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Was America Attacked by Muslims on 9/11?

By David Ray Griffin

Much of America's foreign policy since 9/11 has been based on the assumption that it was attacked by Muslims on that day. This assumption was used, most prominently, to justify the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is now widely agreed that the use of 9/11 as a basis for attacking Iraq was illegitimate: none of the hijackers were Iraqis, there was no working relation between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, and Iraq was not behind the anthrax attacks. But it is still widely believed that the US attack on Afghanistan was justified. For example, the New York Times, while referring to the US attack on Iraq as a "war of choice," calls the battle in Afghanistan a "war of necessity." Time magazine has dubbed it "the right war." And Barack Obama says that one reason to wind down our involvement in Iraq is to have the troops and resources to "go after the people in Afghanistan who actually attacked us on 9/11."

The assumption that America was attacked by Muslims on 9/11 also lies behind the widespread perception of Islam as an inherently violent religion and therefore of Muslims as guilty until proven innocent. This perception surely contributed to attempts to portray Obama as a Muslim, which was lampooned by a controversial cartoon on the July 21, 2008, cover of The New Yorker.

As could be illustrated by reference to many other post-9/11 developments, including as spying, torture, extraordinary rendition, military tribunals, America's new doctrine of preemptive war, and its enormous increase in military spending, the assumption that the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked by Muslim hijackers has had enormous negative consequences for both international and domestic issues.¹

Is it conceivable that this assumption might be false? Insofar as Americans and Canadians would say "No," they would express their belief that this assumption is not merely an "assumption" but is instead based on strong evidence. When actually examined, however, the proffered evidence turns out to be remarkably weak. I will illustrate this point by means of 16 questions.

1. Were Mohamed Atta and the Other Hijackers Devout Muslims?

The picture of the hijackers conveyed by the 9/11 Commission is that they were devout Muslims. Mohamed Atta, considered the ringleader, was said to have become very religious, even "fanatically so."² Being devout Muslims, they could be portrayed as ready to meet their Maker---as a "cadre of trained operatives willing to die."³

But this portrayal is contradicted by various newspaper stories. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that Atta and other hijackers had made "at least six trips" to Las Vegas, where they had "engaged in some decidedly un-Islamic sampling of prohibited pleasures." These activities were "un-Islamic" because, as the head of the Islamic Foundation of Nevada pointed out: "True Muslims don't drink, don't gamble, don't go to strip clubs."⁴

One might, to be sure, rationalize this behavior by supposing that these were momentary lapses and that, as 9/11 approached, these young Muslims had repented and prepared for heaven. But in the days just before 9/11, Atta and others were reported to be drinking heavily, cavorting with lap dancers, and bringing call girls to their rooms. Temple University Professor Mahmoud Ayoub said: "It is incomprehensible that a person could drink and go to a strip bar one night, then kill themselves the next day in the name of Islam. . . . Something here does not add up."⁵

In spite of the fact that these activities were reported by mainstream newspapers and even the Wall Street Journal editorial page,⁶ the 9/11 Commission wrote as if these reports did not exist, saying: "we have seen no credible evidence explaining why, on [some occasions], the operatives flew to or met in Las Vegas."⁷

2. Do Authorities Have Hard Evidence of Osama bin Laden's Responsibility for 9/11?

Whatever be the truth about the devoutness of the hijackers, one might reply, there is certainly no doubt about the fact that they were acting under the guidance of Osama bin Laden. The attack on Afghanistan was based on the claim that bin Laden was behind the attacks, and the 9/11 Commission's report was written as if there were no question about this claim. But neither the Bush administration nor the Commission provided any proof for it.

Two weeks after 9/11, Secretary of State Colin Powell, speaking to Tim Russert on "Meet the Press," said he expected "in the near future . . . to put out . . . a document that will describe quite clearly the evidence that we have linking [bin Laden] to this attack."⁸ But at a press conference with President Bush the next morning, Powell reversed himself, saying that although the government had information that left no question of bin Laden's responsibility, "most of it is classified."⁹ According to Seymour Hersh, citing officials from both the CIA and the Department of Justice, the real reason for the reversal was a "lack of solid information."¹⁰

That same week, Bush had demanded that the Taliban turn over bin Laden. But the Taliban, reported CNN, "refus[ed] to hand over bin Laden without proof or evidence that he was involved in last week's attacks on the United States." The Bush administration,

saying "[t]here is already an indictment of Osama bin Laden" [for the attacks in Tanzania, Kenya, and elsewhere]," rejected the demand for evidence with regard to 9/11.¹¹

The task of providing such evidence was taken up by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who on October 4 made public a document entitled "Responsibility for the Terrorist Atrocities in the United States." Listing "clear conclusions reached by the government," it stated: "Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda, the terrorist network which he heads, planned and carried out the atrocities on 11 September 2001."¹²

Blair's report, however, began by saying: "This document does not purport to provide a prosecutable case against Osama Bin Laden in a court of law." This weakness was noted the next day by the BBC, which said: "There is no direct evidence in the public domain linking Osama Bin Laden to the 11 September attacks. At best the evidence is circumstantial."¹³

After the US had attacked Afghanistan, a senior Taliban official said: "We have asked for proof of Osama's involvement, but they have refused. Why?"¹⁴ The answer to this question may be suggested by the fact that, to this day, the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorist" webpage on bin Laden, while listing him as wanted for bombings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, makes no mention of 9/11.¹⁵

When the FBI's chief of investigative publicity was asked why not, he replied: "The reason why 9/11 is not mentioned on Usama Bin Laden's Most Wanted page is because the FBI has no hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11."¹⁶

It is often claimed that bin Laden's guilt is proved by a video, reportedly found by US intelligence officers in Afghanistan in November 2001, in which bin Laden appears to report having planned the attacks. But critics, pointing out various problems with this "confession video," have called it a fake.¹⁷ General Hamid Gul, a former head of Pakistan's ISI, said: "I think there is an Osama Bin Laden look-alike."¹⁸ Actually, the man in the video is not even much of a look-alike, being heavier and darker than bin Laden, having a broader nose, wearing jewelry, and writing with his right hand.¹⁹ The FBI, in any case, obviously does not consider this video hard evidence of bin Laden's responsibility for 9/11.

What about the 9/11 Commission? I mentioned earlier that it gave the impression of having had solid evidence of bin Laden's guilt. But Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, the Commission's co-chairs, undermined this impression in their follow-up book subtitled "the inside story of the 9/11 Commission."²⁰

Whenever the Commission had cited evidence for bin Laden's responsibility, the note in the back of the book always referred to CIA-provided information that had (presumably) been elicited during interrogations of al-Qaeda operatives. By far the most important of these operatives was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), described as the "mastermind" of the 9/11 attacks. The Commission, for example, wrote:

Bin Ladin . . . finally decided to give the green light for the 9/11 operation sometime in late 1998 or early 1999. . . . Bin Ladin also soon selected four individuals to serve as suicide operatives. . . . Atta---whom Bin Ladin chose to lead the group---met with Bin Ladin several times to receive additional instructions, including a preliminary list of approved targets: the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the U.S. Capitol.²¹

The note for each of these statements says "interrogation of KSM."²²

Kean and Hamilton, however, reported that they had no success in "obtaining access to star witnesses in custody . . . , most notably Khalid Sheikh Mohammed."²³ Besides not being allowed to interview these witnesses, they were not permitted to observe the interrogations through one-way glass or even to talk to the interrogators.²⁴ Therefore, they complained: "We . . . had no way of evaluating the credibility of detainee information. How could we tell if someone such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed . . . was telling us the truth?"²⁵

An NBC "deep background" report in 2008 pointed out an additional problem: KSM and the other al-Qaeda leaders had been subjected to "enhanced interrogation techniques," i.e., torture, and it is now widely acknowledged that statements elicited by torture lack credibility. "At least four of the operatives whose interrogation figured in the 9/11 Commission Report," this NBC report pointed out, "have claimed that they told interrogators critical information as a way to stop being "-tortured.'" NBC then quoted Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, as saying: "Most people look at the 9/11 Commission Report as a trusted historical document. If their conclusions were supported by information gained from torture, . . . their conclusions are suspect."²⁶

Accordingly, neither the White House, the British government, the FBI, nor the 9/11 Commission has provided solid evidence that Osama bin Laden was behind 9/11.

3. Was Evidence of Muslim Hijackers Provided by Phone Calls from the Airliners?

Nevertheless, many readers may respond, there can be no doubt that the airplanes were taken over by al-Qaeda hijackers, because their presence and actions on the planes were reported on phone calls by passengers and flight attendants, with cell phone calls playing an especially prominent role.

The most famous of the reported calls were from CNN commentator Barbara Olson to her husband, US Solicitor General Ted Olson. According to CNN, he reported that his wife had "called him twice on a cell phone from American Airlines Flight 77," saying that "all passengers and flight personnel, including the pilots, were herded to the back of the plane by . . . hijackers [armed with] knives and cardboard cutters."²⁷

Although these reported calls, as summarized by Ted Olson, did not describe the hijackers so as to suggest that they were members of al-Qaeda, such descriptions were supplied by calls from other flights, especially United 93, from which about a dozen cell phone calls were reportedly received before it crashed in Pennsylvania. According to a Washington Post story of September 13,

[P]assenger Jeremy Glick used a cell phone to tell his wife, Lyzbeth, . . . that the Boeing 757's cockpit had been taken over by three Middle Eastern-looking men. . . . The terrorists, wearing red headbands, had ordered the pilots, flight attendants and passengers to the rear of the plane.²⁸

A story about a "cellular phone conversation" between flight attendant Sandra Bradshaw and her husband gave this report:

She said the plane had been taken over by three men with knives. She had gotten a close look at one of the hijackers. . . . "He had an Islamic look," she told her husband.²⁹

From these calls, therefore, the public was informed that the hijackers looked Middle Eastern and even Islamic.

Still more specific information was reportedly conveyed during a 12-minute cell phone call from flight attendant Amy Sweeney on American Flight 11, which was to crash into the North Tower of the World Trade Center.³⁰ After reaching American Airlines employee Michael Woodward and telling him that men of "Middle Eastern descent" had hijacked her flight, she then gave him their seat numbers, from which he was able to learn the identity of Mohamed Atta and two other hijackers.³¹ Amy Sweeney's call was critical, ABC News explained, because without it "the plane might have crashed with no one certain the man in charge was tied to al Qaeda."³²

There was, however, a big problem with these reported calls: Given the technology available in 2001, cell phone calls from airliners at altitudes of more than a few thousand feet, especially calls lasting more than a few seconds, were not possible, and yet these calls, some of which reportedly lasted a minute or more, reportedly occurred when the planes were above 30,000 or even 40,000 feet. This problem was explained by some credible people, including scientist A.K. Dewdney, who for many years had written a column for Scientific American.³³

Although some defenders of the official account, such as Popular Mechanics, have disputed the contention that high-altitude calls from airliners were impossible,³⁴ the fact is that the FBI, after having at first supported the claims that such calls were made, withdrew this support a few years later.

With regard to the reported 12-minute call from Amy Sweeney to Michael Woodward, an affidavit signed by FBI agent James Lechner and dated September 12 (2001) stated that, according to Woodward, Sweeney had been "using a cellular telephone."³⁵ But when the 9/11 Commission discussed this call in its Report, which appeared in July 2004, it declared that Sweeney had used an onboard phone.³⁶

Behind that change was an implausible claim made by the FBI earlier in 2004: Although Woodward had failed to mention this when FBI agent Lechner interviewed him on 9/11, he had repeated Sweeney's call verbatim to a colleague in his office, who had in turn repeated it to another colleague at American headquarters in Dallas, who had recorded it;

and this recording---which was discovered only in 2004---indicated that Sweeney had used a passenger-seat phone, thanks to "an AirFone card, given to her by another flight attendant."³⁷

This claim is implausible because, if this relayed recording had really been made on 9/11, we cannot believe that Woodward would have failed to mention it to FBI agent Lechner later that same day. While Lechner was taking notes, Woodward would surely have said: "You don't need to rely on my memory. There is a recording of a word-for-word repetition of Sweeney's statements down in Dallas." It is also implausible that Woodward, having repeated Sweeney's statement that she had used "an AirFone card, given to her by another flight attendant," would have told Lechner, as the latter's affidavit says, that Sweeney had been "using a cellular telephone."

Lechner's affidavit shows that the FBI at first supported the claim that Sweeney had made a 12-minute cell phone call from a high-altitude airliner. Does not the FBI's change of story, after its first version had been shown to be technologically impossible, create the suspicion that the entire story was a fabrication?

This suspicion is reinforced by the FBI's change of story in relation to United Flight 93. Although we were originally told that this flight had been the source of about a dozen cell phone calls, some of them when the plane was above 40,000 feet, the FBI gave a very different report at the 2006 trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called 20th hijacker. The FBI spokesman said: "13 of the terrified passengers and crew members made 35 air phone calls and two cell phone calls."³⁸ Instead of there having been about a dozen cell phone calls from Flight 93, the FBI declared in 2005, there were really only two.

Why were two calls still said to have been possible? They were reportedly made at 9:58, when the plane was reportedly down to 5,000 feet.³⁹ Although that was still pretty high for successful cell phone calls in 2001, these calls, unlike calls from 30,000 feet or higher, would have been at least arguably possible.

If the truth of the FBI's new account is assumed, how can one explain the fact that so many people had reported receiving cell phone calls? In most cases, it seems, these people had been told by the callers that they were using cell phones. For example, a Newsweek story about United 93 said: "Elizabeth Wainio, 27, was speaking to her stepmother in Maryland. Another passenger, she explains, had loaned her a cell phone and told her to call her family."⁴⁰ In such cases, we might assume that the people receiving the calls had simply mis-heard, or mis-remembered, what they had been told. But this would mean positing that about a dozen people had made the same mistake.

An even more serious difficulty is presented by the case of Deena Burnett, who said that she had received three to five calls from her husband, Tom Burnett. She knew he was using his cell phone, she reported to the FBI that very day and then to the press and in a book, because she had recognized his cell phone number on her phone's Caller ID.⁴¹ We cannot suppose her to have been mistaken about this. We also, surely, cannot accuse her of lying.

Therefore, if we accept the FBI's report, according to which Tom Burnett did not make any cell phone calls from Flight 93, we can only conclude that the calls were faked---that Deena Burnett was duped. Although this suggestion may at first sight seem outlandish, there are three facts that, taken together, show it to be more probable than any of the alternatives.

First, voice morphing technology was sufficiently advanced at that time to make faking the calls feasible. A 1999 Washington Post article described demonstrations in which the voices of two generals, Colin Powell and Carl Steiner, were heard saying things they had never said.⁴²

Second, there are devices with which you can fake someone's telephone number, so that it will show up on the recipient's Caller ID.⁴³

Third, the conclusion that the person who called Deena Burnett was not her husband is suggested by various features of the calls. For example, when Deena told the caller that "the kids" were asking to talk to him, he said: "Tell them I'll talk to them later." This was 20 minutes after Tom had purportedly realized that the hijackers were on a suicide mission, planning to "crash this plane into the ground," and 10 minutes after he and other passengers had allegedly decided that as soon as they were "over a rural area" they must try to gain control of the plane. Also, the hijackers had reportedly already killed one person.⁴⁴ Given all this, the real Tom Burnett would have known that he would likely die, one way or another, in the next few minutes. Is it believable that, rather than taking this probably last opportunity to speak to his children, he would say that he would "talk to them later"? Is it not more likely that "Tom" made this statement to avoid revealing that he knew nothing about "the kids," perhaps not even their names?

Further evidence that the calls were faked is provided by timing problems in some of them. According to the 9/11 Commission, Flight 93 crashed at 10:03 as a result of the passenger revolt, which began at 9:57. However, according to Lyzbeth Glick's account of the aforementioned cell phone call from her husband, Jeremy Glick, she told him about the collapse of the South Tower, and that did not occur until 9:59, two minutes after the alleged revolt had started. After that, she reported, their conversation continued for several more minutes before he told her that the passengers were taking a vote about whether to attack. According to Lyzbeth Glick's account, therefore, the revolt was only beginning by 10:03, when the plane (according to the official account) was crashing.⁴⁵

A timing problem also occurred in the aforementioned call from flight attendant Amy Sweeney. While she was describing the hijackers, according to the FBI's account of her call, they stormed and took control of the cockpit.⁴⁶ However, although the hijacking of Flight 11 "began at 8:14 or shortly thereafter," the 9/11 Commission said, Sweeney's call did not go through until 8:25.⁴⁷ Her alleged call, in other words, described the hijacking as beginning over 11 minutes after it, according to the official timeline, had been successfully carried out.

Multiple lines of evidence, therefore, imply that the cell phone calls were faked. This fact has vast implications, because it implies that all the reported calls from the planes, including those from onboard phones, were faked. Why? Because if the planes had really been taken over in surprise hijackings, no one would have been ready to make fake cell phone calls.

Moreover, the FBI, besides implying, most clearly in the case of Deena Burnett, that the phone calls reporting the hijackings had been faked, comes right out and says, in its report about calls from Flight 77, that no calls from Barbara Olson occurred. It does mention her. But besides attributing only one call to her, not two, the FBI report refers to it as an "unconnected call," which (of course) lasted "0 seconds."⁴⁸ In 2006, in other words, the FBI, which is part of the Department of Justice, implied that the story told by the DOJ's former solicitor general was untrue. Although not mentioned by the press, this was an astounding development.

This FBI report leaves only two possible explanations for Ted Olson's story: Either he made it up or else he, like Deena Burnett and several others, was duped. In either case, the story about Barbara Olson's calls, with their reports of hijackers taking over Flight 77, was based on deception.

The opening section of The 9/11 Commission Report is entitled "Inside the Four Flights." The information contained in this section is based almost entirely on the reported phone calls. But if the reported calls were faked, we have no idea what happened inside these planes. Insofar as the idea that the planes were taken over by hijackers who looked "Middle Eastern," even "Islamic," has been based on the reported calls, this idea is groundless.

4. Was the Presence of Hijackers Proved by a Radio Transmission "from American 11"?

It might be objected, in reply, that this is not true, because we know that American Flight 11, at least, was hijacked, thanks to a radio transmission in which the voice of one of its hijackers is heard. According to the 9/11 Commission, the air traffic controller for this flight heard a radio transmission at 8:25 AM in which someone---widely assumed to be Mohamed Atta---told the passengers: "We have some planes. Just stay quiet, and you'll be okay. We are returning to the airport." After quoting this transmission, the Commission wrote: "The controller told us that he then knew it was a hijacking."⁴⁹ Was this transmission not indeed proof that Flight 11 had been hijacked?

It might provide such proof if we knew that, as the Commission claimed, the "transmission came from American 11."⁵⁰ But we do not. According to the FAA's "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events," published September 17, 2001, the transmission was "from an unknown origin."⁵¹ Bill Peacock, the FAA's air traffic director, said: "We didn't know where the transmission came from."⁵² The Commission's claim that it came from American 11 was merely an inference. The transmission could have come from the same room from which the calls to Deena Burnett originated.

Therefore, the alleged radio transmission from Flight 11, like the alleged phone calls from the planes, provides no evidence that the planes were taken over by al-Qaeda hijackers.

5. Did Passports and a Headband Provide Evidence that al-Qaeda Operatives Were on the Flights?

However, the government's case for al-Qaeda hijackers on also rested in part on claims that passports and a headband belonging to al-Qaeda operatives were found at the crash sites. But these claims are patently absurd.

A week after the attacks, the FBI reported that a search of the streets after the destruction of the World Trade Center had discovered the passport of one of the Flight 11 hijackers, Satam al-Suqami.⁵³ But this claim did not pass the giggle test. "[T]he idea that [this] passport had escaped from that inferno unsinged," wrote one British reporter, "would [test] the credulity of the staunchest supporter of the FBI's crackdown on terrorism."⁵⁴

By 2004, when the 9/11 Commission was discussing the alleged discovery of this passport, the story had been modified to say that "a passer-by picked it up and gave it to a NYPD detective shortly before the World Trade Center towers collapsed."⁵⁵ So, rather than needing to survive the collapse of the North Tower, the passport merely needed to escape from the plane's cabin, avoid being destroyed or even singed by the instantaneous jet-fuel fire, and then escape from the building so that it could fall to the ground! Equally absurd is the claim that the passport of Ziad Jarrah, the alleged pilot of Flight 93, was found at this plane's crash site in Pennsylvania.⁵⁶ This passport was reportedly found on the ground even though there was virtually nothing at the site to indicate that an airliner had crashed there. The reason for this absence of wreckage, we were told, was that the plane had been headed downward at 580 miles per hour and, when it hit the spongy Pennsylvania soil, buried itself deep in the ground. New York Times journalist Jere Longman, surely repeating what he had been told by authorities, wrote: "The fuselage accordioned on itself more than thirty feet into the porous, backfilled ground. It was as if a marble had been dropped into water."⁵⁷ So, we are to believe, just before the plane buried itself in the earth, Jarrah's passport escaped from the cockpit and landed on the ground. Did Jarrah, going 580 miles per hour, have the window open?⁵⁸ Also found on the ground, according to the government's evidence presented to the Moussaoui trial, was a red headband.⁵⁹ This was considered evidence that al-Qaeda hijackers were on Flight 93 because they were, according to some of the phone calls, wearing red headbands. But besides being absurd for the same reason as was the claim about Jarrah's passport, this claim about the headband was problematic for another reason. Former CIA agent Milt Bearden, who helped train the Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan, has pointed out that it would have been very unlikely that members of al-Qaeda would have worn such headbands:

[The red headband] is a uniquely Shi'a Muslim adornment. It is something that dates back to the formation of the Shi'a sect. . . . [I]t represents the preparation of he who wears this red headband to sacrifice his life, to murder himself for the cause. Sunnis are by and large most of the people following Osama bin Laden [and they] do not do this.⁶⁰

We learned shortly after the invasion of Iraq that some people in the US government did not know the difference between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. Did such people decide that the hijackers would be described as wearing red headbands?

6. Did the Information in Atta's Luggage Prove the Responsibility of al-Qaeda Operatives?

I come now to the evidence that is said to provide the strongest proof that the planes had been hijacked by Mohamed Atta and other members of al-Qaeda. This evidence was reportedly found in two pieces of Atta's luggage that were discovered inside the Boston airport after the attacks. The luggage was there, we were told, because although Atta was already in Boston on September 10, he and another al-Qaeda operative, Abdul al-Omari, rented a blue Nissan and drove up to Portland, Maine, and stayed overnight. They caught a commuter flight back to Boston early the next morning in time to get on American Flight 11, but Atta's luggage did not make it.

This luggage, according to the FBI affidavit signed by James Lechner, contained much incriminating material, including a handheld flight computer, flight simulator manuals, two videotapes about Boeing aircraft, a slide-rule flight calculator, a copy of the Koran, and Atta's last will and testament.⁶¹ This material was widely taken as proof that al-Qaeda and hence Osama bin Laden were behind the 9/11 attacks.

When closely examined, however, the Atta-to-Portland story loses all credibility.

One problem is the very idea that Atta would have planned to take all these things in baggage that was to be transferred to Flight 11. What good would a flight computer and other flying aids do inside a suitcase in the plane's luggage compartment? Why would he have planned to take his will on a plane he planned to crash into the World Trade Center?

A second problem involves the question of why Atta's luggage did not get transferred onto Flight 11. According to an Associated Press story that appeared four days after 9/11, Atta's flight "arrived at Logan . . . just in time for him to connect with American Airlines flight 11 to Los Angeles, but too late for his luggage to be loaded."⁶² The 9/11 Commission had at one time evidently planned to endorse this claim.⁶³ But when The 9/11 Commission Report appeared, it said: "Atta and Omari arrived in Boston at 6:45" and then "checked in and boarded American Airlines Flight 11," which was "scheduled to depart at 7:45."⁶⁴ By thus admitting that there was almost a full hour for the luggage to be transferred to Flight 11, the Commission was left with no explanation as to why it was not.

Still another problem with the Atta-to-Portland story was the question why he would have taken this trip. If the commuter flight had been late, Atta, being the ringleader of the hijackers as well as the intended pilot for Flight 11, would have had to call off the whole operation, which he had reportedly been planning for two years. The 9/11 Commission, like the FBI before it, admitted that it had no answer to this question.⁶⁵

The fourth and biggest problem with the story, however, is that it did not appear until September 16, five days after 9/11, following the collapse of an earlier story.

According to news reports immediately after 9/11, the incriminating materials, rather than being found in Atta's luggage inside the airport, were found in a white Mitsubishi, which Atta had left in the Boston airport parking lot. Two hijackers did drive a blue Nissan to Portland and then take the commuter flight back to Boston the next morning, but their names were Adnan and Ameer Bukhari.⁶⁶ This story fell apart on the afternoon of September 13, when it was discovered that the Bukharis, to whom authorities had reportedly been led by material in the Nissan at the Portland Jetport, had not died on 9/11: Adnan was still alive and Ameer had died the year before.⁶⁷

The next day, September 14, an Associated Press story said that it was Atta and a companion who had driven the blue Nissan to Portland, stayed overnight, and then taken the commuter flight back to Boston. The incriminating materials, however, were still said to have been found in a car in the Boston airport, which was now said to have been rented by "additional suspects."⁶⁸ Finally, on September 16, a Washington Post story, besides saying that the Nissan had been taken to Portland by Atta and al-Omari, specified that the incriminating material had been found in Atta's luggage inside the Boston airport.⁶⁹

Given this history of the Atta-to-Portland story, how can we avoid the conclusion that it was a fabrication?

7. Were al-Qaeda Operatives Captured on Airport Security Videos?

Still another type of evidence for the claim that al-Qaeda operatives were on the planes consisted of frames from videos, purportedly taken by airport security cameras, said to show hijackers checking into airports. Shortly after the attacks, for example, photos showing Atta and al-Omari at an airport "were flashed round the world."⁷⁰ However, although it was widely assumed that these photos were from the airport at Boston, they were really from the airport at Portland. No photos showing Atta or any of the other alleged hijackers at Boston's Logan Airport were ever produced. We at best have photographic evidence that Atta and al-Omari were at the Portland airport.

Moreover, in light of the fact that the story of Atta and al-Omari going to Portland was apparently a late invention, we might expect the photographic evidence that they were at the Portland Jetport on the morning of September 11 to be problematic. And indeed it is. It shows Atta and Omari without either jackets or ties on, whereas the Portland ticket agent said that they had been wearing jackets and ties.⁷¹ Also, a photo showing Atta and al-Omari passing through the security checkpoint is marked both 05:45 and 05:53.⁷²

Another airport video was distributed on the day in 2004 that The 9/11 Commission Report was published. The Associated Press, using a frame from it as corroboration of the official story, provided this caption:

Hijacker Khalid al-Mihdhar . . . passes through the security checkpoint at Dulles International Airport in Chantilly, Va., Sept. 11 2001, just hours before American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon in this image from a surveillance video.⁷³

However, as Rowland Morgan and Ian Henshall have pointed out,

a normal security video has time and date burned into the integral video image by proprietary equipment according to an authenticated pattern, along with camera identification and the location that the camera covered. The video released in 2004 contained no such data.⁷⁴

The Associated Press notwithstanding, therefore, this video contains no evidence that it was taken at Dulles on September 11.

Another problem with this so-called Dulles video is that, although one of the men on it was identified by the 9/11 Commission as Hani Hanjour,⁷⁵ he "does not remotely resemble Hanjour." Whereas Hanjour was thin and had a receding hairline (as shown by a photo taken six days before 9/11), the man in the video had a somewhat muscular build and a full head of hair, with no receding hairline.⁷⁶

In sum: Video proof that the named hijackers checked into airports on 9/11 is nonexistent. Besides the fact that the videos purportedly showing hijackers for Flights 11 and 77 reek of inauthenticity, there are no videos even purportedly showing the hijackers for the other two flights. If these 19 men had really checked into the Boston and Dulles airports that day, there should be authentic security videos to prove this.

8. Were the Names of the "Hijackers" on the Passenger Manifests?

What about the passenger manifests, which list all the passengers on the flights? If the alleged hijackers purchased tickets and boarded the flights, their names would have been on the manifests for these flights. And we were told that they were. According to counterterrorism coordinator Richard Clarke, the FBI told him at about 10:00 that morning that it recognized the names of some al-Qaeda operatives on passenger manifests it had received from the airlines.⁷⁷ As to how the FBI itself acquired its list, Robert Bonner, the head of Customs and Border Protection, said to the 9/11 Commission in 2004:

On the morning of 9/11, through an evaluation of data related to the passenger manifest for the four terrorist hijacked aircraft, Customs Office of Intelligence was able to identify the likely terrorist hijackers. Within 45 minutes of the attacks, Customs forwarded the passenger lists with the names of the victims and 19 probable hijackers to the FBI and the intelligence community.⁷⁸

Under questioning, Bonner added:

We were able to pull from the airlines the passenger manifest for each of the four flights. We ran the manifest through [our lookout] system. . . . [B]y 11:00 AM, I'd seen a sheet that essentially identified the 19 probable hijackers. And in fact, they turned out to be, based upon further follow-up in detailed investigation, to be the 19.⁷⁹

Bonner's statement, however, is doubly problematic. In the first place, the initial FBI list, as reported by CNN on September 13 and 14, contained only 18 names.⁸⁰ Why would that be if 19 men had already been identified on 9/11?

Second, several of the names on the FBI's first list, having quickly become problematic, were replaced by other names. For example, the previously discussed men named Bukhari, thought to be brothers, were replaced on American 11's list of hijackers by brothers named Waleed and Wail al-Shehri. Two other replacements for this flight were Satam al-Suqami, whose passport was allegedly found at Ground Zero, and Abdul al-Omari, who allegedly went to Portland with Atta the day before 9/11. Also, the initial list for American 77 did not include the name of Hani Hanjour, who would later be called the pilot of this flight. Rather, it contained a name that, after being read aloud by a CNN correspondent, was transcribed "Mosear Caned."⁸¹ All in all, the final list of 19 hijackers contained six names that were not on the original list of 18---a fact that contradicts Bonner's claim that by 11:00 AM on 9/11 his agency had identified 19 probable hijackers who, in fact, "turned out to be. . . the 19."

These replacements to the initial list also undermine the claim that Amy Sweeney, by giving the seat numbers of three of the hijackers to Michael Woodward of American Airlines, allowed him to identify Atta and two others. This second claim is impossible because the two others were Abdul al-Omari and Satam al-Suqami,⁸² and they were replacements for two men on the original list---who, like Adnan Bukhari, turned up alive after 9/11.⁸³ Woodward could not possibly have identified men who were not added to the list until several days later.⁸⁴

For all these reasons, the claim that the names of the 19 alleged hijackers were on the airlines' passenger manifests must be considered false.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that the passenger manifests that were released to the public included no names of any of the 19 alleged hijackers and, in fact, no Middle Eastern names whatsoever.⁸⁵ These manifests, therefore, support the suspicion that there were no al-Qaeda hijackers on the planes.

It might appear that this conclusion is contradicted by the fact that passenger manifests with the names of the alleged hijackers have appeared. A photocopy of a portion of an apparent passenger manifest for American Flight 11, with the names of three of the alleged hijackers, was published in a 2005 book by Terry McDermott, *Perfect Soldiers: The 9/11 Hijackers*.⁸⁶ McDermott reportedly said that he received these manifests from the FBI.⁸⁷ But the idea that these were the original manifests is problematic.

For one thing, they were not included in the evidence presented by the FBI to the Moussaoui trial in 2006.⁸⁸ If even the FBI will not cite them as evidence, why should anyone think they are genuine?

Another problem with these purported manifests, copies of which can be viewed on the Internet,⁸⁹ is that they show signs of being late creations. One such sign is that Ziad Jarrah's last name is spelled correctly, whereas in the early days after 9/11, the FBI was

referring to him as "Jarrahi," as news reports from the time show.⁹⁰ A second sign is that the manifest for American Flight 77 contains Hani Hanjour's name, even though its absence from the original list of hijackers had led the Washington Post to wonder why Hanjour's "name was not on the American Airlines manifest for the flight."⁹¹ A third sign is that the purported manifest for American Flight 11 contains the names of Wail al-Shehri, Waleed al-Shehri, Satam al-Suqami, and Abdul al-Omari, all of whom were added some days after 9/11.

In sum, no credible evidence that al-Qaeda operatives were on the flights is provided by the passenger manifests.

9. Did DNA Tests Identify Five Hijackers among the Victims at the Pentagon?

Another type of evidence that the alleged hijackers were really on the planes could have been provided by autopsies. But no such evidence has been forthcoming. In its book defending the official account of 9/11, to be sure, Popular Mechanics claims that, according to a report on the victims of the Pentagon attack by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology: "The five hijackers were positively identified."⁹² But this claim is false.

According to a summary of this pathology report by Andrew Baker, M.D., the remains of 183 victims were subjected to DNA analysis, which resulted in "178 positive identifications." Although Baker says that "[s]ome remains for each of the terrorists were recovered," this was merely an inference from the fact that there were "five unique postmortem profiles that did not match any antemortem material provided by victims' families."⁹³

A Washington Post story made even clearer the fact that this conclusion---that the unmatched remains were those of "the five hijackers"---was merely an inference. It wrote: "The remains of the five hijackers have been identified through a process of exclusion, as they did not match DNA samples contributed by family members of all 183 victims who died at the site" (emphasis added).⁹⁴ All the report said, in other words, was that there were five bodies whose DNA did not match that of any of the known Pentagon victims or any of the regular passengers or crew members on Flight 77.

We have no way of knowing where these five bodies came from. For the claim that they came from the attack site at the Pentagon, we have only the word of the FBI and the military, which insisted on taking charge of the bodies of everyone killed at the Pentagon and transporting them to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.⁹⁵

In any case, the alleged hijackers could have been positively identified only if samples had been obtained from their relatives, and there is no indication that this occurred. Indeed, one can wonder why not. The FBI had lots of information about the men identified as the hijackers. They could easily have located relatives. And these relatives, most of whom reportedly did not believe that their own flesh and blood had been involved in the attacks, would have surely been willing to supply the needed DNA. Indeed, a story about

Ziad Jarrah, the alleged pilot of Flight 93, said: "Jarrah's family has indicated they would be willing to provide DNA samples to US researchers, . . . [but] the FBI has shown no interest thus far."⁹⁶

The lack of positive identification of the alleged hijackers is consistent with the autopsy report, which was released to Dr. Thomas Olmsted, who had made a FOIA request for it. Like the flight manifest for Flight 77, he revealed, this report also contains no Arab names.⁹⁷

10. Has the Claim That Some of the "Hijackers" Are Still Alive Been Debunked?

Another problem with the claim that the 19 hijackers were correctly identified on 9/11, or at least a few days later, is that some of the men on the FBI's final list reportedly turned up alive after 9/11. Although Der Spiegel and the BBC claim to have debunked these reports, I will show this is untrue by examining the case of one of the alleged hijackers, Waleed al-Shehri---who, we saw earlier, was a replacement for Adnan Bukhari, who himself had shown up alive after 9/11.

In spite of the fact that al-Shehri was a replacement, the 9/11 Commission revealed no doubts about his presence on Flight 11, speculating that he and his brother Wail---another replacement---stabbed two of the flight attendants.⁹⁸ But the Commission certainly should have had doubts.

On September 22, 2001, the BBC published an article by David Bamford entitled "Hijack '-Suspect' Alive in Morocco." It showed that the Waleed al-Shehri identified by the FBI as one of the hijackers was still alive. Explaining why the problem could not be dismissed as a case of mistaken identity, Bamford wrote:

His photograph was released by the FBI, and has been shown in newspapers and on television around the world. That same Mr Al-Shehri has turned up in Morocco, proving clearly that he was not a member of the suicide attack. He told Saudi journalists in Casablanca that . . . he has now been interviewed by the American authorities, who apologised for the misunderstanding.⁹⁹

The following day, September 23, the BBC published another story, "Hijack "-Suspects' Alive and Well." Discussing several alleged hijackers who had shown up alive, it said of al-Shehri in particular: "He acknowledges that he attended flight training school at Daytona Beach. . . . But, he says, he left the United States in September last year, became a pilot with Saudi Arabian airlines and is currently on a further training course in Morocco."¹⁰⁰

In 2003, an article in Der Spiegel tried to debunk these two BBC stories, characterizing them as "nonsense about surviving terrorists." It claimed that the reported still-alive hijackers were all cases of mistaken identity, involving men with "coincidentally identical names." This claim by Der Spiegel depended on its assertion that, at the time of the reports, the FBI had released only a list of names: "The FBI did not release photographs until four days after the cited reports, on September 27th."¹⁰¹ But that was not true.

Bamford's BBC story of September 22, as we saw, reported that Waleed al-Shehri's photograph had been "released by the FBI" and "shown in newspapers and on television around the world."

In 2006, nevertheless, the BBC used the same claim to withdraw its support for its own stories. Steve Herrmann, the editor of the BBC News website, claimed that confusion had arisen because "these were common Arabic and Islamic names." Accordingly, he said, the BBC had changed its September 23 story in one respect: "Under the FBI picture of Waleed al Shehri we have added the words '-A man called Waleed Al Shehri...'" to make it as clear as possible that there was confusion over the identity.¹⁰² But Bamford's BBC story of September 22, which Herrmann failed to mention, had made it "as clear as possible" that there could not have been any confusion.

These attempts by Der Spiegel and the BBC, in which they tried to discredit the reports that Waleed al-Shehri was still alive after 9/11, have been refuted by Jay Kolar, who shows that FBI photographs had been published by Saudi newspapers as early as September 19. Kolar thereby undermines the only argument against Bamford's assertion, according to which there could have been no possibility of mistaken identity because al-Shehri had seen his published photograph prior to September 22, when Bamford's story appeared.¹⁰³

The fact that al-Shehri, along with several other alleged hijackers,¹⁰⁴ was alive after 9/11 shows unambiguously that at least some of the men on the FBI's final list were not on the planes. It would appear that the FBI, after replacing some of its first-round candidates because of their continued existence, decided not to replace any more, in spite of their exhibition of the same defect.

11. Is There Positive Evidence That No Hijackers Were on the Planes?

At this point, defenders of the official story might argue: The fact that some of the men labeled hijackers were still alive after 9/11 shows only that the FBI list contained some errors; it does not prove that there were no al-Qaeda hijackers on board. And although the previous points do undermine the evidence for such hijackers, absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence.

Evidence of absence, however, is implicit in the prior points in two ways. First, the lack of Arab names on the Pentagon autopsy report and on any of the issued passenger manifests does suggest the absence of al-Qaeda operatives. Second, if al-Qaeda hijackers really were on the flights, why was evidence to prove this fact fabricated?

Beyond those two points, moreover, there is a feature of the reported events that contradicts the claim that hijackers broke into the pilots' cabins. This feature can be introduced by reference to Conan Doyle's short story "Silver Blaze," which is about a famous race horse that had disappeared the night before a big race. Although the local Scotland Yard detective believed that Silver Blaze had been stolen by an intruder, Sherlock Holmes brought up "the curious incident of the dog in the night-time." When the

inspector pointed out that "[t]he dog did nothing in the night-time," Holmes replied: "That was the curious incident."¹⁰⁵ Had there really been an intruder, in other words, the dog would have barked. This has become known as the case of "the dog that didn't bark."

A similar curious incident occurred on each of the four flights. In the event of a hijacking, pilots are trained to enter the standard hijack code (7500) into their transponders to alert controllers on the ground. Using the transponder to send a code is called "squawking." One of the big puzzles about 9/11 was why none of the pilots squawked the hijack code.

CNN provided a good treatment of this issue, saying with regard to the first flight:

Flight 11 was hijacked apparently by knife-wielding men. Airline pilots are trained to handle such situations by keeping calm, complying with requests, and if possible, dialing in an emergency four digit code on a device called a transponder. . . . The action takes seconds, but it appears no such code was entered.¹⁰⁶

The crucial issue was indicated by the phrase "if possible": Would it have been possible for the pilots of Flight 11 to have performed this action? A positive answer was suggested by CNN's next statement:

[I]n the cabin, a frantic flight attendant managed to use a phone to call American Airlines Command Center in Dallas. She reported the trouble. And according to "The Christian Science Monitor," a pilot apparently keyed the microphone, transmitting a cockpit conversation.¹⁰⁷

If there was time for both of those actions to be taken, there would have been time for one of the pilots to enter the four-digit hijack code.

That would have been all the more true of the pilots on United Flight 93, given the (purported) tapes from this flight. A reporter at the Moussaoui trial, where these tapes had been played, wrote:

In those tapes, the pilots shouted as hijackers broke into the cockpit. "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" a pilot screamed in the first tape. In the second tape, 30 seconds later, a pilot shouted: "Mayday! Get out of here! Get out of here!"¹⁰⁸

According to these tapes, therefore, the pilots were still alive and coherent 30 seconds after realizing that hijackers were breaking into the cockpit. And yet in all that time, neither of them did the most important thing they had been trained to do---turn the transponder to 7500.

In addition to the four pilots on Flights 11 and 93, furthermore, the four pilots on Flights 175 and 77 failed to do this as well.

In "Silver Blaze," the absence of an intruder was shown by the dog that didn't bark. On 9/11, the absence of hijackers was shown by the pilots who didn't squawk.

12. Were bin Laden and al-Qaeda Capable of Orchestrating the Attacks?

For prosecutors to prove that defendants committed a crime, they must show that they had the ability (as well as the motive and opportunity) to do so. But several political and military leaders from other countries have stated that bin Laden and al-Qaeda simply could not have carried out the attacks. General Leonid Ivashov, who in 2001 was the chief of staff for the Russian armed forces, wrote:

Only secret services and their current chiefs---or those retired but still having influence inside the state organizations---have the ability to plan, organize and conduct an operation of such magnitude. . . . Osama bin Laden and "Al Qaeda" cannot be the organizers nor the performers of the September 11 attacks. They do not have the necessary organization, resources or leaders.

Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, the former foreign minister of Egypt, wrote:

Bin Laden does not have the capabilities for an operation of this magnitude. When I hear Bush talking about al-Qaida as if it was Nazi Germany or the communist party of the Soviet Union, I laugh because I know what is there.

Similar statements have been made by Andreas von Bülow, the former state secretary of West Germany's ministry of defense, by General Mirza Aslam Beg, former chief of staff of Pakistan's army, and even General Musharraf, the president of Pakistan until recently.¹⁰⁹

This same point was also made by veteran CIA agent Milt Bearden. Speaking disparagingly of "the myth of Osama bin Laden" on CBS News the day after 9/11, Bearden said: "I was there [in Afghanistan] at the same time bin Laden was there. He was not the great warrior." With regard to the widespread view that bin Laden was behind the attacks, he said: "This was a tremendously sophisticated operation against the United States---more sophisticated than anybody would have ascribed to Osama bin Laden." Pointing out that a group capable of such a sophisticated attack would have had a way to cover their tracks, he added: "This group who was responsible for that, if they didn't have an Osama bin Laden out there, they'd invent one, because he's a terrific diversion."¹¹⁰

13. Could Hani Hanjour Have Flown Flight 77 into the Pentagon?

The inability of al-Qaeda to have carried out the operation can be illustrated in terms of Hani Hanjour, the al-Qaeda operative said to have flown Flight 77 into the Pentagon.

On September 12, before it was stated that Hanjour had been the pilot of American 77, the final minutes of this plane's trajectory had been described as one requiring great skill. A Washington Post story said:

[J]ust as the plane seemed to be on a suicide mission into the White House, the unidentified pilot executed a pivot so tight that it reminded observers of a fighter jet maneuver. . . . Aviation sources said the plane was flown with extraordinary skill, making it highly likely that a trained pilot was at the helm.¹¹¹

But Hani Hanjour was not that. Indeed, a CBS story reported, an Arizona flight school said that Hanjour's "flying skills were so bad . . . they didn't think he should keep his pilot's license." The manager stated: "I couldn't believe he had a commercial license of any kind with the skills that he had."¹¹² A New York Times story, entitled "A Trainee Noted for Incompetence," quoted one of his instructors as saying that Hanjour "could not fly at all."¹¹³

The 9/11 Commission even admitted that in the summer of 2001, just months before 9/11, a flight instructor in New Jersey, after going up with Hanjour in a small plane, "declined a second request because of what he considered Hanjour's poor piloting skills."¹¹⁴ The Commission failed to address the question of how Hanjour, incapable of flying a single-engine plane, could have flown a giant 757 through the trajectory reportedly taken by Flight 77: descending 8,000 feet in three minutes and then coming in at ground level to strike Wedge 1 of the Pentagon between the first and second floors, without even scraping the lawn.

Several pilots have said this would have been impossible. Russ Wittenberg, who flew large commercial airliners for 35 years after serving as a fighter pilot in Vietnam, says it would have been "totally impossible for an amateur who couldn't even fly a Cessna" to fly that downward spiral and then "crash into the Pentagon's first floor wall without touching the lawn."¹¹⁵ Ralph Omholt, a former 757 pilot, has bluntly said: "The idea that an unskilled pilot could have flown this trajectory is simply too ridiculous to consider."¹¹⁶ Ralph Kolstad, who was a US Navy "top gun" pilot before becoming a commercial airline pilot for 27 years, has said: "I have 6,000 hours of flight time in Boeing 757's and 767's and I could not have flown it the way the flight path was described. . . . Something stinks to high heaven!"¹¹⁷

The authors of the Popular Mechanics book about 9/11 offered to solve this problem. While acknowledging that Hanjour "may not have been highly skilled," they said that he did not need to be, because all he had to do was, using a GPS unit, put his plane on autopilot.¹¹⁸ "He steered the plane manually for only the final eight minutes of the flight," they state triumphantly¹¹⁹---ignoring the fact that it was precisely during those minutes that Hanjour had allegedly performed the impossible.

14. Would an al-Qaeda Pilot Have Executed that Maneuver?

A further question is: Even if one of the al-Qaeda operatives on that flight could have executed that maneuver, would he have done so? This question arises out of the fact that the plane could easily have crashed into the roof on the side of the Pentagon that housed Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and all the top brass. The difficult maneuver would have been required only by the decision to strike Wedge 1 on the side.

But this was the worst possible place, given the assumed motives of the al-Qaeda operatives: They would have wanted to kill Rumsfeld and the top brass, but Wedge 1 was as far removed from their offices as possible. They would have wanted to cause as much destruction as possible, but Wedge 1---and only it---had been renovated to make it less

vulnerable to attack. Al-Qaeda operatives would have wanted to kill as many Pentagon employees as possible, but because the renovation was not quite complete, Wedge 1 was only sparsely occupied. The attack also occurred on the only part of the Pentagon that would have presented physical obstacles to an attacking airplane. All of these facts were public knowledge. So even if an al-Qaeda pilot had been capable of executing the maneuver to strike the ground floor of Wedge 1, he would not have done so.

15. Could al-Qaeda Operatives Have Brought Down the World Trade Center Buildings?

Returning to the issue of competence, another question is whether al-Qaeda operatives could have brought down the Twin Towers and WTC 7?

With regard to the Twin Towers, the official theory is that they were brought down by the impact of the airplanes plus the ensuing fires. But this theory cannot explain why the towers, after exploding outwards at the top, came straight down, because this type of collapse would have required all 287 of each building's steel columns---which ran from the basement to the roof---to have failed simultaneously; it cannot explain why the top parts of the buildings came straight down at virtually free-fall speed, because this required that the lower parts of the building, with all of their steel and concrete, offered no resistance; it cannot explain why sections of steel beams, weighing thousands of tons, were blown out horizontally more than 500 feet; it cannot explain why some of the steel had melted, because this melting required temperatures far hotter than the fires in the buildings could possibly have been; and it cannot explain why many firefighters and WTC employees reported massive explosions in the buildings long after all the jet-fuel had burned up. But all of these phenomena are easily explainable by the hypothesis that the buildings were brought down by explosives in the procedure known as controlled demolition.¹²⁰

This conclusion now constitutes the consensus of independent physicists, chemists, architects, engineers, and demolition experts who have studied the facts.¹²¹ For example, Edward Muniak, a mechanical and fire protection engineer who worked in the US departments of energy and defense, says: "The concentric nearly freefall speed exhibited by each building was identical to most controlled demolitions. . . . Collapse [was] not caused by fire effects."¹²² Dwain Deets, the former director of the research engineering division at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center, mentions the "massive structural members being hurled horizontally" as one of the factors leaving him with "no doubt [that] explosives were involved."¹²³

Given the fact that WTC 7 was not even hit by a plane, its vertical collapse at virtually free-fall speed, which also was preceded by explosions and involved the melting of steel, was still more obviously an example of controlled demolition.¹²⁴ For example, Jack Keller, emeritus professor of engineering at Utah State University, who has been given special recognition by Scientific American, said: "Obviously it was the result of controlled demolition."¹²⁵ Likewise, when Danny Jowenko---a controlled demolition expert in the

Netherlands who had not known that WTC 7 had collapsed on 9/11---was asked to comment on a video of its collapse, he said: "They simply blew up columns, and the rest caved in afterwards. . . . [I]t's been imploded. . . . A team of experts did this."¹²⁶

If the Twin Towers and WTC 7 were brought down by explosives, the question becomes: Who would have had the ability to place the explosives? This question involves two parts: First, who could have obtained access to the buildings for all the hours it would have taken to plant the explosives? The answer is: Only someone with connections to people in charge of security for the World Trade Center.

The second part of the question is: Who, if they had such access, would have had the expertise to engineer the controlled demolition of these three buildings? As Jowenko's statement indicated, the kind of controlled demolition to which these buildings were subjected was implosion, which makes the building come straight down. According to ImplosionWorld.com, an implosion is "by far the trickiest type of explosive project, and there are only a handful of blasting companies in the world that possess enough experience . . . to perform these true building implosions."¹²⁷

Both parts of the question, therefore, rule out al-Qaeda operatives. The destruction of the World Trade Center had to have been an inside job.

16. Would al-Qaeda Operatives Have Imploded the Buildings?

Finally, we can also ask whether, even if al-Qaeda operatives had possessed the ability to cause the World Trade Center buildings to implode so as to come straight down, they would have done so? The answer to this question becomes obvious once we reflect upon the purpose of this kind of controlled demolition, which is to avoid damaging near-by buildings. Had the 110-story Twin Towers fallen over sideways, they would have caused massive destruction in lower Manhattan, destroying dozens of other buildings and killing tens of thousands of people. Would al-Qaeda have had the courtesy to make sure that the buildings came straight down?

Conclusion

All the proffered evidence that America was attacked by Muslims on 9/11, when subjected to critical scrutiny, appears to have been fabricated. If that is determined indeed to be the case, the implications would be enormous. Discovering and prosecuting the true perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks would obviously be important. The most immediate consequence, however, should be to reverse those attitudes and policies that have been based on the assumption that America was attacked by Muslims on 9/11.

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Notes

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18. BBC News, "Tape "-Proves Bin Laden's Guilt,"" 14 December 2001 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1708091.stm).
19. See "The Fake 2001 bin Laden Video Tape" (<http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/osamatape.html>).
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21. 9/11CR 149, 155, 166.
22. See 9/11CR Ch. 5, notes 16, 41, and 92.
23. Kean and Hamilton, *Without Precedent*, 118.
24. *Ibid.*, 122-24.
25. *Ibid.*, 119.
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34. See *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts: An In-Depth Investigation* by Popular Mechanics, ed. David Dunbar and Brad Reagan (New York: Hearst Books, 2006), 83-86.
35. Lechner FBI Affidavit; available at *Four Corners: Investigative TV Journalism* (click here Woodward and Sweeney are not identified by name in the affidavit, which refers simply to the former as "an employee of American Airlines at Logan" and to the latter as "a flight attendant on AA11." But their names were revealed in an "investigative document compiled by the FBI" to which Eric Lichtblau referred in "Aboard Flight 11, a Chilling Voice," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 September 2001 (click here
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37. Gail Sheehy, "9/11 Tapes Reveal Ground Personnel Muffled Attacks," *New York Observer*, 24 June, 2004 (<http://www.observer.com/node/49415>).
38. Greg Gordon, "Prosecutors Play Flight 93 Cockpit Recording," *McClatchy Newspapers*, *KnoxNews.com*, 12 April 2006 (click here The quoted statement is Gordon's paraphrase of the testimony of "a member of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force."
39. See *United States v. Zacarias Moussaoui*, Exhibit Number P200054 (click here This graphics presentation can be more easily viewed in "Detailed Account of Phone Calls from September 11th Flights" at 9-11 Research (click here
40. "The Final Moments of United Flight 93," *Newsweek*, 22 September 2001 (click here See "Interview with Deena Lynne Burnett (re: phone call from hijacked flight)," 9/11 Commission, FBI Source Documents, Chronological, September 11, 2001, *Intelfiles.com*, 14 March 2008 (click here Greg Gordon, "Widow Tells of Poignant Last Calls," *Sacramento Bee*, 11 September 2002 (click here and Deena L. Burnett (with Anthony F. Giombetti), *Fighting Back: Living Beyond Ourselves* (Longwood, Florida: Advantage Inspirational Books, 2006), where she wrote: "I looked at the caller ID and indeed it was Tom's cell phone number" (61).
42. William M. Arkin, "When Seeing and Hearing Isn't Believing," *Washington Post*, 1 February 1999 (click here Although Brickhouse Security's advertisement for Telephone Voice Changers (click here has been modified in recent years, it previously included a device called "FoneFaker," the ad for which said: "Record any call you make, fake your Caller ID and change your voice, all with one service you can use from any phone."
44. For Deena Burnett's reconstruction of the calls, see click here
45. See *The New Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 122.
46. Lichtblau, "Aboard Flight 11, a Chilling Voice" (see note 34, above).
47. 9/11CR 4, 6.
48. See note 38, above.

49. 9/11CR 19.
50. Ibid.
51. "Summary of Air Traffic Hijack Events: September 11, 2001," FAA, 17 September 2001 ([click here](#))
52. Frank J. Murray, "Americans Feel Touch of Evil; Fury Spurs Unity," Washington Times, 11 September 2002 ([click here](#))
53. "Ashcroft Says More Attacks May Be Planned," CNN, 18 September 2001 ([click here](#))
"Terrorist Hunt," ABC News ([click here](#))
54. Anne Karpf, "Uncle Sam's Lucky Finds," Guardian, 19 March 2002 ([click here](#)) Like some others, this article mistakenly said the passport belonged to Mohamed Atta.
55. Statement by Susan Ginsburg, senior counsel to the 9/11 Commission, at the 9/11 Commission Hearing, 26 January 2004 ([click here](#)) The Commission's account reflected a CBS report that the passport had been found "minutes after" the attack, which was stated by the Associated Press, 27 January 2003.
56. Sheila MacVicar and Caroline Faraj, "September 11 Hijacker Questioned in January 2001," CNN, 1 August 2002 ([click here](#)) 9/11 Commission Hearing, 26 January 2004.
57. 9/11CR 14; Jere Longman, *Among the Heroes: United 93 and the Passengers and Crew Who Fought Back* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 215.
58. In light of the absurdity of the claims about the passports of al-Suqami and Jarrah, we can safely assume that the ID cards of Majed Moqed, Nawaf al-Hazmi, and Salem al-Hazmi, said to have been discovered at the Pentagon crash site (see "9/11 and Terrorist Travel," 9/11 Commission Staff Report [[click here](#) 27, 42]), were also planted.
59. For a photograph of the headband, see 9-11 Research, "The Crash of Flight 93" ([click here](#))
60. Quoted in Ross Coulthart, "Terrorists Target America," *Ninemsn*, September 2001 ([click here](#))
61. Lechner FBI Affidavit (see note 34, above).
62. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 2001; *Boston Globe*, 18 September, 2001.
63. The 9/11 Commission's Staff Statement No. 16, dated 16 June 2004 (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5224099>), said: "The Portland detour almost prevented Atta and Omari from making Flight 11 out of Boston. In fact, the luggage they checked in Portland failed to make it onto the plane."
64. 9/11CR 1-2.

65. 9/11CR 451n1; FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III, "Statement for the Record," Joint Intelligence Committee Inquiry, 26 September 2002 (click here)
66. "Two Brothers among Hijackers," CNN Report, 13 September 2001 (click here)
67. "Feds Think They've Identified Some Hijackers," CNN, 13 September 2001 (click here)
68. "Portland Police Eye Local Ties," Associated Press, Portsmouth Herald, 14 September 2001 (click here)
69. Joel Achenbach, "'You Never Imagine' A Hijacker Next Door," Washington Post, 16 September 2001 (click here Rowland Morgan and Ian Henshall, 9/11 Revealed: The Unanswered Questions (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), 181.
71. David Hench, "Ticket Agent Haunted by Brush with 9/11 Hijackers," Portland Press Herald, 6 March 2005 (<http://www.spartacus.blogs.com/ticketagent.htm>).
72. This photo can be seen at click here
73. Associated Press, 22 July 2004. The photo with this caption can be seen in Morgan and Henshall, 9/11 Revealed, 117-18, along with a genuine security video (with identification data), or at <http://killtown.911review.org/flight77/hijackers.html> (scroll half-way down).
74. Rowland and Henshall, 9/11 Revealed, 118.
75. 9/11CR 452n11.
76. Jay Kolar, "What We Now Know about the Alleged 9-11 Hijackers," in Paul Zarembka, ed., The Hidden History of 9-11 (New York: Seven Stories, 2008), 3-44, at 8 (emphasis Kolar's).
77. Richard A. Clarke, Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror (New York: Free Press, 2004), 13.
78. "Statement of Robert C. Bonner to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States," 26 January 2004 (click here)
79. Ibid.
80. "FBI: Early Probe Results Show 18 Hijackers Took Part," CNN, 13 September 2001 (click here "List of Names of 18 Suspected Hijackers," CNN, 14 September 2001 (click here
81. "List of Names of 18 Suspected Hijackers."
82. Gail Sheehy, "Stewardess ID'd Hijackers Early, Transcripts Show," New York Observer, 15 February 2004 (<http://www.observer.com/node/48805>).

83. Satam al-Suqami replaced a man named Amer Kamfar, and Abdulaziz al-Omari replaced a man with a similar name, Abdulrahman al-Omari; see Kolar, "What We Now Know," 12-15.

84. Another problem with the claim that Woodward had identified these three men is that the seat numbers reportedly used to identify Atta and al-Omari (see Gail Sheehy, "Stewardess ID'd Hijackers Early") did not match the numbers of the seats assigned to these two men (9/11CR 2).

85. All four passenger manifests can be found at [click here](#)

86. Terry McDermott, *Perfect Soldiers: The 9/11 Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), photo section after p. 140.

87. This is stated at "The Passengers," 911myths.com (http://911myths.com/html/the_passengers.html).

88. Although discussions on the Internet have often claimed that these manifests were included in the FBI's evidence for the Moussaoui trial, several researchers failed to find them. See Jim Hoffman's discussion at [click here](#)

89. To view them, see "Passenger Lists," 9-11 Research ([click here](#) To download them and/or read cleaned-up versions, see "The Passengers," 911myths.com (http://911myths.com/html/the_passengers.html).

90. "Hijackers Linked to USS Cole Attack? Investigators Have Identified All the Hijackers; Photos to Be Released," CBS News, 14 September 2001 ([click here](#) Elizabeth Neuffer, "Hijack Suspect Lived a Life, or a Lie," Boston Globe, 25 September 2001 ([click here](#)

91. "Four Planes, Four Coordinated Teams," Washington Post, 16 September 2001 ([click here](#)

92. David Dunbar and Brad Reagan, eds., *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts* (New York: Hearst Books, 2006), 63.

93. Andrew M. Baker, M.D., "Human Identification in a Post-9/11 World: Attack on American Airlines Flight 77 and the Pentagon Identification and Pathology" ([click here](#)

94. Steve Vogel, "Remains Unidentified for 5 Pentagon Victims," Washington Post, 21 November 2001 ([click here](#) See my discussion in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking: An Answer to Popular Mechanics and Other Defenders of the Official Conspiracy Theory*, revised & updated edition (Northampton: Olive Branch, 2007), 268-69.

96. "Ziad Jarrah," Wikipedia, as the article existed prior to September 8, 2006. On that date, that passage was removed. However, the earlier version of the article, containing the passage, is available at http://www.wanttoknow.info/articles/ziad_jarrah.

97. Thomas R. Olmsted, M.D. "Still No Arabs on Flight 77," Rense.com, 23 June 2003 (<http://www.rense.com/general38/77.htm>).
98. 9/11CR 5.
99. David Bamford, "Hijack '-Suspect' Alive in Morocco," BBC, 22 September 2001 (click here)
100. "Hijack '-Suspects' Alive and Well," BBC News, 23 September 2001 (click here "Panoply of the Absurd," Der Spiegel, 8 September 2003 [click here
102. Steve Herrmann, "9/11 Conspiracy Theory," The Editors, BBC News, 27 October 2006 (click here
103. Jay Kolar, "Update: What We Now Know about the Alleged 9-11 Hijackers," Zarembka, ed., The Hidden History of 9-11: 293-304, at 293-94.
104. For discussion of some of these other men, see *ibid.*, 295-98.
105. The story "Silver Blaze" is available at Wikisource (http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Silver_Blaze).
106. "America Under Attack: How could It Happen?" CNN Live Event, 12 September 2001 (click here
107. *Ibid.* This was the "radio transmission" discussed earlier.
108. Richard A. Serrano, "Heroism, Fatalism Aboard Flight 93," Los Angeles Times, 12 April 2006 (click here
109. All of these statements are contained in the section headed "Senior Military, Intelligence, Law Enforcement, and Government Officials" at Patriots Question 9/11 (<http://www.patriotsquestion911.com>).
110. "9/12/2001: CIA Veteran Doubts Bin Laden Capable of 9/11 Attacks, Suspects Larger Plot," Aidan Monaghan's Blog, 11 March 2008 (<http://www.911blogger.com/blog/2074>).
111. Marc Fisher and Don Phillips, "On Flight 77: '-Our Plane Is Being Hijacked,'" Washington Post, 12 September 2001 (click here
112. "FAA Was Alerted To Sept. 11 Hijacker," CBS News, 10 May 2002 (click here
113. Jim Yardley, "A Trainee Noted for Incompetence," New York Times, 4 May 2002 (click here 9/11CR 242.
115. Greg Szymanski, "Former Vietnam Combat and Commercial Pilot Firm Believer 9/11 Was Inside Government Job," Arctic Beacon, 17 July 2005 (click here Email from Ralph Omholt, 27 October 2006.

117. Alan Miller, "U.S. Navy 'Top Gun' Pilot Questions 9/11 Pentagon Story," OpedNews.com, 5 September 2007 (click here Dunbar and Reagan, eds., Debunking 9/11 Myths, 6.

119. Ibid.

120. These problems and more are discussed in The New Pearl Harbor Revisited, Ch. 1.

121. For such people who have been willing to go public, see Patriots Question 9/11 (<http://PatriotsQuestion911.com>).

122. Patriots Question 9/11 (<http://PatriotsQuestion911.com/engineers.html#Munyak>).

123. Stated at Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (<http://www.ae911truth.org/profile.php?uid=998819>).

124. For anyone aware of the facts, NIST's report on the collapse of WTC 7, issued August 22, 2008, is laughable. For one thing, as I had predicted (Ch. 1 of The New Pearl Harbor Revisited), NIST simply ignored all the facts to which its fire theory cannot do justice, such as the melted steel, the thermite residue, and the reports of explosions in the building.

125. Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (click here This interview can be seen at "Controlled Demolition Expert and WTC7" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3DRhwRN06I>)). A portion is contained in the film Loose Change Final Cut.

127. "The Myth of Implosion" (<http://www.implosionworld.com/dyk2.html>).

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