head with a special dash of bumbling mediocrity, a clumsy obviousness that forces things into harsh focus. Bush pulled the US out of recent Israeli-Palestinian talks while publicly laying much of the blame for the violence on Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. According to former AP reporter Robert Parry, "Earlier this month [September 2001], Bush ordered U.S. diplomats to walk out of an anti-racism conference because it was considering language that would portray the Palestinians as victims of racism at the hands of Israeli authorities." Bush (and Al Gore) have staunchly supported the ineffective sanctions against Iraq that kill 5,357 children a month, according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

So in light of this, is Osama bin Laden a cowardly madman with no scruples? A little research shows a different picture. The following is not presented to endorse the murderous politics or tactics of Osama bin Laden. Rather, this is presented to show that writing off Osama bin Laden as a "madman" or "barbarian" is to ignore the arguments the US's enemy #1 is making. ABC News' John Miller's 1998 interview with bin Laden shows an intelligent but desperate leader who has declared war on the USA. He feels the USA is just as guilty of genocide, but the USA is more hypocritical about its tactics. He told John Miller, "The American imposes himself on everyone. Americans accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists--those children, who have no weapons and have not even reached maturity. At the same time, Americans defend a country, the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children.

"Your situation with Muslims in Palestine is shameful--if there is any shame left in America. Houses were demolished over the heads of children. Also, by the testimony of relief workers in Iraq, the American-led sanctions resulted in the death of more than one million Iraqi children. All of this is done in the name of American interests. We believe that the biggest thieves in the world and the terrorists are the Americans. The only way for us to fend off these assaults is to use similar means. We do not worry about American opinion or the fact that they place prices on our heads. We as Muslims believe our fate is set."

Bin Laden was also responsible for the anti-U.S. military action against the elite Army Rangers in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993, as described in the popular true-life "nonfiction novel" *Black Hawk Down*, by Mark Bowden. Bin Laden seems to pride himself in having a unity of purpose, the deciding factor in battle according to Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. He found the Americans in Somalia were empty and unmotivated:

"After leaving Afghanistan, the Muslim fighters headed for Somalia and prepared for a long battle, thinking that the Americans were like the Russians," bin Laden said. "The youth were surprised at the low morale of

the American soldiers and realized more than before that the American soldier was a paper tiger and after a few blows ran in defeat. And America forgot all the hoopla and media propaganda...about being the world leader and the leader of the New World Order, and after a few blows they forgot about this title and left, dragging their corpses and their shameful defeat."

John Miller asked bin Laden: "Why would [you] kill American soldiers whose work was to restore order and allow for the distribution of food?"

Bin Laden replied, "Why should we believe that was the true reason America was there?" he replied. "Everywhere else they went where Muslims lived, all they did was kill children and occupy Muslim land."

Asked about the ethics of killing civilians in wartime, bin Laden countered, "American history does not distinguish between civilians and military, not even women and children. They are the ones who used bombs against Nagasaki. Can these bombs distinguish between infants and military? America does not have a religion that will prevent it from destroying all people."

"So we tell the Americans as people," bin Laden said softly, "and we tell the mothers of soldiers and American mothers in general that if they value their lives and the lives of their children, to find a nationalistic government that will look after their interests and not the interests of the Jews. The continuation of tyranny will bring the fight to America, as Ramzi Yousef and others did. This is my message to the American people: to look for a serious government that looks out for their interests and does not attack others, their lands, or their honor. And my word to American journalists is not to ask why we did that but ask what their government has done that forced us to defend ourselves."

So, it's clear to us, and to U.S. intelligence, that Osama is motivated and willing to do whatever it takes to free Palestine from Israeli/U.S. domination. It's odd, then that the CIA met with him in Paris several times in July 2001. According to Paris' *Le Figaro*, Alexandra Richard reports that CIA official (whom Radio France later identified as Larry Mitchell) met with Osama bin Laden several times between July 4th and July 14th 2001 in the American Hospital in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. Bin Laden was in the hospital for his kidney problems and the CIA official in question later bragged about meeting with America's public enemy number one. Ms. Richard goes on to state, "According to various Arab Diplomatic sources and French intelligence itself, precise information was communicated to the CIA concerning terrorist attacks aimed at American interests in the world, including within its own territory."⁴

The next day, CIA spokeswoman Anya Guilsher told reporters that the piece was "complete and utter nonsense...and I told *Le Figaro* that, too." However, no official statement was published on the CIA's website, unlike on October 5, when CIA spokesman Bill Harlowe issued a broad denial that the CIA had ever had "any relationship whatsoever" with Bin Laden.

Harlowe's firm language leaves no room for a white lie: this one is a solid, black fib. Bin Laden was working in Afghanistan and Pakistan fighting with the anti-Taraki, pro-feudalism, pro-landowner Mujahedeen at the war's start in 1979. Five years later he was the point man for the Maktab al-Khidmar (MAK) where he funneled international aid, cash, and CIA advice into the anti-"communist" cause. In association with Pakistani intelligence, MAK was soon the "primary conduit" for cash, weapons and CIA intelligence.⁵

There is clear evidence that the Bush family and bin Laden families go way back. The U.S. media have dismissed any suspicion here, by claiming that Osama is the "black sheep" of the family, and that he has been dis-

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owned. But according to the BBC ⁶, Abdullah and Omar bin Laden are also wanted by the FBI for involvement in 9/11 (according to FBI case ID# Case ID - 199-Eye WF 213 589. 199 I). And when the U.S. airports were all closed in the days following 9/11, a special charter flight out of Boston's Logan airport let 11 members of Bin Laden's family slip out back to Saudi Arabia. Is it any wonder that Osama "happened" to have eluded the U.S. military's lightning fast domination of the region?

Joe Trento is author of the "Secret History of the CIA" and Bureau Chief of the National Security and Natural Resources News Service, a non-profit investigative news organization in Washington, D.C. On November 6, 2001, he told the BBC, "as far back as 1996, the FBI was very concerned about this organization....The FBI wanted to investigate these guys. This is not something that they didn't want to do - they wanted to, they weren't permitted to."

The Bush administration's cozy relationship with the corrupt Enron has come back to haunt it in a way related to 9/11, as well. Last year, the USA was preparing to support a 30-country legal campaign to fight terrorism by legislating against tax havens and off-shore money laundering operations.⁷ But given a choice between private wealth and the international security and law, the wealthy and their lobbyists chose the cash. As PBS's Bill Moyers recently commented in a speech before the Environmental Grantmakers Association conference, "...Texas bankers pulled their strings at the White House, and presto, the Bush administration folded and pulled out of the international campaign against tax havens."⁸

Why Did Fighter Planes Fail to Intercept on 9/11?

In the late 60's, Jared Israel was a student radical at Harvard. As head of the local Students for a Democratic Society chapter, he led a campus-wide student/worker strike that battled 300 police over the Vietnam War, the ROTC on campus, and Harvard's gentrification in Cambridge. After running a series of small businesses, he returned to politics in the late 1990's, concerned over the breakup of Yugoslavia and the role of the U.S. media. He founded the website "The Emperor's New Clothes" at emperors-clothes.com, to publish criticism of U.S. foreign policy. With his partner, Illarian Bykov, he authored clear research that attempted to expose U.S. government and media distortions on Serbia. Starting with his reporting on September 13, Jared Israel began assembling a series of solid reports that ask the hard questions about the 9/11 tragedy: "Why were no fighter planes sent up to defend Washington until after the Pentagon was hit? Why did Bush make his publicly-announced appearance at the Booker School if he already knew of the attacks? Why do the explanations of Dick Cheney and Richard Myers leave us with more questions than answers?" Jared Israel's "indictments" on emperors-clothes.com have informed the television reporting of Barrie Zwicker at Canada's Vision TV, as well as programming on the BBC. Even if the U.S. corporate media can't bear to consider the questions Israel raises, you get the sense that this reporter will remain there, no matter what, writing reports that are clear in their questions, with his sources footnoted and linked, backing up his story.

Jared Israel caught Vice President Cheney in what he considers a major slip-up. The official story from the White House is that President Bush first found out about the World Trade Center hits when he was visiting with students at the Booker School. However, on "Meet the Press," Cheney told Tim Russert that American Flight 77, which eventually struck the Pentagon, "came initially at the White House...."

Tim Russert asked, "The plane actually circled the White House?"

Cheney responded, "Didn't circle it, but was headed on a track into it.

The Secret Service has an arrangement with the F.A.A. They had open lines after the World Trade Center was..."

Dick Cheney stopped talking. Mr. Russert tried to complete his sentence for him by suggesting the phrase "Tracking it by radar."⁹ According to Jared Israel, the fact that Dick Cheney didn't complete his sentence is crucial. If the F.A.A. was communicating with the Secret Service on "open lines" after 8:46 AM, when the first tower was hit, then Bush and company in Florida would have been informed before he even began travelling to the school.

Bush's foreknowledge is supported by reports from two journalists who were in the Bush entourage on 9/11. ABC's John Cochran told Anchor Peter Jennings, "Peter, as you know, the President's down in Florida talking about education. He got out of his hotel suite this morning, was about to leave, reporters saw the White House chief of staff, Andy Card, whisper into his ear. The reporter said to the president, 'Do you know what's going on in New York?' He said he did, and he said he will have something about it later."¹⁰

Associated Press reporter Sonya Ross also reported that she heard about the WTC crashes while the White House press corps was travelling to the school. She sought out more information from White House officials, but no one had a comment until after 9:05 AM, when the President and staff were at the Booker School.

The President knew that a terrorist attack was underway in New York but still traveled to the school for the public appearance that had been announced in the local papers that morning. How could he know that he would not be in danger? In 1994 *Time* magazine printed that the Secret Service's "one unsolvable problem" was that commercial jets could be hijacked while flying down into D.C. over the Potomac and crashed into the White House.¹¹ If commercial jets killing the President were such a pressing issue in 1994, why did the Secret Service not need to care in 2001?

On January 28, 2002, on Canada's Insight Mediafile at Vision TV, host Barrie Zwicker built a story based in part on Jared Israel's research.

Zwicker's program asks why, "In the almost two hours of the total drama [of the morning of 9/11] not a single U.S. Air Force interceptor turns a wheel, until it's almost too late. Why? Was it total incompetence on the part of aircrews trained and equipped to scramble in minutes? Well, unlike the U.S. Air Force, I'll cut to the chase. Simply to ask these few questions is to find the official narrative frankly implausible. The more questions you pursue, it becomes more plausible that there's a different explanation. Namely, that elements within the top U.S. military, intelligence and political leadership, which are closely intertwined, are complicit in what happened on September 11."

Barrie Zwicker has been a television journalist and producer at Vision TV since 1988. He co-founded the channel, the only non-profit, independent cable outfit in Canada. Part of the basic cable package, all Canadian cabled households get Vision, which is dedicated to multi-faith religious programming. Vision supports itself through a healthy mix of advertising, donations, airtime rental, and household cable fees. Vision's programs are viewed by between 100,000 and 150,000 people. After the broadcast, in a correspondence to emperors-clothes.com, "For me to be the first, apparently, to ask these questions on air is ridiculous. Big media should have done it already."

Zwicker, in letters to Emperors-clothes.com, later clarified his comparison

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between the situation on 9/11 and the airplane disaster that killed professional golfer Payne Stewart. When Stewart's Learjet depressurized and stopped responding to radio contact on October 25, 1999, according to government records, an F-16 was by that plane's side within 81 minutes. The F-16 "intercepted" the wayward Learjet, i.e. had caught up with it, and attempted to get close and make visual contact with the plane's distressed crew. All of this was in line with strict procedures written by the F.A.A. In the case of Payne Stewart, something had gone horribly awry, the windows were fogged over (probably from a loss of pressure) and everyone on board was dead by the time the plane flew itself on autopilot into the countryside of South Dakota and crashed.

If the skies in October 1999, are so well-protected that a Learjet with five people on board warrants F-16 escorts once it deviates from its flight path and wanders into rural airspace, why did the same fighter jets stand down on September 11, 2001? The first hijacking deviated Flight 11 from its path at 7:45 AM. The F.A.A. states it suspected it was hijacked by 8:20. Flight 11 hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 AM, killing the 92 people on board, including David Angell, creator of the popular TV show "Frasier." The F.A.A. called the Secret Service at this moment and established the "open line" that Mr. Cheney mentioned.

The then-Acting Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Richard B. Myers issued three contradictory statements about why no fighters were dispatched to protect America's eastern metropolises. But no one in the government has clearly explained why fighters did not take to the air until after 9:35, after the Pentagon was attacked.

According to the Congressional Record, Senator Bill Nelson of Florida asked Richard Myers at his confirmation hearings:

"The second World Trade tower was hit shortly after 9:00. And the Pentagon was hit approximately 40 minutes later.... You said earlier in your testimony that we had not scrambled any military aircraft until after the Pentagon was hit. And so, my question would be: why?
...Perhaps we want to do this in our session, in executive session. But my question is an obvious one for not only this committee, but for the executive branch and the military establishment.

If we knew that there was a general threat on terrorist activity, which we did, and we suddenly have two trade towers in New York being obviously hit by terrorist activity, of commercial airliners taken off course from Boston to Los Angeles, then what happened to the response of the defense establishment once we saw the diversion of the aircraft headed west from Dulles turning around 180 degrees and, likewise, in the aircraft taking off from Newark and, in flight, turning 180 degrees? That's the question.

I leave it to you as to how you would like to answer it. But we would like an answer.

MYERS: You bet. I spoke, after the second tower was hit, I spoke to the commander of NORAD, General Eberhart. And at that point, I think the decision was at that point to start launching aircraft.

One of the things you have to understand, senator, is that in our posture right now, that we have many fewer aircraft on alert than we did during the height of the Cold War. And so, we've got just a few bases around the perimeter of the United States.

So it's not just a question of launching aircraft, it's launching to do what?

These three answers from Myers are all problematic, if not completely specious. The now-confirmed head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's initial comment about NORAD is a non-answer. Myers was asked by the Senator, Why did you wait to launch planes, and Myers answered by saying, we decided to launch planes after the second WTC hit, but we didn't actually launch them until Pentagon was hit.

Why didn't you launch planes?

We didn't launch planes.

Myers' second answer is a subterfuge. As aircraft disasters like Payne Stewart's fatal air disaster show, the U.S. has clear procedures in place to intercept planes in trouble, to attempt to save, divert or down them. Andrews Air Force Base is only 10 miles from the Pentagon, two 'combat-ready' fighter squadrons call it home: the 121st Fighter Squadron of the 113th Fighter Wing, equipped with F-16 fighters and the 321st Marine Fighter Attack Squadron of the 49th Marine Air Group, equipped with F/A-18 fighters.

When Myers says, "launching to do what?" he is quite possibly playing dumb. The F.A.A. and military have rules for how an interceptor should communicate to a wayward aircraft. The F-16 should fly in front of the plane to get the pilot's attention, then rock its own wings back and forth. If the airliner in distress is still being piloted by a trained pilot willing to comply with the escort, the pilot then rocks his or her wings to demonstrate a willingness to comply. Then the fighter will veer off to the left, with the pilot supposedly following, aimed at the "desired heading."¹²

Perhaps Senator Nelson brought up these facts to Richard Myers later. Myers' "You bet" certainly does seem to show enthusiasm and optimism about his ability to make sense if the committee proceeded in "executive session." And so they proceeded, in secret. The transcript for what further transpired is not available to the public.

On Sept 21, Jared Israel was travelling from Serbia, going through a checkpoint in an airport. He got to talking with an air marshal while his bags were being searched. The marshal asked him what he did for a living. Israel said, "I'm a writer."

"About what?"

"U.S. foreign policy."

The Marshal said, "Pro or con?"

Israel said, "Con."

"What do you think about 9/11?"

Israel remembers at this moment thinking, "What the hell" and responding honestly, "I think the U.S. Government organized and killed its own people."

The marshal paused. He said, "I hear your negativity, and I appreciate it. But why do you say that?"

Israel said, "Why didn't fighter planes go in the air?"

The U.S. marshal said, "Hey. That's what we're all asking."

In our interview, Israel noted, "The marshal wasn't talking about We, the Left. He was talking about the majority of law enforcement."

If it's true that the White House knew of the attacks on September 11 beforehand, the question becomes why would they allow such a loss of human lives? Israel writes often of his love for average Americans, for working people, a passion that first emerged in his experiences as a Freedom-rider in the civil rights struggles of the 60's. Israel realizes that to be motivated to fight an unjust war for oil, the average people would have to be sincerely moved by their own noble sense of struggle and justice: "The American people will not go to war over imperialism or empire. So [the powers that be] staged this blockbuster. They have their own

New Theory continued

Hollywood." And later, "I think American working-class people are fabulous, but they're misinformed. We have beasts in the government. Look at Kosovo. The U.S. funded Islamists to work with the KLA. We've funded Chechnyians with links to Al Qaeda. Bosnia, too. You have to have a scorecard! These Islamists are used like a multi-purpose tool. The U.S. has covert operations supporting Islamists in Algeria."

Producer Barrie Zwicker in Canada is more explicit about the U.S.'s reasons why they might have allowed an attack from the likes of Osama bin Laden. He feels it's likely they attempted "To stampede public opinion into supporting the so-called war on terrorism. To justify a war on Afghanistan, to justify a future oil pipeline, the grab for Middle-Eastern oil." Zwicker is making reference here to an oil pipeline to the Caspian Sea oil basin. Dick Cheney and other oil executives have been speaking about this regularly since 1992, and U.S. News and World Report estimates The Caspian Sea's oil wealth is around \$4 trillion.

If the U.S. Government was complicit in 9/11, this is consistent with the darker corners of its history. In 1896, the brief Spanish American War was declared and Cuba was quickly seized after the battleship Maine exploded in Havana harbor. The Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers fanned the flames of war, and quickly declared that the Maine had been blown up by an outside bomb or torpedo. The nation and the troops rallied around the slogan, "Remember the Maine." But in 1976, a Navy historian proved the explosion was actually caused by an internal coal fire on board the ship.

In 1962, the then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Lyman Lemnitzer, handed U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara a proposal called "Operation Northwoods." It proposed that the U.S. military be given permission to fabricate a tragic attack on Americans that could then be blamed on Cuba. After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the military was beginning to suspect Kennedy of being too "soft on communism" and wanted to find a way to build public support for a Cuban invasion. Lemnitzer suggested blowing up a commercial airliner and blaming the Cubans. According to National Security Agency archives, Lemnitzer even suggested killing astronaut John Glenn on February 20, 1962, in an explosion on the launch pad before Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth. In his new book on U.S. intelligence, *Body of Secrets*, James Bamford (formerly a producer at ABC News) notes that then, as now, "the Pentagon was capable of launching a secret and bloody war of terrorism against their own country in order to trick the American public into supporting a war." Bamford later told ABC News that the plan included U.S. military control over Cuba, which was, ironically "what we're supposed to be freeing them from." If Northwoods had been successful, it would have made the U.S. guilty of "what we were accusing Castro himself of doing."

In 1964, the Vietnam War was escalated after a minor incident in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Pentagon falsely claimed "multiple attacks" from the North Vietnamese, and President Johnson called for a stronger response in a stirring speech praised for its gravity. Johnson later admitted, "For all I know, our Navy was shooting at whales out there" in the Gulf of Tonkin.

As recently as 1991, public opinion was again formed in the service of war through cagey public relation efforts and appeals to the emotions. A story was created that invading Iraqi soldiers had pulled Kuwaiti babies from incubators. A 15-year old Kuwaiti girl gave "eye-witness" testimony before congress, and before bombing Iraq, Bush and the Senate made reference to her testimony multiple times. Two years later, it was revealed that the story was the creation of the Hill & Knowlton public relations firm, who had been hired by the Kuwaitis for a cool \$10 million. The 15-year-old turned out to be the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the U.S.

Will the world ever get the real answer about 9/11? Not if Bush, Cheney et al. have anything to do with it. On January 29, 2002, CNN reported that both the President and VP personally phoned up Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and threatened reprisals for his investigation into why the 9/11 attacks slipped past US intelligence/security. Wrapping himself in the flag, Cheney threatened that Daschle would be tarred as an obstruction to the war effort. Cheney also implied that Bush administration officials might be too busy to attend hearings, if invited, Ken Lay-style. Although he was adamant that "People need to know what happened," Daschle's hearings are going to be held in "executive session" out of the public eye. One of Cheney's main concerns was making sure Daschle not allow other Senate subcommittee hearings be held in public.

What possible justification could Bush and Cheney have for hiding the results of an investigation into why 9/11 happened? They claimed that Daschle's efforts would divert energies from the war effort. But in the words of freelance political scientist and author David Cogswell, "How could they possibly say it would take resources away from the war on terrorism when it should be the foundation of any war on terrorism. These guys are crazy and extremely dangerous to planet Earth."

NOTES-

1. Beaty, Jonathan and S.C. Gwynne. *The Outlaw Bank*. Random House: 1993.
2. Ibid.
3. The information on Bath's commission comes directly from his own sworn testimony, following acrimonious lawsuits from former partner Bill White. Also see: "Bush Said Friend's Arbusto Investment Was His Own, Not Saudi Money-Friend 'Declined To Comment For The Record.'" *Houston Chronicle*, June 4, 1992. by Jerry Urban
4. Richard, Alexandra. *Le Figaro*. October 31, 2001 page 2
5. Bin Laden comes home to roost His CIA ties are only the beginning of a woeful story By Michael Moran, MSNBC
<http://www.msnbc.com/news/190144.asp#BODY>
6. http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/events/newsnight/newsid_1645000/1645527.stm BBC2 Newsnight program trans. , Nov. 7 2001
7. TIME Magazine September 9, 2000. Title of article TK.
8. From Bill Moyers speech given October 16, 2001 in Brainerd, MN. Published October 31, 2001 on BuzzFlash.com
9. 'NBC, Meet the Press' (10:00 AM ET) Sunday 16 September 2001. Full transcript at: <http://stacks.msnbc.com/news/629714.asp?cp1=1>
- Backup transcript at: <http://emperor.vwh.net/9-11backups/nbcmp.htm>
10. ABC News Special Report 'Planes crash into World Trade Center' (8:53 AM ET) Tuesday 11 September 2001
11. TIME Magazine (Domestic edition), 'NEVER SAFE ENOUGH,' by Hugh Sidey, November 14, 1994 Volume 144, No. 20 Can be read at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/archive/1994/941114/941114.presidency.html>
12. <http://www.faa.gov/ATpubs/AIM/Chap5/aim0506.html#5-6-4>