

**WE WERE
LIED
TO ABOUT**

9/11



T H E I N T E R V I E W S

JON GOLD

Dedication

This book is dedicated to 9/11 Family Members Lorie Van Auken, Mindy Kleinberg, Patty Casazza and Kristen Breitweiser, collectively known as the "Jersey Girls" or the September Eleventh Advocates. They were the ones to really start the fight for the truth. If not for their efforts, there would never have been a 9/11 Commission, as corrupt and compromised as it was. That is a scary thought. They have fought continuously for many years (even if the corporate news have largely ignored their efforts). The media focused on their fight for the Commission, and followed the women during the Commission hearings; after the release of the 9/11 Report, and the "official story" was set in stone, the Jersey Girls' questions ceased to be addressed. Shame on the media for that. The Jersey Girls have spoken at conferences, participated in the 9/11 Congressional Briefing hosted by then Representative Cynthia McKinney, and have issued many incisive press releases over the years pertaining to 9/11. Three of the Jersey Girls appeared in a documentary entitled "9/11: Press For Truth" that attempted to bring attention to this issue, but was mostly ignored by the media. We would all be better off, if the world could hear what the Jersey Girls have to say. I want to thank the four of them (and Monica Gabrielle as well who is also a September Eleventh Advocate). You are my heroes, you have my absolute respect and gratitude. You are an inspiration. Thank you.

Introduction

Hello, and thank you very much for getting this book. I was hoping my first book *9/11 Truther: The Fight for Peace, Justice and Accountability* might change the world, but that never happened.

I think I picked a bad title. If you would like a complimentary copy, feel free to email me at Gold9472@comcast.net. It would be good context for this book.

On May 22, 2013, I broke my back. I am now partially paralyzed from the waist down, and am having quite a bit of difficulties, but I'm doing my best to cope. Even though I became disabled, I still cared deeply about this cause. Even in the hospital, I continued to make movies and provide updates for the Tour de Peace (a bicycle ride across the country for peace that Gold Star Mother and anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan, myself, and others started). I am limited as to what I can do now, but I've done my best to post the news, write articles when inspired, talk on radio shows, and make informational videos.

Cindy Sheehan had this idea to start what is called the "Soapbox People's Network." The idea was that other people would contribute articles and their shows to Cindy's site. She asked me if I wanted to do a show about 9/11.

As it turns out, after 15+ years of advocating for 9/11 Justice, I've met some amazing people that know a lot about this issue. So, I agreed and instantly got started on the show.

I did my best to interview the "best of the best." I refrained from having guests on for the sake of talking about their theories.

There were many people I tried to contact to have on the show, such as John Farmer, Eleanor Hill, Dana Lesemann (RIP), but the guests I did manage to get were absolutely amazing.

One day I was talking with Mickey Huff of Project Censored. I was bored being homebound, and he recommended I transcribe all of my interviews and make it into a book. I instantly thought that was a good idea. A lot of people have been asking me for transcripts of the shows. Also, many people like to read interviews rather than listen to them. So, here is that book. Thank you Mickey for the inspiration.

I also want to give a **HUGE** thanks to Michele Fergus who took the time to transcribe my shows, and to give me little smart ass notes along the way. I hope I wasn't too rough on you. :) You laid the foundation for something I would never be able to do and for that, I am forever grateful. You also are almost entirely responsible for the "Suggested Further Research" section, and I want to thank you for that as well.

I also want to give a **HUGE** thanks to Scott Ford for designing the book cover. We fight like the true brothers that we are, but you always help to make me look good. I am forever grateful for that as well.

I hope this book accomplishes what it was intended to do. That is to educate and to help set the historical record straight. Sure, there have been some new developments since these interviews took place, but they don't take away from anything that is said. I don't agree with everything everyone said during these interviews, but we're allowed to have disagreements without spewing hatred towards each other. Also, you will often hear me call people "hero" during these interviews. I have learned from personal experience that using that word causes a lot of pressure for the person you're trying to be nice to when using it. In my first book I said that I was a "Joe Schmoe American." I am. There is an expression "never meet your heroes." Your heroes will always let you down. Why? They are human beings just like you. They are capable of mistakes and everything else a human being is capable of if you can believe that (that's sarcasm). I also said in my first book "I'm not a Democrat. I'm not a Republican. I'm not a hero. I'm not a role model. I'm a regular, everyday person who's paying attention and trying to make a difference, and I'm just trying to do the right thing." That is also still true.

Here's some advice... be your own hero. Have inspirations, but **DO BETTER** than your inspirations. Don't depend on one person to get the job done. Please. This book isn't about me. It's about us.

Hopefully, this book will put this issue back on the table. Incidentally, if you want to listen to the shows, they are available [here](#) and on [YouTube](#).

I have also decided to give this book away for free because I feel like it's the right thing to do. I never did this work to keep it to myself. I don't want people to have to pay for the right to read this information, especially those who might not be able to afford it. I have no intention of profiting from 9/11.

I have believed that selling a book or putting a value on it, meant that the person buying it might be more inclined to give it a try. I'm hoping instead that my documented time and

work for this cause helps in the value department. I'm going to have faith in word of mouth. I hope you really take the time to read it, digest what is in it, and recommend it to family, co-workers, and friends.

I edited this book myself. I took out a lot of "you know's," and some stammering, and added "to," "a," "is," to places it needed it to make it more readable, and things like that. Everyone has their own way of speaking, so I tried to leave some of the "you know's," and "like's" in the text. I did, however, leave my "and so on and so forth's" there. ;)

I could never thank the people that allowed me to interview them enough. They all have tremendous things to say, and I hope you do your best to take it all in.

To those journalists who consider themselves alternative press, but don't incorporate the fact that we were lied to about 9/11, or don't know the truth about 9/11 into whatever Post-9/11 related story they report about, I have this to say... you are helping to create an extremely dangerous environment. History is being written, and it's simply the wrong history. Please reconsider your stance on the issue of 9/11. Thank you.

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

Dr. Martin Luther King

We Were **LIED To About 9/11: The Interviews** **By Jon Gold**

Testimonials

"Jon Gold has spent countless hours researching the events of September 11, 2001. As a result, he has a wealth of information regarding the events surrounding the attacks. He has interviewed many informed sources with insights into what happened before, during and after 9/11, and this book is a compilation of those interviews. September 11, 2001 has been used as a rationale for torture, the Patriot Act, the Iraq war, and recently to justify a ban on travel from seven countries (none of which are the four countries that the 9/11 hijackers came from), and so much more. For anyone interested in deepening their understanding of the complexities of September 11th, this material should not be missed."
- **9/11 Family Member Lorie Van Auken, Jersey Girl, September 11th Advocate**

"No one I know has worked harder to unravel the truth of the 9-11 attacks and to explain why it still matters than Jon Gold. To say he has the "patience of Job" is an understatement. In producing this excellent compilation of interviews of witnesses, official insiders and knowledgeable researchers, Jon Gold has gifted historians and other truth-seekers with a solid place to begin their own further inquiry." - **Coleen Rowley, retired FBI Agent and former Minneapolis Division Legal Counsel who testified in connection with the Joint Intelligence Committee Inquiry, the Senate Judiciary Committee's investigation and the Department of Justice's Inspector General about FBI failures prior to 9-11**

"In an era of fake news and disinformation, Jon Gold remains laser focused on facts, not theories, that remind us how many questions remain unanswered, connections unexplored, and criminals unpunished. Jon's dogged journalism is a beacon of light and vessel of truth in a sea of disappointment, lunacy and lies, and his mounds of research have undoubtedly shaped the true people's history of the most important event of our generation." - **Abby Martin, journalist, creator of The Empire Files and founder of Media Roots**

Table Of Contents

Description Of Show	8
Jenna Orkin	9
Mickey Huff	22
Erik Larson	61
Ray Nowosielski	89
Coleen Rowley	114
Lorie Van Auken	142
Nafeez Ahmed	167
Cindy Sheehan	197
J. Michael Springmann	213
Paul Church	236
Thomas Drake	265
Philip Shenon	312
John Albanese	336
Robbie Martin	381
Jon Gold	415
Peter Dale Scott	432
Peter Van Buren	464
Bob McIlvaine	483
Bill Bergman	540
Brian McGlinchey	574
Malcolm Chaddock	601
Andy Worthington	668
Senator Bob Graham	700
Ray McGovern	719
Jonathan Kay	746
Dan Christensen	776
Abby Martin	808
Jon Gold	832
Peter Phillips	874
John Newman	905
Paul Thompson	Part I (944), Part II (964), Part III (985), Part IV (1005)
Suggested Further Research (Books, Videos, Websites).....	1029

Description Of The Show

JON

Hi everyone, and welcome to my new show called: *We Were Lied to About 9/11*. I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network. This is the first episode, so I want to explain what I hope to accomplish by having this show.

I look at 9/11 as a crime and not an act of war. As with every crime there are suspects for that crime. I believe that along with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, elements within our Government and other Governments have **MORE THAN EARNED** the title of suspect for the crime of 9/11. That being said, I don't know what happened that day or who was ultimately responsible. Admitting this, in my opinion, has made me a better advocate for 9/11 justice.

Here's what I **DO** know:

I do know we were lied to about a great many things about that day. I do know that there are many examples of individuals attempting to cover up this or that. I do know that there are many examples of people outright lying about the attacks. I do know that people who should have been held accountable were instead rewarded and promoted. I do know that many polls over the years show that a majority of people question what we were told about that day. I do know that the corporate media has only attacked those who question what we were told about that day. I do know that each investigation we had, had its own version of corruption and compromise, especially the 9/11 Commission. I do know that the families who lost someone that day, and the people of the world, both deserve and require real truth, accountability and justice for what happened that day. The last thing I know is that because of all of the lies of 9/11, there is no justification for all of the evil that we have committed in the name of that day, and in the names of those lost that day.

I don't want to focus on theories about what happened that day. I want to focus on the fact that we were lied to about 9/11. It's a simple and true statement, and I'm hoping that it reaches a majority of people. I want to educate people about everything I just said. Learning about 9/11 is a very hard and daunting task. I want to help people with it, and that is why I am having this show.



Chapter/Episode 1 – Jenna Orkin – August 4, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Jenna Orkin (JENNA)

JON Okay, this is Jon and I'm here with Jenna Orkin and I'm going to quickly read her bio for us.

Jenna Orkin is the author of *The Moron's Guide to Global Collapse*. After 9/11, she was among the first to question the EPA's announcement that the air was safe to breathe. She went on to co-found the World Trade Center Environmental Organization as well as other lower Manhattan activist organizations that revealed and testified to the EPA's lies. Later, she wrote for *FromTheWilderness.com*, the website founded by 9/11 investigative journalist Mike Ruppert, who sadly killed himself in April of this year. Hi, Jenna, my very first guest ever. Welcome to We Were Lied to About 9/11. How are you feeling?

JENNA Wonderful, and you?

JON Oh, I'm doing okay. Now, before we get started, I wrote my own little personal bio for you (yeah?) and I wanted to read that.

JENNA Okay.

JON All right? So, the date was September 9, 2004, the venue the 9/11 Omission Hearings that were held in New York City and chaired by then former representative Cynthia McKinney. I had never heard about the environmental impact of 9/11 before. Our corporate media wasn't telling us about it, apparently. Anyway, Jenna spoke and quite literally changed my life. If there was a barrier that I had trouble hurdling over with regard to the notion that elements within our Government are more than willing to kill Americans, Jenna destroyed that barrier. Also, because of her I started paying extra close attention to the 9/11 first responders and their fate. If not for Jenna, I would NEVER have done the work that I've done with regard to the 9/11 first responders.

Now, before we get started, I just want to point out the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act was eventually passed after a long and hard-fought battle over it, and the responders are getting a lot of help that they would never have gotten before. The Zadroga Act is not permanent, however, and eventually the responders will have to go to DC to fight to renew it. I just wanted to get that out of the way before we start our discussion.

So, hi again, Jenna.

JENNA Yeah, hi.

JON All right, my very first question is: Living in the Manhattan area, what was the day of 9/11 like for you?

JENNA Okay, you know you just raised something that I feel it imperative to answer, which is that the Zadroga Act money will, you know, wane and they will have to fight for more. It will be much harder because you will have a mushrooming series of cancers appearing from let's say around 20 years after 9/11. So, I believe that they passed the Zadroga Act with a feeling on the amount of money because they knew that this was coming up. Anybody with any experience with incubation periods and medical subjects like that would know that, so when they assigned a certain amount of money it was with that in mind.

Anyway, so, the day of 9/11 (yep), I was going to the gym and a neighbor said, "Did you see that a plane crashed into the World Trade Center? They think it's terrorists." So, I looked out the window—I was living in Brooklyn

and you could see the smoke. And so, I went, you know, change of plans. I went back to the apartment, called my son's school because he was going to high school at Stuyvesant four blocks north of the World Trade Center. The line was busy. I made subsequent calls and the line was always busy. Then I called my ex-husband who worked down in that neighborhood to see if he could get our son, and we spoke a bit, and then he said "I've got to go. I just saw somebody jump out the 90th floor." That was the first time you ever heard about that. (Jesus!) This was the first time it was happening. And, so I tried to get to Stuyvesant. Everything was closed. You couldn't take the train. You couldn't walk across the bridge. You were sequestered. And that was a fait accompli.

So, I went back to the apartment, made all kinds of calls. Other people were calling me. My cousin said she'd heard on the radio that Stuyvesant had been evacuated. That turned out to be a false alarm. What happened at the school—my son was in physics class and they saw the first plane hit the building and they looked out the window. The physics teacher then goes and closes the blinds (hmm), which becomes kind of emblematic of the kind of attitude of so many people, including at the school, of what was happening. The head of the school—well the FBI showed up at the school—and the head of the school, the Principal, Stanley Teitel, said, "Should we evacuate?" And the FBI said, "No." And the head of the school—how did this go? He said, "What's the chance that the buildings are going to come down?" and the FBI guy said, "Not a chance." (Wow)

Then, when the first building fell, the FBI guy said, "Now you've got to evacuate everybody because the vibrations could bring down this building." So at that point, they evacuated the kids. There was a teacher downstairs who—and there were 3200 kids at this school—a teacher downstairs said, "You see that person to your left or your right? I don't care if you know them or not, that's your buddy. Stay with them. Run! Go up town." So my son was carrying his back pack because he had never gotten his act together to get a locker—a 26-pound backpack. I weighed it when he finally got home. And he walks five miles and he went to the house of a classmate—well, I guess she was a schoolmate; I don't even think he knew her—and several other people went there too. I don't know. And a friend of mine picked him up and took him to lunch and that restaurant was filled with refugees from Lower Manhattan. And they were passing people on the street. One woman was crying, and my son said to my friend, "Do you know why she was crying?" My friend said, "No." And my son said, "Her train was late. If it had been on time, she would have been in the building."

And then my friend told me he just fell asleep at the lunch table. You know, it had been so exhausting.

So the day was very hectic.

JON Obviously, horrible.

JENNA Yeah, right.

JON It's just horrible. I can't imagine what it was like to be there that day. I mean, I'm from Philadelphia, so I (yeah), the only coverage that I saw was the constant showing of the buildings collapsing (yes) by the corporate media.

JENNA Right. There were parents who lived in Manhattan and were able to get to the school, but they weren't allowed in because the administration didn't know them, and they were afraid at that time—they didn't know if there were terrorists out in the street. So they just locked the doors to people. (Right) Just another little detail.

JON All right. My next question: Why did you start to question what New Yorkers were being told about the air and water quality?

JENNA Because, the following day that same friend who picked up my son had a lunch engagement, not exactly in that neighborhood, of course, sufficiently North where life was still going on, and as per normal—whatever normal is after 9/11—and she said, "It smells godawful. It's the air that's going to be the problem." Well that turned out to be prophetic. So immediately I was concerned about that. There was an enormous rush to get the kids back into the building because it's a population that's terribly ambitious. It's a very competitive school. And, they have to take an exam; the kids go to the best colleges after that; and they LOVE that school—state-of-the-art science labs and clubs—it was the only school my son ever loved. And, so, to question what the Government was saying was to slight the common—you know, it's like slighting the Church in the middle ages, or something. I mean, everybody wanted to go back.

There were a couple of naysayers. I quickly made friends with them. But we were too few. And, on top of that, the school administration, no I should say, the parent association was lied to about whether the ventilation system had been cleaned. The school underwent a million-dollar clean-up, but it

excluded the ventilation system, and they lied about that to the parents association. So, everybody was rushing back to the school. And they didn't find out until after-the-fact. That's a very key factor.

JON So, it was essentially the safety of your son that prompted you to do the questioning.

JENNA Oh, of course, that was the entirety of it, apart from that it didn't affect me hardly at all.

JON Now, could you briefly tell us what kind of toxins were found in the dust? This is something that when I first heard you speak it was just amazing to me. It just never—none of it occurred to me. So, could you do that?

JENNA Okay, yeah, the Sierra Club report written in, I believe, 2003 or 4 said over 2,000 contaminants. Well that's plenty but, in fact, there are 80,000 manufactured in the United States, so there are probably more, but who cares? Anyway, you had 50,000 computers just in World Trade Center One and Two, each made with a couple of pounds of lead. Mercury—41 milligrams of mercury per fluorescent light bulb, you know, calculate that for those two buildings. Those two buildings constituted a city with its own zip code. So everything that's in a city was in there. Your doctors' offices with radiation equipment. You had smoke alarms that had radioactive Americium241.

And then, about early October, Dr. Thomas Cahill who came in from UC Davis tested very and ultra fine particles. They were the highest he'd ever gotten out of the 7,000 samples he'd taken around the world, including at the burning Kuwait oil fields. We'd beat them all. Just catastrophic levels of dioxin—you could go on and on.

JON And the alkalinity of the—

JENNA Oh, the alkalinity! Thank you. Yes, right, the equivalent to drain cleaner. And what the EPA did about that was so ingenious because they reduced it by from, let's say, from 11 to 10, somewhere around there. And to the layman it looks like not much of a reduction. It looks like a 10 percent, 9 percent reduction. In fact, it's a logarithmic scale, so you're reducing it by a factor of 10 and they don't tell you that of course.

JON Right, oh geez. Now, Christie Todd Whitman, the former head of the EPA, is the one that made many statements saying that everything was okay. On September 24, 2006, the *New York Post* reported that "Condoleezza Rice's office gave final approval to the infamous Environmental Protection Agency press releases days after 9/11 claiming the air around Ground Zero was 'safe to breathe' internal documents show." *New York One* is the only other news outlet to report on that story. Nothing ever came of it. The story just went away.

To your knowledge, is this story true?

JENNA Well, I don't have any personal knowledge. I only know what I read, which is the same thing that you read. But, I would say, you know, this dovetails with the question of who ultimately is responsible. And Condoleezza Rice, if her office said the air is safe to breathe, they're getting their information from the EPA. They're not in the business of environmental protection. That's not their area of expertise. So they're just mouthing what they're told. It's really (coughing) the EPA that has to be held ultimately responsible. They're the ones in charge. And I would also really love to question—and nobody ever will—the White House Council on Environmental Quality (coughing), which is the dark horse in this whole thing.

JON Are you all right? (Mmm-hmm) Okay, good.

Okay, so—but it was the White House that essentially got the EPA to rewrite the reports to be more—

JENNA It's the White House Council on Environmental Quality—and James Connaughton is a very interesting figure because lots of things lead back to James Connaughton, like comments about climate change, denying it or downplaying it, you know, can be traced back to him. Changing the press releases where cautionary statements on asbestos become reassurances eventually lead back to Connaughton's office. He was called in to question by the Senate, and I have up on my computer what Chairman James Inhofe concluded about that. That was in 2003. This is Inhofe's investigation: "EPA acted properly in its response, as well as in its communications with the public. The administration did not suppress any part . . ." You know, you can imagine what it says. (Right) That kind of thing. (Yeah) Then later Hillary Clinton questioned Connaughton, but you know, he tap-danced out of that. Nothing ever happens to any of these people. It all rolls right off them.

JON Well, the only form of accountability that I'm aware of with regard to Christie Todd Whitman is that there was a judge that one time said something about her actions in a very negative way—I don't remember exactly.

JENNA Okay, okay, huh—that was Judge, I think her name is Deborah Bade, Deborah Batts? I may be confused. Yeah, I think that was it. [Note: U.S. District Judge Deborah A. Batts] Okay, that was a lawsuit of resident students and office workers against the EPA and I was named as one of the original Plaintiffs because I had my carpet tested for asbestos and the results showed, well, it was not conclusive, but too much asbestos, according to ultrasonication which was an EPA-approved test, but a test they did not apply after 9/11 down at the World Trade Center. They questioned their own test.

Anyway, so we sued the EPA. And that's a lower court level—this wonderful judge gave an incredibly strong statement that Christie Todd Whitman's actions shocked the conscience. It was fantastic. Hillary Clinton held a press conference and it was all triumphant. But, of course, what does the EPA do? They appeal and next thing you know, that's the end of that. And the higher court judge said, basically—it seemed to me that if you read between the lines, he would say, "If you don't allow the Government to lie, they won't talk at all. So we have to let them lie." I mean that's what—in legalese that's what it sounded like.

JON Well, and in another form of accountability that Christie Todd Whitman faced was testifying before Jerrold Nadler, Jerry Nadler [Rep. Jerrold Nadler, (D-NY)] and he literally, he tore her apart. And, that's on video and that's a form of accountability, I guess, but they're not—

JENNA And then she was going to run for President and she didn't, o-kay. (Laughter) But, you know, this is a hydra's head. You cut one off and you get five other monsters.

JON Right. All right, so how does Hugh Kaufman fit into this story?

JENNA Hugh Kaufman was the chief investigator for the EPA Ombudsman, I believe the Solid Waste Department. And so, starting in February of '02, we met with him and Robert Martin, the ombudsman, at the office of Joel Kupferman, who was a wonderful lawyer and one of the heroes of 9/11, and

Kaufman and Martin held hearings, which were the best ever on this disaster, because at the other hearings the Government kowtowed to the agencies. And the agencies said if you don't let us go on first, we're not going to appear at all. And so they let them go on first knowing full well—everybody knew full well—the press had a deadline and they'd be gone by the time the ragtag militia of activists and independent scientists spoke, telling the truth. So that's the way it had been working until the ombudsman hearing where he put the best witnesses up first, so at least it's in the record. And he was a tremendous—Hugh Kaufman was a tremendous hero after the BP disaster—he was all over the place warning of what—

JON I do remember that. But he wasn't—he was not officially working for the EPA. He was somebody who used to work for the EPA.

JENNA Yeah, he was. He was the chief investigator for the EPA ombudsman. He was like the watchdog within the EPA, making sure they did what they were supposed to do.

JON Right. Now, both local and federal Governments were aware that the air was not safe to breathe when they made their statements, correct?

JENNA Well, it depends, you know, a lot of people—I think some people knew more than others. And what they normally do is hand over the statements to some poor middle innocent who genuinely doesn't know that it's a false statement and so you kind of—it's like money laundering. By the time you put somebody in front of the camera, they have no direct access to the original data and they believe what they're told. They believe what they're saying and it makes it more effective.

JON Right, right, exactly. But the White House was certainly aware of the harm when they changed the EPA statements and so forth.

JENNA Oh, God, yes.

JON All right. Can you tell me about why some 9/11 first responders were told not to wear respirators?

JENNA Some of them were told that it just looked bad—you're going to frighten the public. It's bad PR. You don't want to do that.

JON As a result, well, it's one of the factors as to why many 9/11 first responders are now sick and dying, unfortunately.

JENNA Absolutely. Some residents wore respirators because some well-meaning person said you should really do that. The residents were advised to clean up their own apartments and where the dust was really bad, just wear long pants and you'll be fine.

JON Right, I remember that. And to use wet cloth to clean the dust. Isn't that how it went?

JENNA Yes, that's how it went. And some of them would put on a respirator, but nobody told them to change the filter, so they used the same un-filter, you know, useless.

JON Geez—can you explain how Wall Street fits into this story.

JENNA According to the report by the EPA Inspector General in August of 2003, part of the motivation of downplaying the air quality was to get Wall Street up and running ASAP, which is what they did.

JON So, money is more important than people.

JENNA Oh, for sure.

JON Right, that just boggles my mind. It gets me so angry. Now—is there anything else you want to say about that, or—

JENNA I think another motivation for being so kind of counter-intuitive and counter-humane and everything else, was—and it's not just what I think; it doesn't matter what I think—is that EPA wanted to set a new precedent for environmental disasters. They already had in place—since this is what they do for a living—they had a protocol to clean up after an environmental disaster. You test in concentric circles starting from the epicenter. You see in what direction the contaminants went. You do more cleaning up in that direction. It's scientifically valid. It had been done.

Then they kept saying, well, but 9/11 was unprecedented—of course it is. Everything is unprecedented. History does not repeat itself verbatim. But there are certain patterns that are followed. So, they completely broke with tradition as far as 9/11 went, and they did not do that testing in concentric

circles, etc. (Right) and they didn't clean up according to their own protocols. So, they were setting a new standard, which is: there's a disaster; it's unprecedented and you're on your own.

JON Well, we saw the same things with Katrina. (Right) We saw the same things with the BP oil spill. (Right) Go ahead—

JENNA So they knew that that kind of disaster was in the offing and they didn't want to set the precedent of being responsible to clean it up.

JON Right. Well, that they are and they didn't, and—anyway, several thousand 9/11 first responders are sick and well over a thousand have died. Are you aware of the amount of New Yorkers that became ill or are you aware of any that have died as a result of the toxic dust. I'm aware of a nun who passed away and donated her body so it could be studied to better help people, but that's the only civilian that I'm aware of.

JENNA Right. There is—okay, you're never going to get an adequate answer on that because people will die of it and, you know, toxins don't announce themselves in the blood. They don't have little labels on them. Yeah, I'm just looking at one now. Somebody called Felicia Dunn Jones, in 2007 died of World Trade Center poison.

JON I remember that name. Go ahead.

JENNA Right. So that was one that was officially linked. But, officially linked is an obstacle course to get over or through and I'm sure there are more. You'll never get the real number there.

JON That's unfortunate. According to FindLaw.com, second degree murder is partially defined as "a killing caused by dangerous conduct and the offender's obviously lack of concern for human life." Do you agree that this perfectly describes the actions of our Government with regard to the environmental impact of 9/11?

JENNA Sure. (laughter) That was easy.

JON That was very easy. It's unfortunate that we never were able to hold anyone accountable under that standard, but it does seem to perfectly describe it. Now, in your eyes, who should be held accountable for the lies regarding the toxic dust?

JENNA You know, up the chain-of-command at the EPA, and I would love to see the White House Council on Environmental Quality really investigated, but I'm not holding my breath.

JON And that's it, okay. You told me that you're now working on the fracking issue. What would you like to tell us about that?

JENNA All right. Fracking is one disgusting example of the fallout, the consequences of an idea—it's not an idea, it's a fact, the fact of peak oil—peak oil does not mean we're running out of oil. It means we have run out of easy oil. (Right) And that's obvious across the board. So, when you run out of easy oil, it's not simply a matter of, okay, switching gears and we'll just get the more difficult oil. I mean, the BP disaster is a direct consequence of peak oil. They would not have been drilling in the ocean. They would not be going down thousands of meters into this treacherous and expensive terrain to extract oil if there was easier oil available. So, fracking and poisoning the water is one symptom. BP is another symptom. The fact that Saudi Arabia is saying, okay, we're interested in going solar, that's scary. That means that Saudi Arabia is past peak, though they'll never admit it. (Right) Because they were the fountainheads for the world (yep), so this situation where there's this desperate grab for the last remaining resources is playing out all over the world and it's the reason, one of the reasons you're having the unrest in the Middle East over Gaza because, you know, the gas that Israel wants and—

JON Right, Dr. Nafeez Ahmed (yes) wrote an article about that (that's right) for *The Guardian* (right).

JENNA So, you don't hear these words "peak oil." You don't—you hear that it's because of rockets and—or, you know, crazy Arabs, or something. The real bottom line here is that we have resource wars going on and they can only get worse as long as we keep our economic system, which is based on infinite growth. Because if you need more and more and more money, you're going to need more and more people, and there's not enough resources for them.

JON Right. Can you quickly explain what infinite growth means? To me, it means, you know, that oil does not regrow itself. You know when you run out of—go ahead—

JENNA Okay, it's really about economic infinite growth. What it means is that when you put a hundred dollars in the bank, you expect to get back a little more, and everybody gets more than what they put in and where does it come from? And really where it comes from these days is from the Federal Reserve printing it. And they have the authority to do that which they got from the Bretton Woods Agreement at the end of World War II. There are certain major banks—the European Central banks—that have this luxury.

But, pieces of paper with lots of zeros on them only work up to a point. You can't say to China "we owe you so many trillions of dollars" and then stick another few zeroes on the piece of paper you give them. China is not fools. (Hmm) So, the dollar is losing its status in the world that we got from that Bretton Woods Agreement and China and Russia are just leaving the dollar behind and turning towards the ruble, the euro, and gold. This is going to leave us in a very desperate situation. And what the economy is based on is real stuff in the earth, real minerals, food—you know, it doesn't matter if you have a trillion dollars and there's no water. (Right) It all comes down to that.

JON You can't eat a dollar.

JENNA That's correct.

JON All right. Before we finish, are there any websites you would like to promote?

JENNA Oh! Well, let's see—I wasn't expecting that. (Laughter) Mike Ruppert's website for 9/11 information: FromtheWilderness.com For the World Trade Center environmental information, the first website I put up was: WTCEO.org (World Trade Center Environmental Organization dot org), and—gosh—

JON Well, I would like to personally promote the FealGood Foundation: FealGoodFoundation.com or .org, I think. Do you have any more?

JENNA I'm going to regret this afterwards. I'm going to be kicking myself, but those are (Laughter)—I think [From the Wilderness](http://FromtheWilderness.com) is very important. Of course (Okay) it would be very good for the Ground Zero workers, yes.

JON Right. Well, Jenna, I very much appreciate you coming on my show. It's actually an honor to have you on my show. You're a hero of mine, and that's all I can say. Just thank you.

JENNA Well thank YOU, Jon. It's great to talk to you.

JON Well wonderful. All right, thank you for coming on and we'll talk to you again some day.

JENNA Thank you, Jon.

JON All right, thanks, Jenna.

JENNA Right, bye.



Chapter/Episode 2 – Mickey Huff – August 28, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Mickey Huff (MICKEY)

JON

Hi everyone and welcome to my show called "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show focuses on how the corporate media has treated those who question what we were told about 9/11. It is greatly because of how the corporate media has treated us that many people with followings won't talk about the multitude of cover-ups concerning 9/11. It is greatly because of how the corporate media has treated us that many people think that 9/11 Truthers or advocates for 9/11 justice are the equivalent of a baby killer or a dog torturer. It is greatly because of how the corporate media has treated us that we have failed to reach the critical mass necessary to resolve this issue. If the corporate media did its job, I would not have had to devote almost 12 years of my life to this cause. I ask you, in what world does it make sense to constantly attack and misrepresent those seeking truth, accountability, and justice for the murder of 2,976 people? Certainly not in the world I choose to be a part of.

Okay, this is Jon and I'm here with Mickey and I'm going to quickly read his bio for us.

MICKEY HUFF is director of Project Censored and serves on the board of the Media Freedom Foundation. To date, he has edited or coedited six volumes of *Censored* and contributed numerous chapters to these works dating back to 2008. Additionally, he has coauthored several chapters on media and propaganda for other scholarly publications, most recently *Flashpoint in Ukraine* from Clarity Press (2014). He is currently professor of social science and history at Diablo Valley College in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he is cochair of the history department. Huff is cohost with former Project Censored director Dr. Peter Phillips of "The Project Censored Show," the weekly syndicated public affairs program that originates from KPFA Pacifica Radio in Berkeley CA. For the past several years, Huff has worked on the national planning committee of Banned Books Week, working with the American Library Association and the National Coalition Against Censorship, of which Project Censored is a member. He is also a longtime musician and composer. He lives with his family in Northern California. He's also the associate editor of the forthcoming SAGE publication *Encyclopedia of Censorship in 2017*.

Hi, Mickey, how are you doing today?

MICKEY Jon, I'm doing really well. Thanks so much for having me come on to have a conversation with you about 9/11, media propaganda, and censorship.

JON I very much appreciate having you on today to help me navigate through this very important issue. All right, so I'm just going to get into the questions then.

What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

MICKEY 9/11/2001, perhaps many other folks had some similar experiences. I awoke to a phone ringing wildly in my ear, six or so o'clock, almost, roughly—I'm in California and it was a student actually of mine saying, "Oh my God! You need to turn on the television." And, of course, I did, right? And we all started seeing the shock and awe of that day before us. And, I remember going to campus—I was teaching that day, and we just had conversations and discussions, and set up forums all over campus. In fact, that entire week we did those things. And it was interesting because given that I'm an

historian and social scientist, I mean, I'm also a person, I was horrified by the images and things that I was seeing.

And—but I also couldn't help the other part of me putting all of this into some kind of context. Both global, not nationalist context, and also historical, not merely present context. And I remember distinctly that from that period on for several years the questions that I had or questions that would come up were greeted with great degrees of hostility. And, in fact, I fashioned an entire course around critical thinking in 9/11 and I still teach that class, and—it was definitely a day that changed a lot of things for people, particularly in terms of perception and I think that one of the lasting things that we see from that very day is the constant attempts to rekindle, to manipulate the emotions of the public that continues to support massive wars of aggression and empire-building.

And, so I again, I do remember the day and I suppose many people do, and it was an incredible, an incredibly emotional thing, and I know that people—particularly people that were most closely struck by that, that's a post-traumatic stress issue. I'm not going to use the word disorder. There's nothing disorder-related about having post-traumatic stress related to such a tragedy. (Right)

I also remember using that event, in a way, to say well, if we have some such stress and trauma about an event like this, imagine what people around the world feel when the United States bombs their towns and their villages, and—I mean, on and on, right. You know this history and this drill. And it's really a teachable moment—tragedies often are, sadly, (Right) that continues to be. And what's interesting, too, Jon, is that teaching this class over the years about these issues, looking at 9/11 is a—the class is basically about history in the making. Right? Looking at journalism as the rough draft of history, and it uses 9/11 and the so-called war on terrorism as sort of a focal point or a course topic to analyze how all of this, all these narratives have been erected around 9/11. And now I'm teaching people that were children, literally, when 9/11 happened. And so they have a remarkably different perspective on it than 10 years ago.

JON

Absolutely, yeah, one of the things that I've done, or tried to do, is go through the park that's close to me and interview people randomly. And within the last month or so I interviewed a group of students, and I asked them how they were being taught 9/11 in their classroom. And what they told me was that they weren't taught anything about the context of the

attacks or anything like that. They were just taught about the specifics of that day. And, actually, over the years I've made many efforts to reach out to teachers who write syllabuses to teach 9/11 to try and get them to incorporate, the unanswered questions of 9/11, the context of 9/11, and so forth. Because it's very scary to me to think of what they're being taught about, they're being taught the myths, essentially.

MICKEY Indeed, Jon, and in fact an article that I did with Paul Rea for the *Censored 2009* book was literally ripping on that and the article was titled "Deconstructing Deceit: 9/11, the Media and Myth Information," meaning mythological information. And a lot of the way I go about teaching 9/11 issues, historically, is by deconstructing the mythologies and the narratives.

JON Right. Why don't you tell us a little bit about your background. You're a professor, obviously. (Laughter) Tell us a little about that.

MICKEY Teaching is something I've always been interested in. I taught music for a very long time. I started teaching music, actually, in high school. I took a real interest in media, propaganda, history, politics, and so forth, and as I went through college and veered over to become a history major and went to graduate school for history, mostly looking at the recent past and recent historiography of the United States and its interpretation—particularly about myth-making and the power of the official narrative to mold and shape the way people perceive the past, such that it creates a prism in the present that they are predisposed to see things in a certain light, or in a certain way, and less disposed to ask potential questions that challenge those narratives.

My graduate work focused on the Kent State shootings—I published more about that in the last couple years with Laurel Krause whose sister was murdered by the National Guard at Kent State, May 4, 1970. (Geez) It's the same kind of—it's the same analytical kind of approach of like, well there's a lot of things that are going on, both historically and in the present, that appear to be one thing, but there's often reluctance for people to sometimes address the severity or the roots of some of these issues because, again, we're predisposed through conditioning through our media, through education, to not necessarily question these things, and to just not know. As you said about 9/11, many people don't even really know the facts involved with these issues.

Of course, one of the things Project Censored does year-round is undercover—you know, report underreported—censored stories, but this is historic, I mean this is a history—is why we have to uncensor all of our un-histories in order to have context in the present such that we can, in real time, critically think about and deconstruct current events. And so, that's really my interest in this and that's why I ended up in education is because I just thought it was a great vehicle to be around people to just talk about these things as much as possible.

JON I think as being a citizen it is our responsibility to familiarize yourself with what's going on in this country. To familiarize yourself with what the country or the Government is doing in your name with your tax dollars. I just—you know before 9/11 I was not like that at all. I didn't care. I was like most Americans. Most Americans don't pay attention to things. And 9/11 took me completely off-guard. Caught me off-guard, and the rest is history. From that point on I had to know what was going on next and, I became glued to the TV set and watched what was going on. And, as I said before, unfortunately, I picked Fox News as my resource (Laughter). They were the red, whitest, and bluest of all the networks. So I was trying to be patriotic, and so I watched Fox News—unfortunately.

All right, you mentioned Project Censored. What is Project Censored and when did you become a part of it?

MICKEY Project Censored is a media-research organization and academic-research organization that stresses the importance of news media literacy and critical thinking. And what you just said a moment ago about civic duty for us to be doing these kinds of things, yeah, I just said that this past week. I just started teaching for the fall semester and I was telling my critical thinking classes that this isn't just for tests. This is for your, the rest of your life. This is for what we're supposed to be doing in our society. And Project Censored, of course, mirrors that, and Project Censored was founded in 1976. It's been on the state university by communications professor Carl Jensen, and Peter Phillips, sociologist, took over the project 20 years later. I worked with Peter—I've worked with Peter off and on after the events of 9/11 and became much more involved with Project Censored after 2006 and 7. I had put together a 9/11 conference called: "Lifting the Fog" with several people in the Bay Area here, and Peter and I started to work more closely after that. I became associate director of Project Censored 2008, and became director of Project Censored in 2010.

And what Project Censored does is researches and vets the most under-reported or censored stories in the U.S. press and, of course, we focus on the independent, alternative press and we point out what corporate media failed to do under alleged free press principles—and I say "under alleged" (laughter) is because the idea behind the free press is that the media, the news media, reporters, journalists, they will tell the public what is going on in a meaningful way, contextually, such that they can act intelligently in civic affairs. Unfortunately, of course, that's not how corporate media functions and they are, in fact, a large propaganda arm of the establishment of the military industrial security complex of the U.S. Nato Empire, and they're also a commercial medium that provides sufficient distraction and tries to get people consuming and doing these various things. But lost in there is the free press principles that George Seldes saying—a great reporter in the 20th century—that the purpose of journalism and the news media is to tell people what's really going on.

And that's what Project Censored really tries to do is give people the opportunity to find out what's really going on. And we do a book every year with Seven Stories Press, and we have a website ProjectCensored.org. We have a new, award-winning documentary film ProjectCensoredtheMovie.com. So your listeners can certainly go—if they don't know about Project Censored, you can invite them to check out our website and our materials.

We've certainly covered 9/11, but we are not a 9/11-centric organization. (Right) But, how could we not cover 9/11. It's not that people haven't heard of 9/11. It's not that people don't know about 9/11 per se, but if you take a look and analyze, like you—you know, I would say it was a good thing you were watching some of the Fox News. I say good thing because at some point I think it becomes so obvious that it's so completely biased and one-sided—as is the rest of a lot of the corporate media. It isn't just Fox.

JON Oh, exactly. It's MSNBC, CNBC, CNN, ABC, CBS—they're all slanted.

MICKEY NPR, PBS—all of this. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*. I mean they all have angles and they may have some, potentially on the surface ideological proclivities—Fox is on the right, MSNBC is on the left. But that's all part of the framing of the propaganda that people are getting "both sides" of the story.

JON Well, it's just the false left/right paradigm that they try to maintain.

MICKEY Correct. And they try to maintain it, but as we see year-after-year more and more Americans ARE turning away from these kinds of outlets and they're turning away from opinion-based journalism. Not because having opinions is bad, but people need to have access to just information before they can construct their own opinions. When you're feeding people over the head with opinion journalism—MSNBC led the way, by the way, last year. Eighty-five (85%) percent of their on-air news reporting was opinion-based journalism. And people figure that out and they start to not trust that these outlets are telling them what they "need to know" and rather are telling them what they want us to know, and what the establishment wants them to know, and what Wall Street wants them to know.

And when you take a look at something like 9/11, of course Project Censored covered this—Project Censored has not weighed in necessarily in terms of saying well this is exactly what happened, or this person's right and this person's wrong. You know it's not—we try not to get involved in movements politically in that regard because we're a free press organization and that is our movement, that's our concerns. But in the process we naturally had to talk about some of the things that were going on with 9/11 that were just so preposterous in terms of media coverage. (Right)

We certainly—and boy, when we weighed in on 9/11 issues, I have to tell you, man, that it really hit the fan. A lot of long-time Project supporters really just were like wow you guys are a bunch of conspiracy theorists. You're a bunch of conspiracy nuts. (Right) And, Peter Phillips had to really deal with this and I came on afterwards and, of course, since I had an interest in 9/11 as an educator and a critical thinker, as well as a concerned citizen, and as a human being in terms of how 9/11 was used by the establishment to wreak havoc around the globe literally killing millions of people, displacing tens of millions of people. We're still doing it as obviously you know. But I thought how could we possibly turn our backs and ignore 9/11 and just pretend that, you know, even that it would take the "Left" or take the Libertarian Right. Very critical Government, very critical of the role of powerful institutions in our society. How is it that they could possibly suspend critical judgment about 9/11 and just the establishment narrative. To me, that was utterly remarkable. (Laughs)

JON Absolutely, and, it was said very early on—I wrote an article—Bill Moyers essentially wrote a hit piece against 9/11 truth and I wrote a response to Bill Moyers and in that article I said:

"It is well known and said by many that after the 9/11 attacks the media in this country did not do its job. Dan Rather said on May 17, 2002, "There was a time in South Africa that people would put flaming tires around people's necks if they dissented and in some ways the fear is that you will be necklaced hear. You will have a flaming tire of lack of patriotism put around your neck. Now it is that fear that keeps journalists from asking the toughest of the tough questions." On April 25, 2007, Dan Rather told Bill Moyers that "There's no question that we didn't do a good job. We weren't smart enough. We weren't alert enough. We didn't dig enough and we shouldn't have been fooled in this way." And Helen Thomas was adamant about the media's failure after 9/11. She said, "They rolled over and played dead."

So, there's that aspect to the corporate media after 9/11. Well there were people who didn't want to be painted in an unpatriotic light, so they stayed away from certain issues. That's not an excuse. I don't condone it in any way, shape or form, but that's what a lot of journalists used as their excuse. You spoke of an alleged free press, and I'm sure you're familiar with Reporters Without Borders?

MICKEY Oh yeah.

JON They ranked the United States in their freedom of the press over the last couple of years as high as 50th in the world—

MICKEY Yes—(Laughs)

JON I'm sorry?

MICKEY Yeah, as low as 50th in the world, right?

JON Yeah, as low as 50th for freedom of press. In a country where our Constitution says that we have freedom of the press. To me, that's absurd and ridiculous (yeah) to be—

MICKEY Yeah, unfortunately, it's—I would argue that in addition to being absurd and ridiculous, it's also tragic and dangerous in a society the size of the U.S. with the resources of the U.S. and the military of the U.S.—the fact that we

have an electorate that's not oft-treated to honest discourse about the matters of the day that hits the most. I would argue that it's literally dangerous how we have such high percentages of people in the population that support certain acts of aggression and restrictions on our Constitutional rights and so forth, particularly post-9/11, in the shadow of 9/11, with the constant refrain of Remember 9/11. Here we are 13 years later and Barack Obama is still reminding us of 9/11 as a means by which to get involved with Isis in Iraq and Syria now, and so forth.

I mean this is very problematic and the role of the journalism and news media is to cut through that type of propaganda. And, unfortunately, what we see—because most people still do, even if they're turning away, do get their news from corporate news media sources. And over the years we have warned and warned and warned people that while the corporate media does report on some things that matter, on occasion, a lot of their coverage is very skewed, very framed, a lot is omitted—and a lot of people don't know where to go. And the irony is that even though more and more people are admitting that—over 60 or 70 percent, in fact, in some polls—admit that they don't trust the news media, they don't trust corporate media, but then when they're polled on issues of the day, they parrot the same things that they hear from the news media that they just claimed that they didn't trust.

JON Well that's something that Paul Thompson, the creator of The Complete 9/11 Timeline at HistoryCommons.org said. He said that the news does report on the news, but you find these stories, these important stories in the back sections of newspapers and so on and so forth. If they had given any of these stories the attention that the ice bucket challenge just got, or Britney Spears or Michael Jackson's death, I mean this would be a different world.

MICKEY It really would be. We certainly are trying at the Project. (Laughs)

JON Right. Now, you told me before that Project Censored has been criticized for not covering certain theories about 9/11. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that.

MICKEY Well, it's interesting, because on one side we've been criticized because we bothered to cover the glaring problems of media propaganda and omissions regarding 9/11 and the 9/11 Commission, and so forth. And then on the other end of the spectrum we've been criticized by people within the "9/11 Truth Movement," so called. Because we won't widely publicize or get into

some of the folks in the movement that—I can't really use the word folks anymore can I because Obama has pretty much trashed that. (Laughter) Aw shucks we tortured some folks and some folks cooked the books. I wonder if the folks cooking the books at the VA are the same folks tortured. But, anyway. I digress.

Some people do have theories of speculative points about 9/11 and I mean we're not really interested in the speculation elements so much. We're interested in critical questions that either have not been asked or not been answered. Certainly the victims' families that pushed so hard for a commission in the face of Bush's obstinance to not have one and Bush, President W. Bush asked Congress specifically not to investigate 9/11 and did not create a commission which was totally biased allegedly independent, hardly the case. And controlled by Philip Zelikow, complete partisan and friends and coauthor with people he's investigating, but that's – maybe we'll get into that later.

But we don't focus on just any Tom, Dick, or Harry or Sally or Sue, or whomever, because they have some theory or some speculative issue with 9/11. And, so we've run into some snags and problems with people about say the Pentagon, or even one of the big issues that's gained some traction in places like New York, of course, on the Twin Towers and Building 7 (Right) where they were trying to get a measure on the ballot and it keeps getting tossed out or kicked off, and it rekindles the attacks of 9/11 and rekindles the whole smearing tactic that these are a bunch of conspiracy nuts and whack jobs, and what have you.

Let me give you a really specific case. A lot of people knowing that the corporate news media is propaganda; knowing that we live in a culture based on a lot of lies and half-truths and so forth then gravitates to alternative news outlets, so that may be good. But some of the outlets they gravitate toward, I would argue, maybe have more negative or detrimental effects in the long-term. The name Alex Jones comes to mind. (Right) InfoWars. And I won't say that there aren't some things on InfoWars that are really well done and are very important stories, but what I would unfortunately also have to posit—and Nolan Higdon did an article with us at Project Censored on our website on Alex Jones The War on Your Mind. It's more like Alex Jones' war on your mind. Because—and this is not a personal statement about Alex. It's not a personal attack. Nolan, and what we've done is we've looked at the way that Jones and InfoWars has covered 9/11 issues and Jones often inserts himself such into the debate that he

becomes the issue. (Right) And, unfortunately, Jones has been discredited on so many different occasions for propounding nonsensical theories or unproven assertions that he's not a terribly credible source (No) on these matters. But he's a very high-profile character in the media, a lightning rod. The Drudge Report uses hundreds of his stories over the years—no joke. And that's a widely trafficked website.

But my point is that Alex is sort of like a lightning rod that becomes a defacto unelected spokesperson for a movement that ultimately ends up discrediting not only the movement but any serious researchers that have questions about the same subject.

JON Well this is an issue—(Very serious problem) We're going to get into this a little bit later.

But, Media Matters—I'm sure you're familiar with them (Yeah). They hate 9/11 people. They hate them. And they have portrayed Alex as the "leader" of the "9/11 Truth Movement" before, as you said.

MICKEY That's exactly the problem. There is no leader. It's an issue and there is a faction of the 9/11 Truth and Justice movement I would say that really at the core wants to know what happened and want new investigations and want material released. Again, the notion that somehow people are called conspiracy theorists in the pejorative for asking questions goes all the way back to the CIA and the John Kennedy assassination when the CIA literally through their Mockingbird reporters said, look, anybody that challenges the Warren Commission, you need to smear them with these labels. You need to call them nuts, crazy, conspiracy freaks, whatever, as long as we can move this down the road such that, people aren't going to really ever find out what happened here. Because they don't want people to understand the operations of the deep state and deep political affairs. As Peter Dale Scott would say (Right) or Mike Lofgren.

But the bigger issue here with now—9/11—is that because of some of the, and I would say irresponsible—this is my opinion, people could clearly disagree—but I think there have been so many irresponsible claims made about 9/11. Not just by the Government and so forth, but by people questioning the 9/11 attacks themselves that it has made it a very confusing and difficult to navigate field or topic. And add into it the emotional reactions people have about the 9/11 events. And a lot of people in the public they don't necessarily know. Who do they trust? Where do they go?

And so forth. And I would then argue that when people become sort of like one click away and you're over to Drudge, over to Jones, over to what have you, I think the general public sort of sees this as wow, look at this guy, bloviating, foaming at the mouth, wow, what a crack pot. He must really be crazy. And then by guilt-by-association somebody over here that argues that we don't know all these things, and the commission itself even has admitted that they were wrong and didn't get to investigate everything—that of course was the purpose, to erect some kind of story about it that might stick, despite the fact that it wasn't supported by all the evidence. We don't know all the evidence. We still don't know all the evidence about Saudi Arabia, etc.

But this kind of thing makes it very difficult to have reasonable discourse about the subject. Add into the mix the people that allegedly are watchdogs of the press and—stalwart progressives that are supposedly very interested in keeping Government honest and so forth, they spend an awful lot of time attacking people that ask these unpopular questions, and then they use the guilt-by-association as a means by which to divert attention away from asking the questions in the first place. (Right) The issue isn't Alex Jones. The issue isn't InfoWars. The issue isn't—I mean, fill in the blanks. The issue is 9/11 and what we do and do not know about it. And that is where we should be placing the focus.

JON

Well—in 2006 or so when the media essentially couldn't ignore us anymore, and they did—they ignored us greatly but there were some hit pieces that were written very early on. In fact, the very first one documented was by Paul Lashmar, *The Independent*. He wrote a hit piece on September 23, 2001, entitled "America at War: Conspiracy Enthusiasts – Some Blame Jews, Others Bush. Everyone Has a Theory on the Net." (Laughter) And early hit pieces focused a lot on the Middle East. They tried to say that there were—the people that questioned the 9/11 attacks only came from the Middle East, but there were many in America who questioned the attacks as well.

And as far as in 2006, when the media really couldn't ignore us anymore, as you said, they focused—they had guests on, that I considered to be the fringe of the "9/11 Truth Movement." They had people like Jim Fetzer, Webster Tarpley, Kevin Barrett, David von Kleist, Alex Jones, Morgan Reynolds, and for trying to paint us as anti-Semites, they had on Christopher Bollyn at one time. (Yeah)

And what they do is they take these individuals and they portray them, or they portray us, as being no different than these individuals. And, there are a lot of times before these people would go on television, you know, on 911blogger.com I—because TV time is so precious I used to beg them to talk about the families, to talk about the unanswered questions, to talk about the 9/11 Commission. In my mind, an author—because TV time was so precious—an author becomes an activist when they get on the television and you should use the best talking points possible to make our argument. And so many people, these individuals were used, they were essentially useful tools for the establishment to paint the "9/11 Truth Movement" as crazy conspiracy theorists and so forth. They would never have on family members and stuff like that.

Now, do you agree that—well, actually, Scott Ford wanted me to ask you about the class that you teach on 9/11 (Sure), so tell us a little bit about that.

MICKEY

Well, it's a critical thinking course, I mean, and it involves the events of 9/11 in a historical context, while simultaneously looking at record-keeping, history in the making, the role of journalism, how we know what we know, why we know what we know, why we don't know certain things, or why a lot of people don't know things that people that have been researching more closely these subjects. Why can't they break through? Why don't the facts speak for themselves as you yourself have written.

And the course is really designed just to get people to think critically and to ask questions and to ask intelligent informed questions about very key issues and the recent past—in this case 9/11—and how it has affected us. (Right) When I'm teaching, I don't go into the class waving wands and banners "inside job," these kind of things (Laughter). Yeah, again, some people get this impression. It's either a 9/11 class that says that 19 hijackers hated our freedom; Islamic radicals hate our freedom. Or, it's inside job. And that's also part of the propaganda is that it's either/or. And it's a more complicated subject, as you well know, and so what I get into in the class is—we look at, and the students get to choose certain things that they want to investigate, and I tell them, of course, there is something very important to understand and that's the myth of the right answer. There's not always one answer. There's not always a perfectly right answer. Or some positions and some arguments are better than others based on evidence. And where evidence stops is, of course, where speculation then begins, but I caution people to stop with the evidence.

JON Well, what I generally tell people is to look at both sides of every argument, every argument that you hear in the "9/11 Truth Movement"—

MICKEY Or all six sides. This is what I argue. Let's look at all the sides. There's more than—

JON Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Look at every—see, when I used to play devil's advocate in the "9/11 Truth Movement," every time somebody would come up with a theory, and I would play devil's advocate, I would get so much shit for that, and, just like you talked about being criticized for not covering certain theories, I took the same kind of thing.

And I gotta tell you, one of the problems that the "9/11 Truth Movement" has, as a movement, and I'm guilty of this as well, is that we would contact journalists and angrily ask them: "Why aren't you covering this? Why aren't you covering that?" And because of that many journalists don't want to touch the issue anymore. Even journalists who used to report on issues, don't want to touch this anymore because they don't want to get blasted by the emails and so forth. And, to me, it's not an excuse to ignore the multitude of cover-ups concerning 9/11, but I do almost understand it.

MICKEY Well I can say, yeah, I've seen it first-hand and, frankly, I've seen it directed towards me and Peter Phillips, and at Project Censored and one of the things that I do, addressing Scott Ford's sort of what's going on in this class, question—one of the things I stress, particularly in the beginning of the term, is that how we communicate to others and each other is at least as important as what we're communicating. (Right) Because we're humans and we have emotional thinking, we have critical thinking, we have reactions—and when you're going after, not you personally, but when you're going after somebody with a big truth stick and you're very angry that other people won't unravel that and look at it and validate your concerns, that does enrage people. But it also makes people on the other end of that stick feel like they're being attacked.

And so I would argue that that's entirely counterproductive in terms of communicating. And what I've experienced is when I more soberly address critiques and questions in a macro way with some of these people in journalism or other professors and so forth is that they spend the first 5 or 10 minutes going off on a rampage about anecdotes of how many times they've been assaulted verbally from people. And it really wears on them. It really wears on them. And I know Bill Maher has railed on 9/11 Truth

because of hecklers and, I know to some degree, Howard Zinn who originally was a little supportive of some of David Ray Griffin's work, later sort of distanced himself. Some of that, again, it's the teeth. It's just people just can only handle being berated and attacked so long until they start to just see everybody that has a question about something like 9/11 is the same. And now we're back to the Alex Jones' problem, right? (Right)

And somehow the sober, intelligent, legitimately concerned citizens—certainly the people, the victims' families of 9/11—it gets drowned in the sin of our contentious bread and circus media culture, such that we have to spend some time with each other really unpacking that baggage and tearing down those walls to say, okay, let's go now. Let's have our little therapy session, and now when we're done with that, let's address some of the key facts, key issues, and key unanswered questions and let people in to the dialogue and conversation in a way that they feel they're in the driver's seat and you can socratically sort of say, okay, so what's your aversion to the subject. Let's forget about the personalities; let's forget about the people; let's forget about your personal experiences; tell me how you can make sense of—fill in the blank, Jon, right? (Right) The unanswered questions. The facts speak for themselves. Go through a list of things that we know. I mean, something that's so common as the forewarnings (Well—) right? Historical—go ahead—

JON What you're talking about is something that we would never see on the corporate television. We would never see an hour-long discussion (laughter)

MICKEY I laugh, but you're right.

JON We would never see an hour-long discussion with somebody like Paul Thompson, or Kevin Fenton, or even myself, talk about these issues and not allow the corporate media to frame it in a certain way—completely unedited. There was an interview years ago with Martin Luther King. He was on the Mike Douglas Show. And he had a chance to speak his views and make his arguments and so forth. You literally will not see that today.

And one thing I want to mention, Cindy Sheehan (Mmm-hmm) is a good friend of mine, she used to tell me how much she hated 9/11 Truthers because of how aggressive they were against her. And there was a time where she wanted nothing to do with it, and then something happened in the "9/11 Truth Movement"—somebody called her a wretched liar, I'm not

going to mention any names (Mm-hmm) and I emailed her and I said, look, this man is not representative of the "9/11 Truth Movement." We very much respect what you do. I apologize and so forth. And from that point on, Cindy and I, became great friends. And now, she's open to discussing the 9/11 issue. She's open to promoting the 9/11 issue when she speaks. And so, again, it goes back to how you approach people and so forth.

Now, I have a question. How many companies own the majority of the media in this country?

MICKEY In the United States, we're down to about five or six that control roughly 90 percent (90%) of the media. And when we say that, it's not just news media, it's the entertainment and infotainment complex. I mean, the same companies historically, we have major military industrial complex companies owning vast percentages of various media outlets. Ben Bagdikian who wrote *The Media Monopoly* in 1982—it's now in multiple editions later—Ben Bagdikian was the canary in the coal mine, so to speak. Dean of journalism at UC Berkeley back in the day, saying that oh my, we're down to 50 corporations that are controlling the media. (Laughs). (Right) I'm not laughing because it's funny. (No, I know)

We're down to five and it's amazing how little people seem to pay attention to this and—I mean, Phil Donahue, another talk show pioneer, along with Mike Douglas, Phil Donahue, who also by the way experienced the wrath of the nationalist post-9/11 climate that percolated through corporate America and the news media losing his show because he asked questions about the invasion of Iraq (Right). Totally unrelated factoid of 9/11, but you wouldn't know that if you were watching the corporate news media back then, or now, for that matter I suppose. But, Donahue hit the nail on the head a number of years ago when he said, yeah, I've got 500 channels and 400 of them are selling Bowflex machines and the others are selling jewelry and Jesus. (Laughs) And, I mean, it's—yeah, but because people have all these channels and all these alleged choices, right, they don't necessarily ask the critical questions about like who is putting this out there, what are we paying for? Who is arranging this to be so convenient for us to consume and what do they get out of it?

JON A lot of times the corporate media will accept talking points from the Government and portray it as news.

MICKEY Absolutely. It's commonplace, I'm afraid. So are video news releases, which are fake news stories done up from PR firms that hire actors to play journalists to read propaganda and then they send these tapes and these videos to news outlets in hopes that they will uncritically run them. And hundreds of times, Jon, they have run them. (Right, exactly) Literally.

JON I've heard stories before, Sibel Edmonds tried to contact somebody from *Newsweek*, and that person refused to talk to her. She's a 9/11 whistleblower. She has explosive information that if it ever got out—it's one of those things that the corporate media did not bring attention to that if it had ever gotten out, Americans would be outraged. And she just mentioned one instance of trying to contact somebody in *Newsweek* and they refused to talk with her.

Now, with regard to that issue I have a story from Bob McIlvaine, who's a 9/11 (Mmm-hm), family member. At one point, there was a reporter from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* who wanted to do a story with Bob, and the editor would not let the story run. And, eventually, this reporter quit from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and they called Bob to apologize because they really wanted to run that story.

Could you talk a little bit about that? Like, who has the say in corporate media as to what gets reported on and what doesn't? Where do those decisions get made?

MICKEY If you go back and look, one of the seminal works in this area of media literacy and propaganda that is particularly focusing on the United States was Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's *Manufacturing Consent*. That was from 1988. And, I know in the 9/11 movement, Chomsky's name often draws great ire because (hmm) well, why don't you address these issues? And why don't you—again, I think that the litmus testing that we talked about earlier that the notion that there are people in both Left and Libertarian circles that if you have a certain view on 9/11, that determines whether or not they'll ally with you. And within the 9/11 movement, they have another litmus test that if you won't say X about the Pentagon, then you're on the wrong side of the issues, and on and on and on.

JON Correct, it became cult-like. The "9/11 Truth Movement" became very cult-like.

MICKEY Yeah, very cult-like, and very tunnel-vision. But, again, I'm not into throwing babies out with bathwater here. I have critiqued Amy Goodman or Noam Chomsky on some issues and I have agreed with them on many, many others, and I can at least acknowledge where people have contributed intellectually and culturally in very positive ways, I think, overall. And I don't think it's fair that we can just litmus test people on one issue and discard them. And I do think that's also what draws contempt for particular movements and outlets, both alike. (Right) And that's what I think is important—to cut through.

So, back to the question of who makes these decisions. Well, manufacturing consent is literally a term that's taken from the 1920s—Walter Lippmann, Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew—these folks were really instrumental in selling World War I to the American public, and engineering consent was one of the terms that comes out of that period. In other words, the modern Democratic theory in the early 20th century, it was that, well, we have more and more people voting and participating in society to the progressive era; we have more and more people that want to be part of Government and so forth. That's fine, but the munitions industries, the banks, and established powers, well, how are we going to control the masses? Going back to the founding of the United States, Alexander Hamilton was, basically, look at the rabble, how can we deal with these ignorant people? Democracy will never work. We'd have to tell people what to do and think because they're too stupid and ignorant to do it on their own.

Well, that's where manufacturing consent comes from. And that's the idea that well, if you just control the range of opinion and control the flow of information, then you can ultimately attenuate the outcomes of public opinion that then may be steered toward supporting policy X or policy Y. When prior to the steering and controlling of that information the public may have had a very different view about policy X or policy Y.

JON Well, obviously, this is extremely dangerous. It's an extremely dangerous practice, and—my belief is that the media outlets in this country need to be broken up into hundreds of different companies, forcing them to compete for the best story.

MICKEY I would argue they need to be broken up into a series of non-profits. I mean, this is one of the big problems with news media, and if you look at the propaganda model that was put forward by Chomsky and Herman in *Manufacturing Consent*, their book, in 1988, it has five significant

components about what controls news media and information flow. And the first is ownership. In a capitalistic economy the idea that news is based on competition for profit creates serious problems because it means the bottom line matters more than the facts. (Right) Or what the "truth" might be about a particular issue. And when you compound ownership and private profit with advertising, which is the way most media companies make their money, then you've got to be careful that you're promoting the people that are advertising their products and services on your shows—which, by the way, are supposedly on the public airways, right? (Right) The Communications Act of 1934, says that the airways belong to the public, yet we have five corporations that control 90 percent (90%) of the information and the media that is going out to the public. So it's a complete oxymoron. It's a complete propaganda ploy.

JON They've also done away with what's called the Fairness Doctrine.

MICKEY 1987, that got axed. Now the Fairness Doctrine used to mandate that there were equal time for different candidates and that got disappeared in the Reagan years, and that then led to the rise of A.M. right-wing radio, which dominates across the U.S. almost 90 percent (90%) of the talk-radio programming in particularly small communities around the U.S. is piped in, is right-wing radio.

And I want to say something here—just very, very quickly, as a footnote. Possibly, a disclaimer. I don't consider myself a right-wing person, but I want to say that I don't personally have problems with people that have right-wing ideologies. My problem is when people act like their ideology is the only ideology. And I have a bigger problem with news media outlets that pretend they are objective when, in fact, they are entirely ideological operators. (Right) All the main big fives—the Disney, the Viacom, the News Corp, and so forth—they have a clear ideological perspective, and it's not necessarily Republican or Democrat as you'll see on Fox and MSNBC. It's pro-capitalism. And it's not a free market, and it's not a fair market. It's dominating a market. And it's dominating the so-called marketplace of ideas. And when you couple the ownership and advertising issue, that's a serious means by which information can be wittled, funneled, controlled, omitted, etc.

And then you add to that the other elements of the propaganda model, which includes sourcing—only relying on official sources? (Right) Well, that totally crowds out the people that are involved in the society, the

vernacular views, the bottom-up views, the grassroots views, bringing Howard Zinn back into this. The people's history, right? We need the people's media, Jon. And the people's media isn't on CNN. And it's not on Fox, and MSNBC, and ABC and so forth, and all these other channels. The people's media is something like Pacifica, right? It's a community based media.

And so I don't want to get into ideological fights with people by saying right-wingers or left-wingers—these kinds of things. (No, I mean—) Yeah, I think like you said before, you called it a false paradigm. And I think people get really ensconced in this distraction.

But the part of the propaganda model that I was just mentioning—sourcing—is very significant. The news media that rely only on official sources, they're like stenographers for people in power.

JON Exactly. They also fight for what's called "access."

MICKEY Yeah, if you write a story that's critical of one of your sources, they'll talk to your "competitor." But I always say the competition is a ruse. I mean that whole idea that these groups are competing is—I mean, that's propaganda in and of itself. That's what's used to make people feel like this is really competitive. They're definitely going to scoop each other and da-da-da. They're going to tell us what's really going on because that's how they make their money. No, nonsense. These are all people that hobnob with powerful people. They eat in the same restaurants. They hang out at the same meetings. In some cases, at some news outlets, they literally have people there that are married to people that are in powerful positions so they don't disclose. All kinds of stuff like this goes on.

So sourcing is a real serious problem, biased and newsfeed that a lot of people don't pay attention to, unfortunately.

And then the last couple points in the propaganda model, one's called flack and the other ideology. Well, we already addressed ideological bias. And in the United States where it masquerades as donkeys and elephants, it's really about bottom line and is about controlling markets and controlling profits for shareholders. Corporations are required through their charters, by law, to do what is necessary to maximize the profits of their investors. That clearly competes with the need to tell people, as George Seldes said, what's really going on. Because if it goes against the profit motive, then the people

that make those decisions can be removed from leaderly roles in the corporation. So, we have the owners, the advertisers, we then—of course that trickles all the way down through the editors and so forth.

And I want to underscore one key point about this propaganda model. Flack, by the way, is feedback, boycotts. There are ways in which people at news media outlets can be influenced or pressured to report or not report certain things. So there are several different things that work together through the propaganda model. But the thing is that a lot of folks when you ask journalists—there's the "folks" word again, sorry, can't use it (laughs)—a lot of people in journalism, they'll say well, nobody tells me what to report. Nobody tells me. (Right) Jim Lehrer was just saying this not long ago about PBS news. Nobody's ever told me what to do or what to report.

Or, what a lot of people don't know is that PBS, even though it's "public broadcasting," the Lehrer News Hour, the flagship news program on that show, was basically privately owned and funded by Liberty Media, which was a conservative, organization, and so in other words, Jim Lehrer doesn't need to be told what to report or what not to report per se. Jim Lehrer is an intelligent person. He knows what he can and can't necessarily get away with saying. And particularly not—look, Lehrer's more like a superstar in the news media, right? These personalities and so forth. You take your rank and file journalist at this shrinking jobs that consolidation's brought, and deregulation has brought, which has gotten us down to five behemoth corporations that own 95 percent (95%) of the media, you don't need to tell these young journalists what to report and not report. If you're reporting and writing about something and your editor doesn't publish it, how long do you think that's going to happen before you lose your job, Jon? (Not very long) And covering controversial issues is always problematic.

JON Well, this brings us to a topic that I want to talk about. There were journalists who would report on some of the unanswered questions of 9/11 and some of the inconsistencies of 9/11. One person in particular, Robert Scheer wrote an article for the *Los Angeles Times* called "What We Don't Know About 9/11 Hurts Us" and just a few months later he was fired.

MICKEY Yeah, he's not working at the *LA Times* anymore. (Laughs)

JON No, he started Truthdig.com (Yes, I know) And I think there are other instances where journalists who tried to do the right thing were let go. And

we talked about Phil Donahue and so forth, but I mean, that was also one of the reasons—

MICKEY You can go down the list, I mean, with so many of these people. Ya know, Sharyl Attkisson, Kristina Borjesson, Peter Arnett, the embedded reporters in the so-called wars and so forth. I mean there is a serious effort to control what people are saying, what journalists are allowed to report. There are military censors; there are corporate media censors; there are other Government censors. I mean, it's patently absurd, to be frank, that many in the public just don't realize how many controls there are on the information. And it is exactly as you say, Jon, the very people that often try to call that out or point that out or point to the things that the media ought to be covering and doing, they might not be long for those particular pedestals, outlets, or megaphones.

One good thing about the Internet so far is that people like Scheer can go out and start his own kind of online publication and attract enough of viewers that want to know things that these folks want to say at Truthdig that they're able to continue and they're able to keep going.

But this gets back to the problem of the competition and the profits and so forth. And I'd argue that the non-profit model, the community based model (Right), like higher education, we have tenure for professors and even though some will say, well, tenure's abused and so on. But tenure is very important for academics because it protects academics' freedom. And journalists really need to have the same kind of freedom to report the things they see without the fear of retaliation that takes many forms. And, of course, this takes serious forms. You look in our last book *Censored 2014: Fearless Speech in Fateful Times*, the onslaught against whistleblowers; the deaths of journalists around the globe. This is all escalating. This is all increasing in the post-9/11 environment. (Absolutely) And I think that people need to be made much more aware of this and really get more involved in citizen's journalism and supporting journalists (Right) that really try to do the right thing.

JON People like Abby Martin and so forth.

MICKEY Yes, Abby is on our board and has a wonderful show "Breaking the Set" on RT. Now a lot of folks knee-jerk that right out of the gate and say, oh that's *Russia Today*; that's propaganda, Putin, Russian parliament funded. And I say, yeah, that's great, but who do you think funds *The New York Times*?

Who do you think funds CNN? (Right) Do you think there's nobody behind that that has an interest involved? And so I say to people—

JON Well it just—

MICKEY You know what I say to people—back to the critical thinking class—is that yeah, that's fancy, that's wonderful, please pay attention to that. But, take a look at the subjects, the topics, the guests, the facts, and the arguments and THEN if there is an obvious bias, an obvious problem and a conflict of interest, yes, then that is very relevant. But, if you go through case-by-case and you take a look at who Abby Martin has on her program, including us, or Nafeez Ahmed, and so many other people that don't get the attention of *The New York Times* or CNN and so forth, has to make you wonder, has to make you wonder. Then why are people not being involved by being invited on these shows? Well, we know why, Jon. It's because these corporate news media outlets will not tolerate people that are criticizing this political economy issue, who are criticizing the blatant biases that go on in news media. They're just, they pretend they don't exist. And a show like Abby's, "Breaking the Set" really, I think, hits whereas—it's like a Who's Who of who should be a part of the public debate about what's going on, who most people never hear of.

JON Right. Now, I want to—I brought up Abby for a reason (Yeah). You know, I coined the phrase 9/11 Truther and, unfortunately, because of how it's been tarnished over the years I now refer to myself as an advocate for 9/11 justice. But let me—I want to read the definition that I wrote for the phrase 9/11 Truther.

"In my mind a 9/11 Truther is someone who fights alongside the family members seeking truth and accountability for the 9/11 attacks. In my mind a 9/11 Truther is someone who fights for the sick and dying 9/11 first responders who need healthcare desperately. In my mind a 9/11 Truther is someone who does not like how the day of 9/11 is being used to inflict pain and suffering around the world and is trying to stop it, stop it by using the truth, something that we have been denied by our Government regarding the 9/11 attacks."

Now, that's the definition of a 9/11 Truther. I get to say that because I coined the phrase. Now, unfortunately, because of the corporate media's coverage of the—or the corporate media's attacks against 9/11 Truthers, they've essentially made a 9/11 Truther the equivalent of—

MICKEY It's a term of mockery.

JON Yeah, they've made it the equivalent of a baby killer or a dog torturer. If you even, oh my God! A 9/11 Truther!

Now Abby recently, she spoke out against Russia's actions in the Ukraine and she got a lot of flack for that. But one of the things that they did (Yeah) is they went through her history and saw her activism with 9/11 and tried to use that against her. And we've seen that in many cases. (Absolutely) Van Jones, do you remember him?

MICKEY I remember well. I remember well.

JON I'm not saying I'm a fan of Van Jones, but you know he signed this 9/11 Truth statement years ago. And they used that against him to get him out of the Obama administration. How many times have we seen, let's talk about celebrities. Every time a celebrity has come out and spoken on behalf of 9/11—Rosie O'Donnell (Mmm-hmm), Willie Nelson, Heather Thomas, Charlie Sheen, who I don't like, but whatever—every time someone like that has spoken out, the corporate media went into attack mode. (Of course!) And it—

I wrote an article years ago—I don't remember the title. It was something like "Recording mainstream media attacks in unison are hard." Just recording mainstream media attacks just happen to take place in unison. And it's across all networks that these people get attacked.

MICKEY It's very coordinated and the term has propagandistically been transformed quite successfully by the establishment and corporate media. I don't call it mainstream media, Jon, because I think you and I and—(Yeah, we're the mainstream) are the mainstream, and they're the corporate media. They're the media that has their agenda and our media, I think Jon, needs to have the people's agenda. And that's why we need to have these kinds of conversations. And that's why Peter Phillips and I have the show on KPFA Pacifica Radio once a week. I think that's what we need to be doing. We need to counter that. Corporate news media is irrelevant. I think. Other than being a propaganda arm of the state and the—the corporate state, to be more specific. And I think that we need to be aware of that. (Right) And they have successfully. You're correct, Jon, they have successfully turned the word TRUTH into a tarnishing term. And, boy, I have to say that

is a travesty. (Yes it is) That the very thing that is pure about human existence to seek wisdom and seek understanding and compassion is part of a process of truth. The great Indian poet Robert Dranoff Tagore once wrote that truth comes as a conqueror only to those who have lost the art of receiving it as a friend. The truth meaning, the process of coming to reasonable, temporary conclusions based on facts, based on evidence, right?

And what has happened is our Government and the corporate news media have literally turned that very term, described that process, into a negative pejorative attack. (Yep) And that—that is at the core of the propaganda organ. That is ultimately the way to control public opinion. Because you don't want to find yourself on the receiving end of that kind of attack, now do you, Jon?

JON No you don't, because look what happens. You lose your job and so on and so forth.

MICKEY And you lose your credibility and so forth.

JON Yeah, you lose your credibility—you lose your following—

MICKEY Yeah, yeah. It is a sickeningly devious attempt that, again, it pains me greatly to see otherwise thoughtful, caring people on whatever side of the political spectrum buy it, fall for it. And anytime that you're somebody uttering the term conspiracy theorist as a pejorative label, it has already told me enough about that person. Nothing much about the person or movements they may be attacking. It's told me they are intellectually lazy. They are potentially dishonest. And that they are not interested in having open dialogue. They're interested in attacking people to bolster their own position or status.

JON Right. Well one of the problems with demonizing people who question 9/11 is that it's very difficult to get people who have a voice, who have a following, to even address the issue anymore because of the fact that they're afraid of the backlash that they'll receive.

MICKEY Oh we've addressed it every year. It's been in our books for years. We've addressed it repeatedly. We're sure we've lost some support, from foundations, and so forth. A couple of people have quit as national judges of Project Censored. Out of the many people that have been judges, including Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, only two people resigned as

judges of our stories, over 9/11 stories—Norman Solomon was one of them. Who, by the way, has since said that he thinks we may need to look into it again and so on. Who knows?

But my point is that you're right about that. There has been a tarnishing affect. But we focus on the media coverage of it and the lack of information that comes out through the corporate media about these types of events. Next week we're doing a 9/11 show yet again. (Right) We're participating in the 9/11 Film Festival in Oakland, not because we agree with everything that every movie there says, but because it's a key place that people in the community can go in and talk about these things and not feel attacked, and not feel threatened. And we're going to have Nafeez Ahmed on. Coming up here this week who obviously will be talking about post-9/11 related issues. We have Shahid Buttar coming on from the Bill of Rights Defense Committee in a couple weeks talking about post-9/11 civil liberties issues. These are real issues connected to 9/11 and we cannot be afraid to address these issues or else we are throwing in the towel for the next generation.

JON

Well, I'm going to address a few things right now that you made me think of. Things that are omitted by the media. Things that are absolutely ignored by the media and—before we get into this, everybody should know that each time one of these things has happened, there's been mass email campaigns to different corporate media outlets informing them that these things are happening. So, it's not like they don't know they're happening. They just choose arbitrarily to ignore them. And—yeah, I'm going to go over a list of things that I believe are newsworthy events that happened that the news media completely ignored. And, one of the things are the many conventions we've had over the years, the very first, or one of the very first, was the 9/11 Omission Hearings, which took place in New York City on September 9, 2004, a few months after the release of the 9/11 report that was chaired by then former representative Cynthia McKinney. They had a multitude of family members speaking. They had authors and researchers speaking. There were hundreds of people in the room. And nobody covered that. And there were many examples of that from many different conferences over the years.

Now another few things that have been completely ignored by the media, unless it's an attack piece, the different Zogby Polls that 9/11Truth.org commissioned over the years. Those were completely ignored. The only polls that ever seem to get any attention were the ones that were run by

CBS or *The New Times*. That talked about conspiracy theories and stuff like that.

The 9/11 Congressional briefing that took place in July of 2005 that was chaired by then Representative Cynthia McKinney—she won her seat back. And The Jersey Girls—Lorie Van Auken, Mindy Kleinberg, Monica Gabrielle, the September 11th Advocates. They testified at this hearing and —The September 11th Advocates, The Jersey Girls, they, during the time of the 9/11 Commission, they were on TV all the time. And, we had this thing where in this country we should support the 9/11 Family Members and so forth, but after the release of the 9/11 report when the myth was written in stone, when The Jersey Girls would speak out, they were almost entirely ignored. They released so many press releases over the years calling into question this or that—and I'm going to give you two examples, and remember the word "newsworthy" okay? When I read these.

This is the first one. It's from August 4, 2006, it's called "9/11 Widows Issue Statement Regarding Pentagon Deception and 9/11 Commission."

"The fact the Commission did not see fit to tie up all loose ends in their final report or to hold those who came before them accountable for lying and/or making misleading statements, puts into question the veracity of the entire Commission's Report. Individuals who came before the commission to testify after NORAD's appearance had no reason to state the truth. It was abundantly clear that there would be no repercussions for any misrepresentations." And they finished their statement by saying that the "9/11 Commission was derelict in its duties. What we needed from them was a thorough investigation into the events of September 11th. Inexcusably, five years later we still do."

MICKEY Yeah, that's inexcusable. You're correct.

JON And nobody, nobody covered that. I mean, this is something, to me, that should have been plastered across the television screens across the country. And never did.

MICKEY Again, you're right. There are decisions that were made by people in very high places to report the press releases from the Commission. (Okay--) I mean, look, it's so amazing that there are even people associated with the

Commission itself who have publicly stated that the Commission itself was a white wash. It was a cover-up. John Farmer comes to mind, Dean of Law at Rutgers University. The former legal counsel to the Commission. I mean it's really riveting in a lot of ways. The two main commissioners, Kean and Hamilton, have discussed the problems and how they don't know, and how we really don't know. It reminds me, painfully, of the 1970s when the Congress basically had the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations and so on and they basically said, yeah, that Kennedy thing, that Warren Commission Report, that hmmm, that's got a lot of problems. We don't think it's very accurate, but we don't know what to do about it, so move along. Nothing to see here. These aren't the droids you're looking for. [Laughs] Here we are at 9/11—here we are (Right) where there are ample statements from people both involved with the Commission and outside, including the victims' families that are saying, we're still waiting for an actual investigation.

JON

I want to read the second press release from The Jersey Girls, the September 11th Advocates. And this was written on February 4, 2008, after the allegations from Phil Shenon's book "The Commission" came out that said Karl Rove was speaking to Philip Zelikow—the idea that he may have been taking direction from Karl Rove came out—and they came out with a statement and it was titled "September 11th Advocates Comment on the Impending Release of Philip Shenon's Book."

"Why when this Congressionally mandated commission could have done much to fix the fatal flaws in our Government by conducting a real investigation and making vital recommendations, would they instead allow it to become a sham. This investigation was meant to fix the loopholes that allowed our country to be so vulnerable. Why would they choose instead to succumb to political machinations? What would we find out if a real investigation into September 11, 2001 were ever done? The bottom line is that the most deadly attack on American soil, since Pearl Harbor, remains dangerously unexamined. This can only be remedied with an investigation guided by the facts and conducted outside the reach of those with a vested interest in suppressing the truth."

Again, another press release from The Jersey Girls that should have been splattered across the TV screens across the country—and I want to go

through a couple of other things really fast—the release of "9/11 Press for Truth." That was completely ignored by the media.

MICKEY Yeah, you don't see that—you don't see that in the 9/11 Museum—excuse me, I'm—[laughs]

JON This is a film—you will not see "9/11 Press for Truth" at the 9/11 Museum. When it was released we had a mass campaign, sending out emails to different corporate media outlets; we gave a copy to each and every member of the House and the Senate; and nobody in the corporate media covered this. And this was The Jersey Girls calling into question—it destroyed the legitimacy of the 9/11 Commission, in my opinion, and it was completely ignored. It was not ignored by movie critics, which all gave it favorable reviews, but it was ignored by the corporate media, and around the time of the release of "9/11 Press for Truth" 9/11 Family Members, Donna Marsh O'Connor, Christina Kminek, and Michele Little, got together along with Kyle Hence and Paul Thompson at the National Press Club on September 11, 2006, to call for a new investigation. Only one media outlet in the country covered that, and it was a small town, I forget which it was—it was just one news article that was written about that.

Now, in the latter part of 2006, the September 11th Advocates, or The Jersey Girls, wrote a petition calling for the release of pertinent documentation regarding the 9/11 attacks. I think one of the things was a July 10, 2001 meeting between Cofer Black and Condoleezza Rice. Another was the CIA Inspector General's report, and the final thing that they asked for was for the release of the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry. We got 17,000 signatures and not one media outlet in the country covered this effort.

And there have been many efforts over the years by the families to bring attention to the fact that we were lied to about 9/11. And, it's funny, because in the beginning we were told to support the families. And, instead, over time we were told that when we do this, when we're questioning the 9/11 attacks or whatever, that we were somehow dishonoring the family members. And we heard that repeatedly by the corporate media. And I can't think of anything more dishonoring of the family members than ignoring them, when they're trying to get real truth, accountability, and justice. That's what I used to tell people when they were told that you're dishonoring the family members is to throw it right back in their faces and say, this

happened, that happened, the family members tried to do this—you didn't cover that. Why are you dishonoring them?

MICKEY --five percent of their questions. Yeah, 75 percent of their questions were never even asked let alone answered. We could go on about that.

JON Lorie Van Auken and Mindy Kleinberg wrote a report in September 2006, that showed how poorly the 9/11 Commission answered their questions. Again, something completely ignored by the media.

MICKEY Well, I have to say, that the purpose of "official commissions" in Government—I mean, the purpose in Machiavellian fashion is to create a narrative and use that narrative and put to bed questions. It's not to necessarily seek out the truth or to investigate all avenues. I mean, we even know this from listening to some of the commissioners who said well, we were never allowed to see that. Or these agencies would not give us these documents. (Right) So the erection of the Commission is political theater in many ways. And, attacking people that support the victims' families is another way of trying to own politically the message of the families. As you'll recall, there was no politician, really not too many politicians that weren't gaming to get photo ops at so-called ground zero. (Right) Only to kick the first responders to the curb for a decade thereafter. I mean even up to the present.

JON That's another thing, they completely ignored all of the good work that the "9/11 Truth Movement" did for the 9/11 first responders. We were the only group that was trying to support them, that was trying to bring attention to their issues, that was trying to get them healthcare—

MICKEY Well, until Jon Stewart, right? [Laughs]

JON Yeah, exactly, Jon Stewart, he was the hero of everything. Even though we tried for YEARS and years to bring attention to their issue.

MICKEY I would argue, it's interesting—that example is interesting because notice that if we DO use the big megaphone and the platform to rally people to just causes, they respond. Because it was, once many people were reminded of this travesty, per Jon Stewart on a comedy program (Right), that people mobilized and pressured Congress to do something.

So, I mean, this is exactly why the media is controlled, Jon. Because once people understand what's going on, people, general every day regular folks like us, we react, we respond, we are not operating under the edict of corporate profit or global dominance (Right). We are operating as human beings that want justice and want truth and want to help each other. And, corporate media—let's look at that word corporate for a minute—if that technology was used in a way that addressed the injustices of the world, well, we would have far fewer of them now, wouldn't we? (Absolutely) It's an incredibly powerful medium. How it's used, unfortunately matters. And who controls the levers of that machine matters even more. (Right) And, We The People, Jon, don't control CNN and Fox. All we can do is control our remotes, by turning them off. (Exactly) Stop listening to their propaganda. Stop buying their products. Stop buying their messages and become more involved in local, independent media, citizen journalism, and use critical thinking and media literacy skills.

Which is, again, what Project Censored over the years has been combatting—censorship and propaganda—and this is a message we hit home. We have hundreds of students and faculty on over 20 campuses across the United States, and what we want to do is really create this kind of curriculum (Right), where people have the opportunity to learn why it's not in their interest to watch these programs. I say "programs" purposely [Laughs], because they are brand names.

JON One thing I want to get into is how desperate the media got over the years. It was like blatantly obvious how desperate they were to destroy or discredit anyone questioning the 9/11 attacks. You remember when somebody interrupted Bill Clinton and said, "9/11 was an inside job!" and he said, "How dare you!" At the time, Bill O'Reilly said, "Clear thinking Americans must condemn the fascists (the 9/11 Truthers) and actively oppose the anarchy they embrace. Your children are getting this craziness in school, and it's 24/7 on the Net. Only public opinion and criminal proceedings against the loons will clamp them down. Let those actions begin in earnest."

MICKEY Spoken like a true fascist. That's what fascism sounds like, Jon. [Laughs] (Right) That tacky.

JON I want to get to—

MICKEY And don't forget George W. Bush—let's not tolerate outlandish conspiracy theories about the 9/11 events, right?

JON Concerning the 9/11 attacks [Laughs] yeah, exactly. It seems the media—

MICKEY That's propaganda out of the gate.

JON The corporate media followed his advice it seemed over the years.

Now, I want to continue with how the media has treated us. Now, they had moved to the point, or they did move to the point where they were actually trying to paint us as murderers, as dangerous, murdering people, like psychopaths. And there are many instances of this. And I wrote an article that 9/11 truth has always been non-violent and I suggest people read it. It's available at: 911TruthNews.com

But, they literally, they tried to paint us as murderers. There was something—we had a Treason in American Conference in March 2010, in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and two different media outlets showed up—ABC and RT. The reason—well, I'll get into this—the reason that ABC came there, there was a recent guy who shot some bullets at the Pentagon. He was called "the Pentagon shooter." And, apparently, maybe he had written something about 9/11 online, and ABC was there to try and paint us all as dangerous as the Pentagon shooter. And I'm going to read two different quotes from two different articles.

One is from OnlyInPhiladelphia.com and that was called, "TV Media Info Wars Strikes at Valley Forge 9/11 Truth Conference" and it was by Nate Graham on March 9, 2010.

"Perhaps there truly is no such thing as objective journalism anymore. TV news media organizations have their own slant on every televised story. Unbeknownst to myself at the time, two separate TV news organizations, Russia Today (RT) and ABC News arrived to cover the same 9/11 Truth Conference here in suburban Philadelphia, but with different agendas."

And Coleen Rowley, 9/11 whistleblower, she came there to speak and she was attacked by ABC and she wrote an article called, "Baring the Truth, Nightline Reporter Channels Bill O'Reilly and does a hatchet job." And this is from May 10, 2010.

"When young, smiling female producer Katie Herman identified herself as being with ABC and asked for an interview, I had only just arrived at the conference, so although I was a little surprised that the Nightline TV crew was there, I immediately consented to an interview before anyone had a chance to warn me that the TV show was trying to concoct a connection between the conference and the mentally ill young man who had been killed a few days before while shooting at the Pentagon guard."

They came there literally to paint us as murderers. And I want to say something, there are quite literally millions of people who question what we were told about 9/11, millions and millions of people. Whether or not they're active is another story, but there are millions. And polls over the years have shown this. If there are ten murderers and psychopaths who wrote something about 9/11 on the Internet out of millions of people, that doesn't mean that millions of people who question 9/11 are murderers and psychopaths. And, unfortunately, that hasn't stopped the corporate media from using those individuals to paint us as such.

There was a Holocaust Museum shooter who killed somebody. He went into the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., and Glenn Beck got on TV and said that he was a hero of the "9/11 Truth Movement." And this is what it's come to. This is why people—they squirm when they hear people talk about 9/11. They literally have been trained to stay away from the issue.

MICKEY Well, I can't disagree with you, Jon. And, I do this, in addition to teaching critical thinking and political economy, I also of course teach modern U. S. history and I tell students to scroll over the last pages of the book. Go over the last chapter. How does it end? In other words, how do historians cover 9/11, and already, right, in the last several years, already, the narrative has gelled. This is the same narrative, by the way, as the Fox News man-on-the-street gave the day of 9/11 (Right).

That ended up essentially being the thesis of the 9/11 Zelikow Commission's and sits today now in stone, basically, in the history books because the questions, the unanswered questions, the controversies—all the things that we've been talking about, the

things Project Censored has been covering since our Censored 2003 book, these are just written out of the historical narrative, Jon, so that subsequent generations of people will not be given the opportunity to think critically and ask questions about these issues, because they're not on the test. (Right)

And this is how propaganda works on so many multiple simultaneous levels and layers. And that's what needs to be regularly deconstructed. And I—you mentioned Pearl Harbor before, and I'm not going to veer off historically through all the serious problems from the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, WWI, Pearl Harbor, Gulf of Tonkin—fill in the blanks—the lies that lead to wars, WMDs, etc. but the Pearl Harbor event is interesting because everybody talks about Pearl Harbor so they know exactly what it means, even though the U.S. Army in 1944, issued a report saying the attack should have been prevented and were known about in advance.

We now see Roosevelt documents and Simpson documents, the Secretary of War—that's back when we were more honest about what we called these people. They show them having these conversations about needing to let these things happen to mobilize public support for war and so on. Yet, even when you see acclaimed historians and documentarians like Ken Burns at PBS and so forth, they just brush right over it, and still call it a sneak attack. There's no history of the 50 years of hostility between the U.S. and Japan. There's no talk about the oil embargoes. There's no talk about the reality of what actually is going on there. It's like a sacred historical cow. It's such an important propaganda victory in our historical narrative of official stories, that the Bush administration immediately likened 9/11 to Pearl Harbor, which I thought was, whoa, wait a minute, man, do you really mean that? (Right) Because if you really mean that, it means you did ignore the warnings and you did want it to happen. (Exactly)

And if you do read over the Project for the New American Century, ending up in the Bush administration, well, they talked about needing a new Pearl Harbor in order to invade seven countries. And, by the way, Obama has helped fulfill the prophecy of the Project for New American Century by invading all of these countries that they had outlined. And absent a catalyzing and catastrophic event, like a

new Pearl Harbor, it will likely be difficult to carry out these global ambitions for global dominance. And here we are, 13 years later, Republican, Democrat, doesn't matter on that count, we are in fact the global hegemon, and anybody who questions it: Remember 9/11.

Just this last week, Isis—I keep waiting for Shazam to come out too—but Isis, right, it poses a threat greater than 9/11. I mean, they're still using this Pavlovian fear button over 9/11.

JON Which shows just how important it is to point out the fact that we were lied to about 9/11. To take away their playing card.

MICKEY That's a conservative statement. Yeah, that's a very conservative statement. I know some people hear that and they say: "oh my God, that's crazy talk." Look, the basic facts are that we were lied to about 9/11. That's what the facts show. (Right) The facts are that the public has not been given fair, open, honest, fact-based treatment about 9/11. It has been invoked relentlessly by both Democrats and Republicans as a bludgeon to beat the public into submission through fear, and it continues to be that way, and unless and until we continue to call out the incredible historical pattern of lies and deceit, right, by Government. Remember, I.F. Stone, all Governments lie... (Right) and this is the thing—that we need to focus, and we need to say let's reconstruct these events. And even if we don't bog down in the minutia of the Pentagon, or Building 7, or—remember the Anthrax attacks? Most people don't. We can, at the very least, look at the Commission as the pinnacle of the officializing of those lies.

JON Well there's an old expression that it's not the crime that gets you, it's the cover-up. And the 9/11 Commission itself and its report is literally the cover-up.

MICKEY It is.

JON And so by pointing out the ridiculousness of the 9/11 Commission—I mean, people think that 9/11 was investigated, and unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. There were investigations but they all had their own version of compromise and corruption.

And Mickey, I very much appreciate you coming on my show to talk about this issue. I want to try to wrap it up. We've already been talking for an hour and a half now.

One last question. How do we deal with this issue overall?

MICKEY I think, Jon, the way to do it is where we started. We need to talk to each other about overarching issues of how official narratives permeate our culture. We need to reinforce the idea that questioning our Government, questioning our corporate institutions that lord over us in the globe. We need to stop tacitly and unthoughtfully supporting these organizations. We need to turn off corporate media. We need to think for ourselves, think critically, think independently, become more media literate, and become more compassionate with each other the way that we communicate our concerns and our issues with each other. And we need to not only be compassionate and critical thinkers and communicators, we need to be compassionate and critical listeners. And we need to give people the space that they need to feel secure, that they can come to their own conclusions. And if you give people the facts, and if you listen to them come back at you and you have this ongoing dialogue, everything doesn't need to be fit into a two-minute sound bite, and all issues in the world aren't going to be solved over dinner.

By the way, I would like to say that that's also an idea though. It's nice to share fellowship with people. We need to take the community and really insert this community element back into this. We need to not just sit around on Facebook and we need to be having Face Time. We need to go out and talk to each other as human beings and look at each other and earn respect for each other. By peddling truths and facts with transparent sourcing.

And I think that's the real way forward. And I think that when we pay attention as much as how we communicate to each other as what we're communicating to each other, I think we can really build mutual symbiotic audiences that resonate as a true, small "d" Democratic community that really wants to move forward under the principles ensconced in the U.S. Constitution and, particularly, the Bill of Rights.

Particularly, about free speech and expression and assembly, and petitions and grievances, the right to bear arms, the right to not be imposed upon by Government, the right to be secure in your person, and the rights to privacy, the right to due process, the right to transparent jury trials, the right to be free from torture and cruel and unusual punishment, and the rights of states and local Governments to decide things that the federal Government has no business deciding.

I just rattled off the ten amendments that are the Bill of Rights. And if we really believe in these ideas, Jon, then the way to move forward is by actually practicing them. These are verbs, not abstract concepts. If we do not do these things, we do not have them. And if we don't think for ourselves, somebody else will gladly do it for us.

JON There's an expression, you better take an interest in politics before politics takes an interest in you.

MICKEY --an interest in you. I tell that to my students every semester, Jon.

JON Well, thank you very much Mickey Huff for coming on today. Are there any websites you want to promote?

MICKEY Sure. ProjectCensored.org. You can follow us on Facebook, the NSA and CIA surely do. We're at Project Censored on Facebook. Andy Lee Ross, our associate director and I just finished *Censored 2015: Inspiring We The People*, with a forward by Ralph Nader and cartoons, once again, by Kahlil van Deeb. We are mostly a donor-supported organization. We don't get a lot of grants and foundation support because of the kind of questions we ask and the stories we support. And we recently won a whistleblower—the Pillar Award in Washington, D.C. for our Persons of Conscience in New Media and Journalism—we're very honored to be working with whistleblowers and truth tellers. Thank you so much, Jon.

And we'd like to open up our organizations to all the people that have their stories to tell and their under-reported stories, and we'd like to help do it together. So, we'd certainly like to hear from people. They can contact us through Facebook Project Censored. They can go to ProjectCensored.org and show a screening of our film in your community—Project Censored the Movie. Go to

ProjectCensoredtheMovie: Ending the Reign of Junk Food News. You can go to ProjectCensoredtheMovie.com. You can go to the Project Censored website and see that.

And start this dialogue. Start the dialogue about how media is the root of some of these serious problems of communication we have, and then insert your issue. Then open up a discussion. Have a weekly discussion with people in your community. Right? Use Project Censored as a leap, as sort of a springboard into the conversation. Next week let's talk about how media covers Gaza and Israel. After that, why don't we have a meeting on how the media covers—we could have whole hour and a half shows on all of this as you know. What about 9/11? What about the wars in Iraq? What about Isis? What about this? What about religious freedom? What about pensions being sold off to Wall Street and losing money in New Jersey and Rhode Island? What about the reform education movement? We could fill in the blanks forever. And I tell people, take the issue you care about. Take the issues that hit for you. Check out how it's covered in the corporate media and, all of a sudden, you've got your number two topic ready to go. Because if we don't address the problems of media and propaganda in this country, and in the world, we can't really further our own other interests and causes because the communication is controlled.

JON Right. All right, Mickey, thank you very much for coming on today and I will look forward to having you on again.

MICKEY My pleasure, Jon, any time, and we'll return the favor on KPFA. So, thanks again for all you do. And thanks to you and Cindy Sheehan for the Soapbox. It's been my pleasure to be on.

JON All right, thanks a lot, Mickey.

MICKEY Absolutely.

JON Bye bye.

JON One thing that I neglected to mention during the show is the fact that the corporate media started to attack the 9/11 Family Members who are asking questions and seeking real accountability and justice. People like Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and most famously, Ann

Coulter. Ann Coulter viciously attacked The Jersey Girls in a book of hers and the corporate media gave her a tremendous amount of TV time. There were even people in the corporate media who defended Ann's actions. This took place around the time of the release of the documentary: "9/11 Press for Truth," which starred The Jersey Girls and destroyed the legitimacy of the 9/11 Commission.

Which do you think should have gotten the tremendous amount of TV time? Here's a hint: Not Ann Coulter.



Chapter/Episode 3 – Erik Larson – September 2, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Erik Larson (ERIK)

JON Hi everyone and welcome to my show called "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show will focus on the importance of obtaining documents from the Government regarding 9/11. It will focus on the classification of documents and the redactions within many of the documents that have been released. It will focus on how sometimes within these documents we see contradictions between what is within the document and what is written within the 9/11 report. This aspect of research was very important to the late, great John Judge, an early mentor of mine who, unfortunately, passed away earlier this year. This show is dedicated to him.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with Erik Larson, and I'm going to quickly read his bio for us.

Erik Larson is a 9/11 researcher and activist. In his view, the 9/11 Commission's failure to credibly account for how and why 9/11 happened, and the general acceptance or apathy of the media and the public toward the

official story, represent national security and constitutional crises, and corruption in American society itself. Concerned for the U.S. republic and the well-being of present and future generations around the world, Erik, among other things, has made well over 8,000 9/11 Commission and other 9/11-related documents publicly available through two file sharing websites on the web. It's primarily this work that we have Erik on to talk about today.

Before we talk to Erik, I have a few personal things to say. Erik is the one who came to Washington, D.C. to film my act of civil disobedience where I chained myself to the White House fence. And I was very grateful to him for that. He also got me out of jail.

Another thing is that Erik and I have approached 9/11 in a very similar fashion. So, hopefully, it will make for an interesting conversation today. So, hi Erik. How are you doing?

ERIK Doing well, Jon, and yeah, thanks for remembering that incident—the arrest and all that. Yeah, good times.

JON Yeah, good times. I also remember you came to the March 2010 march against the war and we had lunch with Cindy. (Right) Do you remember that?

ERIK I remember that, too, yeah. You've got some photos of me from that day, I think. Yeah, you're right, we have a similar approach in our thinking to what is important about the information about 9/11 and what the citizenry can do to get truth and justice. Yeah, that's why I agreed to the interview.

JON Now, I am dedicating this show to the late, great John Judge, and I know that he was a friend of yours, inspiration perhaps. (Yeah) Would you like to say a little something about John?

ERIK John Judge, unfortunately, passed away this year and he was behind a lot of efforts for truth and justice in society. Not just 9/11, but he was there from the beginning when all the information that was coming out was fucked up, excuse me, strange and incomplete and there were a lot of serious questions that needed to be asked. And he worked with Cynthia McKinney while she was in office, the House of Representatives, to work on investigations and use the power of Congress to get things done. He worked on 9/11 Citizens Watch, which worked with the families, especially the Family Steering

Committee and the Jersey Girls, to Watchdog the Commission's work. He even helped it do its work to understand what kind of questions it should be asking that it admitted at the beginning derelict saying the family's commission should be a roadmap. But they didn't do it.

And, in addition to that work, his work investigating numerous other deep state events and the actors behind them—so many. I mean—JFK and RFK, and MLK—those political assassinations were some of his primary work that he's best known for. And he—I don't think he published a book, but he did a lot of writing and research and his work was used by other researchers and authors and very well known in communities, research of alternative events like 9/11 and JFK assassination.

Also, in addition to that work, he was a long-time activist in D.C. working with the school system compelling them to make sure that the kids there had options and information in addition to their ROTC programs and military trying to get into the schools and recruit. Like where they backdoor draft these poor young black kids who get into the military usually don't know about non-violent options they could use to better themselves as a society and make a living.

And, I'm probably forgetting a lot of things, but he was well-loved by a lot of different people. I remember David Swanson commented on his passing and someone else whose name escapes me. But, anyway, yeah, John Judge. I'm glad you're dedicating this show to him and I'm honored to be on a show that is dedicated to him.

JON

Yeah, John, very early on was an inspiration to me. The way he presented things; the arguments that he would make—it was so compelling. I have a little quick story about John. The first time I met him was during the 9/11 People's Commission, which was hosted by Pacifica radio. It took place on 9/11/2004 in Washington, D.C. And, I had just recently heard of 9/11 Citizen's Watch a few months prior, and so I wanted to help in any way I could, so the way that he asked me to help him was to put change in his car. And I did. I kept running in and out to put change in the meter for his car. (Yeah, yeah) But he was a major influence on me and he is greatly missed. (Yeah, yeah)

So, let's go ahead and get ahead with the interview.

What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

ERIK You know what? I guess it was probably like it was for a lot of Americans. At the time I kind of assumed that Democrats and Republicans might both be pulled into corporate interests, but we had a free press because anybody could say anything and then I kind of figured if anything was suspicious, or whatever, the media would be doing its job if Congress wouldn't. And I kind of couldn't believe that anybody would not do everything in their utmost to make sure something like that didn't happen.

So I was in shock watching these towers burning. Wondering what's going on for the people in New York and their families. And, I go to work—because waking up and seeing on the news in California, and just kind of in shock, you know. Even after Oklahoma and the first World Trade Center bombing and the Millennium threat, I kind of just like never took terrorism seriously as a threat. I just like figured it doesn't happen here. I hear about it happening in the Middle East now and then, but I'm kind of concerned with what's happening in the United States and my own life and all that.

And then, so I'm wondering, so what's going to happen now because this is a major event. There has to be some kind of response. Who are these people who attacked? I never heard of Al-Qaeda. That's kind of what it was like. Feeling kind of patriotic and outraged and hurt, feeling bad for the people that lost their lives, and pissed off—who would do something like this? You know? If you've got a grievance, work within the political process. I kind of like said okay, it's screwed up, but it works—non-violence is a better strategy than violence. And terrorism became real. It was in America. The worst attack since Pearl Harbor, as they say.

JON As they say.

Okay, when did you first begin to question what we were told about that day?

ERIK I guess even from the beginning I was kind of skeptical, but I did not entirely disbelieve what we were told. I was not sure what to believe. And there were certain things that came out in the news over the years. I remember hearing about the collapse of a third building and thinking it was a little strange. And then hearing about that NORAD had drills involving hijacked airliners being used as weapons prior to 9/11 and I was thinking that was going to be an issue, but I didn't hear much more about it. And the appointment, or attempted appointment of Kissinger to the Commission and

kind of just the whole thing. You know, just Democrats and Republicans on there. I didn't have high hopes for it but I figured it was going to be an investigation and that it wouldn't be possible to cover anything up and people would be held accountable. And then nobody was, so it was—and I noticed how well it all worked out for the Bush administration and their cronies and the Military Industrial Complex. And how they already had an agenda to go into Iraq, which was mentioned even on the campaign trail by Bush.

And then—but I didn't really question it until I saw some DVDs in 2005, which I would not recommend to anyone. A lot of B.S. information in them, but it got me to go looking for information. And when I went looking, I discovered that there was a whole community, even a movement, of researchers and activists on this issue who were actively working to highlight certain information which really cast into doubt what we were being told about 9/11 if we're not critically fatal to certain parts of the narrative and raise serious questions about really who was responsible even if Bin Laden and these 19 accused were involved and actually did the physical work of flying planes into buildings.

Anyway, so it was about 2005 when I started seriously questioning things and became an activist and doing my own research trying to figure out what could be known and what wasn't know.

JON It's interesting because I did my own work starting from mid-2002, early 2003, and I never stumbled across the "9/11 Truth Movement," surprisingly. I did everything on my own. I was contacting my local reps. I was contacting my local media and saying why aren't you covering this? (Mm-hmm)

As I mentioned, you've uploaded over 8,000 documents to the online file sharing website: [scribd.com/911DocumentArchive](https://www.scribd.com/911DocumentArchive) (Yeah). What are these records? And where did they come from?

ERIK These are primarily 9/11 Commission records, but they're also records that came from other sources through the Freedom of Information Act and mandatory declassification review, also known as FOIA and MDR, respectively. And the 9/11 Commission may have some of the records that I got from other channels in their records and they just hadn't been released yet, or they may not have them, I don't know. And the ones that are there, represent a fraction of what the 9/11 Commission had. But 2009—January,

2009, they were mandated by law, an agreement by the 9/11 Commission—or, I guess it wasn't mandated by law, but did an instruction from the 9/11 Commission to the National Archives that they be released in five years. And this was worked out with Philip Zelikow and Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, who were the executive director and commission co-chairs. And, by law, certain Government records must be preserved. Certain records can be destroyed if they're not necessary, or whatever, but certain records must be preserved in the 9/11 Commission's records, were to be preserved means they're going to wind up in the National Archives, and at some point, they become public unless there's reason to keep them from being made public, which may be national security, personal privacy, or any number of other things.

So, they were down there, and January 2009, they were scheduled to be released and they did put out a finite number, according to Thomas Kean, the Commission had access to over 2 million records, and according to archivists at NARA—the National Archives is also known as NARA—according to Chris Wilhelm, the NARA archivist, NARA has 1.4 million pages. So, if the 9/11 Commission had access to that over 600,000 pages, they didn't actually get physical custody and it didn't wind up in the National Archives. And that's just [AUDIOBAD]. They also had a lot of gigs of videos and audio and other records, terabytes even, I think. You know what, definitely I think over two terabytes that Chris said they had just in digital stuff. And a lot of paper records and so—

JON Why did you—what prompted you to go down there and do it?

ERIK As a public service. I was aware that they were going to be released and a couple colleagues at the HistoryCommons Matt and Kevin Fenton were interested in these records, as well as, I guess it was mainly them. So I was in a discussion with them—unless Paul Thompson was around then too. I can't remember. But, anyway, yeah—I was in a discussion with them about getting these records and at the time I had just moved over here, by coincidence, and was unemployed. I couldn't find a job for about a year, so I spent every day down there. It was 50-60 hours a week sometimes, just scanning these records. Scanning everything that had been released, which is actually, even though it's a lot of pages, it's a fraction of what is in there. Let me just finish up on that line real quick. So, out of the 1.4 million pages that they had, NARA had processed about 35 percent, which is what they made available. However, a lot of that 35 percent was in the form of withdrawal notices saying hundreds or thousands of pages of what would

have been in the files is not there because it's withheld for whatever reason, and a lot of times it's classified. So, even though it's been processed and the public could know in general terms what they might be able to get access to if they can get it declassified it's not there. (Right) And what was released is also, you know, when there's actually physical paper in there, a lot of it's redacted. And a lot of what has been released, is not agency records per se, although some agency records did get released in this batch, but a lot of it is just the 9/11 Commission's own records. It's interview records, memos, records of meetings with staff, press briefings, and so on. All the records that are created that's part of the investigation will create a lot of stuff. They had eight different teams, each investigating really complex issues, interviewing hundreds of people, and in addition to the ones I scanned, the National Archives also on its own website, released a significant portion, but not all the memoranda for the records which were created from staff notes from interviews—it's basically like a summary of what was said in the interview according to the actual—

JON Right, and we're going to get into the MFRs a little bit later. (Okay) But, okay, you've essentially, you've collected and put online 8,000 documents (Yeah). There is a great many documents that have yet to be released, for whatever reason. (Yes) A lot of times they cite national security. And, why is it important for researchers to look at this information?

John Judge—I could probably answer that—John Judge used to say a lot that when you go through the actual records of the investigation, a lot of times you'll find contradictory information than what's in the actual report itself. (Absolutely) So, that is one of the reasons why getting these documents is important, making them available to the public is important, and so on.

Now, I'm going to read a little bit—it's part of a question—

ERIK Can I just comment on what you just said? (Sure, go ahead) So, the 9/11 Commissioners themselves, all of them had conflicts of interest. Some of them—like personal, professional, financial, political—all of them had at least one, some of them had many, and especially the two chairs and co-chairs. Lee Hamilton, very interesting history involved in what was essentially a cover-up with the October Surprise in the Iran-Contra; and Kean, a lot of, or several, financial conflicts of interest, in addition to their political—again, how come they're all Democrats and Republicans? We're going to have an independent investigation? They can't find any credible,

experienced, non-Democrats and Republicans to head up this very important investigation? In addition to the commissioners themselves, half of the staff had the same kind of conflicts of interest—at least the professional ones. They got people from the same agencies that they were investigating to assist with these investigations. Not necessarily they were actively working for them, but had previously spent their entire careers in these agencies. So who do you think they're going to be sympathetic to when it comes to telling the story?

But even so, and I guess you could consider the other half of the staff as Americans were concerned and wanted to get to the bottom of things and make sure something like 9/11 never happened again, a lot of stuff came out in staff reports, memos, things that were sent to Zelikow, and things that were sent to the commissioners trying to get around Zelikow's tight reign over the staff's work that not only contradict what the—generally the gist of the report. The official conclusions and all that and the official narrative, but were complaining about how the investigation was being conducted. So, yes, very useful for researchers who are interested in finding out what really happened, whether it's history or whether it's current events that are being used to shape our policies, our Government's policies, foreign and domestic. It's useful for researchers to dig through the actual Government's own records, because sometimes there's stuff in there that—it's just critical to what the public's being told.

Anyway, go on—

JON Well, you're right and I completely agree with you. You know, there's many problems, obviously, with the 9/11 Commission and that. We could devote an entire—a multitude of hours to that topic alone. Yes, there were many staffers who did not trust Zelikow, and so forth.

Now, on September 25th 2006, former 9/11 Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste makes public knowledge a deal within the 9/11 Commission to keep Bush, Cheney, and Clinton's testimony classified until 2009. And then on September 8 2011, it was reported that "ten years after Al-Qaeda's attack on the United States, the vast majority of the 9/11 Commission's investigative records remained sealed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., even though the Commission had directed the archives to make most of the material public in 2009."

You've already gone over a lot of that—

ERIK Right, and that's a point I meant. Other records like what has been released is mostly junk. I mean, there's files and files of newspaper clippings that were related to events and the Commission's work and other records that as far as someone who is looking for truth and justice are just not going to be useful. The Commission just got all kinds of crap dumped on them that really didn't make a difference to their investigation but impeded their work. And, in addition to that, as I mentioned, the people running the investigation had all these conflicts of interest. They had a story to tell. They didn't want to get to the bottom of things necessarily. There's an agenda there. So, again, the records that they're creating are not necessarily useful and these are the ones that are harmless to the official narrative. Of course that's just going to be put out first. But, even so, certain important things had come to light.

But I think I got off track—you were saying?

JON [Laughs] No, I was just making—restating what you said that there was a deal made (Oh, yeah—) by the 9/11 Commission to get these documents released and only 35 percent of them have been released and many of the documents that have been released are greatly redacted, as you mentioned.

ERIK Yeah, and there's stuff in them that might be important, yeah.

JON Now, in many of the memorandums for the records, or what some people call MFRs, which are essentially staff statements describing discussions with witnesses there are many redactions. For instance, 9/11 whistleblower Sibel Edmonds' MFR is almost completely blank. (Right) I also notice that Prince Bandar's MFR is still classified. Are they planning on releasing these documents in their entirety? Ever? Do you know?

ERIK Sibel Edmonds—let me comment on both of those situations. Sibel Edmonds, as you know, FBI whistleblower, who has been by the people who she had named being implicated they called her a nut, conspiracy theorist, crazy, all kinds of disparaging terms. However, if what she has to say is just a bunch of garbage, how come it's been blacked out for classified reasons? So that's really questionable that there's not something very important in there. And, Sibel Edmonds, in her own work and as head of the National Security of Whistleblowers Coalition, and even before that, released a letter signed by her and 24 other people who had knowledge from the intelligence community, FBI, who had knowledge prior to 9/11 of

what had gone down and had observed the Commission's work and read its report and realized it had seriously failed in its duty to account for how and why 9/11 happened. And most of these people are still being gagged from testifying, publicly or under oath, about what they knew and no one is calling them to do it that has the authority to do so. Remarkably, a lot of Sibel Edmonds' testimony has come out under oath in 2008. But yeah, the 9/11 Commission did interview her for like three-and-a-half hours, I think, and came up with a seven, six-and-a-half-page summary of the interview, which is almost entirely redacted.

JON Well, one of the things about Sibel Edmonds is the fact that she was trying to get to testify before the 9/11 Commission and they were not (Right) responding to her, so the families actually snuck her in on one of the family 9/11 Commission meetings and forced them to talk to her. And her story received a footnote in the back of the book—of the back of the 9/11 report.

ERIK And the footnote basically said the FBI needed to improve quality control on its translation unit.

JON Yeah, exactly. (Right) It doesn't get into depth at all as to what we've learned from Sibel. But, again—

ERIK In that Inspector General's report a lot of her allegations. But, yeah, very significant document and that needs to be released. Whether it will ever be made public while we have Democrat or Republican administrations, really questionable. And as far as Bandar and certain other Saudis who have a lot to answer for regarding what happened—al-Bayoumi, and Thumairy, and Abdussatar Shaik and some others, we can get into those, but the Bandar, specifically is this guy's interview record ever going to be released, the State Department would have to be involved. And because it involves sensitive and diplomatic foreign relations, it's highly unlikely that that one will ever be released as long as we have Democrat/Republican administrations, as well.

JON Well, is there anybody fighting for their release?

ERIK Well, as far as I know, the 9/11 families, Jersey Girls, some of them, are still advocating for their release. There's only so much they can do. The Jersey Girls, I think, have already called for a new investigation two or three times since the 9/11 Commission's whitewash came out. There was, as we mentioned previously, a "9/11 Truth Movement," which has some

people going down avenues that I find strange and useless, but there are other people that are working on getting records released. Myself, I'm currently not—I'm not actively working on filing new requests for information. This sorely needs to be done. I'm not sure if Kevin Fenton is either at this point. I'm following up on requests that have already been filed, but I have a list with several hundred additional things that should be submitted for declassification review.

Just from what we know about the records that have already been processed—one of the problems is that we do not even know what the Commission got. Especially amateur researchers like myself, I don't know what records to ask for, what records would and should have been created that should be in the Commission's files. If anyone does know, then—that is willing to give advice, that would be a big help, that might be listening to this about specifically the names of types of records that would be in there. And then they can go looking for them. We can ask for—if you know what the record is, you can ask for a declassification review, which is an avenue similar to Freedom of Information, the FOIA act, but yeah, it's a different process and sometimes more successful.

Other than these people, not sure. I think there's a general interest in the public that more stuff is released, and there are a variety of research communities that I think have an interest in 9/11, but I'm not sure who is actively working on getting stuff out.

JON It seems as if they'll keep them classified and not for public consumption for as long as they can. If nobody's fighting for it.

ERIK Even though Obama, who promised to be the transparency President in his executive order had made provision for stuff to be held secret for over 75 years, as long as certain people, like people of certain levels sign off on it, they can keep stuff secret forever. You know, indefinitely.

JON Absolutely. So what is exactly a FOIA request and do you have any advice for people wanting to make them? And also, what are MDRs?

ERIK Sure, good question. So, a Freedom of Information Act request, or FOIA, is a request that the Government produce records and the FOIA Act can be phrased in general terms. You can ask for any records that the Government has on a specific person or a specific topic and sometimes it's a good idea to narrow the request to reduce the amount of research time and to not get a

bunch of junk in response, which could wind up costing a lot in processing time and copying fees. But in 1974, not even sure—I think it was the 70s—the Freedom of Information Act was passed. Or was it under Clinton? You know, I don't know. But it's on Wikipedia [laughs] it's not even [AUDIOBAD], but it basically says that the Government has to produce any records it has unless there is a compelling interest in keeping them withheld, such as a person's privacy interest, a law enforcement interest, national security interest, a variety of things, there's exceptions. And the law has even been interpreted to mean that the Government does not have to acknowledge having certain records if these records fall within certain generally national security related circumstances. You ask them, I want a copy of this record and will deny having it because it's exempt. (Laughs)

But, anyway, that's one avenue that the public can find out what's going on in its Government is by requesting records. As you noted earlier, sometimes there's information in the Government's own records that contradicts what the people running the Government are telling the public.

And the MDR, which stands for Mandatory Declassification Review request, is a demand that certain information be reviewed for declassification, and the Government has to do this if requested every five years, like once every five years. If it gets a second request within five years, it doesn't have to do it. But it has to do it at least once, which means somebody, somewhere in the Government is going to take a look and see if the information that you want can be released. And with MDR, you have to request a specific document. You have to give detailed information about what you're asking for. You can't ask for information under subjects to be declassified.

And there's also an appeal process which goes all the way to the Information and Security Oversight office, which is part of National Archives. It's the highest classification authority below the United States President. So, if someone in a Government agency is trying to keep some information covered up, either to protect themselves or some cronies, or some political agenda that they have or whatever, or some crime that they're involved in, if they want to keep it covered up and they can't find a way to get that record destroyed without someone finding out and then getting prosecuted for it being destroyed, which isn't necessarily going to happen with the Democrats and Republicans in charge, but if it gets to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP) or Ice Cap—if it gets to Ice Cap, which is part of ICU, then they're going to review it. And

Ice Cap's board is composed of someone from each agency, so they're going to discuss among themselves this information, more eyeballs on it, more brains thinking about can we release this?

Surprisingly, Ice Cap has a better track record when it comes to getting classified information released than under FOIA. Under FOIA you can sue for it to be released, but that means you're going to be in a federal court and, generally, federal judges are deferential to the executive claims of privilege and secrecy and national security and all that. So, suing under FOIA for classified information is more likely to be than just appealing to Ice Cap, which could take many, many years, but may not. According to the National Security Archive, which is based at George Washington University in D.C., which has done great work for decades on getting classified information out about all kinds of important subjects, has put out a requester's guide on Freedom of Information Act and FOIA, and MDR, the mandatory declassification.

So I recommend that everyone go to NFArchive.org if you're interested in learning how to get records from the Government. Yeah, that's the single best source of information. There are other sources of information out there like the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press, but I found the Archive's guide a lot more useful. Anyway—

JON Where can people go to find what you have already made available online? From the 9/11 Commission.

ERIK Sure—so, as mentioned before Scribd.com/911documentArchive and Scribd is spelled S-C-R-I-B-D.com/911DocumentArchive. That's where I've uploaded everything that I've gotten from NARA and from FOIA and MDR. And I've also uploaded records that other researchers have obtained, and it's all 9/11-related stuff. And in addition to that, everything that I've gotten I've sent to 911DataSets.org, which is a TORRENT site. You can't link to individual files in a way that they will be displayed the way you can at Scribd, but Scribd charges money, and if you want to download all the records and you know how to use TORRENT, you can get that from 911DataSets, plus a voluminous amount of other information that has come out from other channels, a lot of it related to the World Trade Center destruction investigations. But there are a lot of other 911-related subjects as well. So, definitely recommend checking out those sites if you're interested in doing research.

JON Okay, well, from the Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11, there are 28 redacted pages. Supposedly, having to do with Saudi support for the hijackers. And there are other countries, supposedly, listed as well. Obama promised 9/11 Family Members, Kristen Breitweiser and Bill Doyle, that he would release these pages and never has. The Obama administration has also made it difficult for the 9/11 families to sue certain Saudis, and right now there is a big push by certain family members and members of Congress to get these documents released. What is your opinion on all that?

ERIK Well, I think those pages should definitely be released. Senator Bob Graham, knows what's in them. He was co-chair of the JICI (the Joint Intelligence Committee Inquiry), the Congressional inquiry, and he said publicly many times that it's not an actual security threat and the fact that it is being suppressed should be of concern to Americans concerned about national security because there's information in there—and he's gone even so far as to say it's a Saudi Government but there's other foreign Governments in there apparently who provided logistical and financial support to the hijackers. And we already actually through other channels know about this information as well. It's been documented. And the question is—

JON Well, as I mentioned, Prince Bandar's memorandum for the record is classified and one of the things that has trickled out over the years, especially from Bob Graham, is the fact that the Bandar family was financially connected to two of the hijackers, and many think that because Prince Bandar was such good friends with Bush, that's why Bush essentially kept these pages redacted.

Now, to me, if that's the case and, I'm not sure that it is, if that's the case, the President essentially helped to cover-up possible participants in the murder of 2,976 people. That to me is an act of treason. When it all comes down to it. And that's just one thing regarding the 9/11 attacks.

ERIK Yes, covering up for anyone that was involved in 9/11 is tantamount to treason. I absolutely agree.

JON It's accessory after the fact. I mean, if you want to talk about real crimes.

ERIK If only that, and there's a lot of other questions about what Bush did and didn't do before 9/11 and on 9/11 and afterwards. But, just for that, it's essentially an act of treason. If you know some foreign country was

involved in attacking the United States and then you're protecting them for whatever reason—and we can assume it's the oil that the U.S. gets from Saudi Arabia, the business relations that the Bush family has with the Saudi Royal Family, and the fact that they had billions in U.S. Treasuries, and all these other investments in the United States, but yeah, it's treason. He takes an oath to defend the Constitution, not even physically protect Americans or the country. And here he is selling out on the investigation of the worst attack on the U.S. since Pearl Harbor? To protect some—whatever is being protected there. And Obama, as well? And especially after the fact, the preventing of this information from being released?

And just to finish the thought from earlier, if the guy who knows what's in the report, who's responsible for that investigation and that report being together, says there's no reason to keep that information classified, I—we're going to of course—I think that information should be released. And it's not just Bob Graham saying so—other people that know what's in there had been saying it should be released.

JON

Well, The Jersey Girls have for years attempted to get these documents released, and now there's an effort by Representatives Walter Jones and Stephen Lynch, and Rep. Massey, and a few others who are attempting to get these documents released. So, hopefully, they will.

Okay, I think we answered the questions regarding the Joint Congressional Inquiry.

Just so everyone knows, we're having some technical difficulties, so we're trying our best to get this interview done.

During the 9/11 Commission, instead of using subpoena power to obtain documents, they instead used what were called "document requests" which could be and were in many cases ignored. I think they used subpoena power two times—once with NORAD and once with the FAA. But that was it. Do you know which documents weren't supplied to the 9/11 Commission? I mean, we talked about that earlier. We really don't, do we?

ERIK

Yeah, we do not have a full accounting, for sure. There are some interesting questions about that though. First on the subpoena power, yeah, the Commission could have used that. It had the authority to do so from the law that Congress passed, and the excuse that they gave was that if they subpoena documents, then they're going to fight us in court and that's going

to tie everything up past the deadline to review the Commission's work. Which sounds like an incredibly bogus excuse, but that's essentially the excuse that was given. But, if the Bush administration wants to get to the bottom of this, why are they going to be fighting subpoenas anyway, you know?

And, another question, since they did use document requests, why were they not complying with these document requests? Certain things like—one question that comes to mind—NORAD was asked for any after-action reports, in addition to a lot of other things. They were asked for any after-action reports that were prepared in response to the events of 9/11. And this is a common thing that's done in the military. Whenever there's an exercise or some major event they're involved in, an after-action report is submitted. Same thing like with a cop—any incident that a cop is involved in with a civilian—it doesn't mean it has to be a shooting or whatever, just writing a ticket for some offense, there is a report being made. And these reports are used to understand what happened and how to improve performance in the future and create accountability. There was no after-action report prepared by NORAD, apparently, in response to the events of 9/11, even though there's gross violations of air sovereignty four times on the day with these planes flying around unauthorized in the U.S. Hijackers crashing them into buildings or attempting to do so. It's just incredible!

And, in addition to that—

JON Well, with regard to NORAD, just to give people an idea, there were people on the staff who wanted to refer NORAD to the Justice Department for a criminal investigation because of the lies that they were telling the 9/11 Commission. And, it actually was Zelikow who sat on that request for a long time and, ultimately, decided to send it to the Inspector General instead, someone who cannot hold anyone accountable for any of their lies. All they can do is recommend that people are held accountable.

ERIK Yeah, clearly, Zelikow was not one of the people who wanted to get to the bottom of anything. He was protecting the responsible agencies.

JON Exactly. Now, and I'm going to read a little bit for this question to give it some context.

In June, 2009, one of the documents that you found at the National Archives was written about in an article at HCGroups.wordpress.com

entitled: "Two Days Before 9/11: Military Exercise Simulated Suicide Hijackings Targeting New York." From that report it says:

"The U.S. Military conducted a training exercise in the five days before the 9/11 attacks that included simulated aircraft hijackings by terrorists. In one of the scenarios, implemented on September 9th, terrorists hijacked a London to New York flight, planning to blow it up with explosives over New York."

Also from that article, it says:

"Although it is not listed in the document, there was also a simulated plane hijacking scheduled to take place in the Northeast United States on the day of 9/11, and its timing overlapped with the real-world events. According to *Vanity Fair*: 'The day's exercise was designed to run a range of scenarios, including a traditional simulated hijack in which politically motivated perpetrators commandeer an aircraft, land on a Cuba-like island, and seek asylum.' When NEADS (Northeast Air Defense Sector) was informed of the first real-world hijacking, members of its staff initially assumed this was part of the exercise. For example, Master Sergeant Maureen Dooley, the leader of the I.D. section, told the other members of her team: 'We have a hijack going on. Get your check-lists. The exercise is on.' Major Kevin Nasypany, the mission crew commander, actually said out loud: 'The hijack's not supposed to be for another hour.' Like numerous hijacking scenarios described in the NORAD exercises document, there was no mention of this simulated hijacking scheduled for the morning of September 11, in the 9/11 Commission Report.

Now, I think only one war game was mentioned in the 9/11 report, and it was in a footnote in the back of the book. I remember during the time of the 9/11 Commission, 9/11 researcher Nick Levis was actually screaming at them: "Talk about the war games! Talk about the war games!" When NORAD was in front of them.

Do you think we'll ever know the full truth about the military exercises that were taking place that day? Or in the days before?

ERIK

If we elect people who are committed to serving the public interest, we can get the truth about 9/11 and justice. And—but yeah—as far as that record and the questions about the war games, boy, where do I start?

Oh yeah, so, *Vanity Fair*, "Vigilant Guardian," the hijacking to Cuba exercise. Very interesting that this was not mentioned in the 9/11 Commission Report and the only attention that the Commission gave to this, other than like the quotes, which it didn't mention was part of that kind of an exercise. It did say it was like a hijacking, but it also mentioned in the footnote about Vigilant Guardian involving a Soviet bomber exercise. So, yeah, very curious. We do not have complete information.

The document that you mentioned that was posted at Scribd, which is titled: "NORAD 9/11 Hijack Summary" I believe. Kevin Fenton wrote the article at HCGroups.wordpress.com that you mentioned, analyzing that. And that document did not go up to the day of 9/11. It goes up to September 10th. And the week before 9/11, there were a quite a number of exercises being conducted. Some of them involved other hijackings, not just this one that was mentioned. Actually, I'm not clear now. That document goes back to a few years before 9/11, but there were a number of exercises being conducted in that week before 9/11. And that document was prepared by 9/11 Commission staffer Miles Kara, who was a senior staff member on Team 8, which was looking at the military response on the day of 9/11. And it's basically a table where he plots out elements of all these different exercises that NORAD had been involved in going back to 1999 or 98, about three years before 9/11, that involved elements of the 9/11 plot. And when you look at it, it's like, wow! They drilled every single element of the 9/11 plot—planes being hijacked; using missiles; domestic hijackings, and so on. And planes being blown up. When you mentioned it happened two days before 9/11, eerily similar to 9/11.

And, again, we still don't know what all the scenarios might have been that were being run on 9/11. But the exercises may or may not have interfered with the response. Maybe they were intended to. There are serious questions about why they weren't cancelled. The person responsible, Colonel Robert Marr, was questioned by Kevin Nasypany, the guy quoted in *Vanity Fair*, about cancelling the exercise. He never gave the order to do so until it was all over. And, again barely scratching the surface.

And there was another MFR where the Commission mentions that certain records that they had gotten about discrepancies in the records and Marr

agreed, that the Commission's standards for quality control, or something like that, had not been met.

But I'm getting off track here. Back to that document that was posted. So, in the Commission Report it said that prior to 9/11 there was no exercise that postulated a hijacked airliner being hijacked from within the United States and used as a weapon—that NORAD had not done an exercise like that. And that statement is literally correct. However, NORAD had done exercises that involved all those elements, repeatedly. It had been drilling responses to hijacking since the 70s. And, if anything, even if they're not going to shoot down a commercial airliner, the response is still they are going to scramble and monitor and intercept. And it happened routinely prior to 9/11. There is a lot of different records, Government records, as well as reports from the media about how routine this was prior to 9/11. Because, the United States has a problem with people flying drugs over the border. One of the things that NORAD gets involved in is if there are unauthorized flights coming from certain places. They scramble jets to check out what's going on, and they'll force these people down. (Right) In addition to that, they started this whole thing because of a fear about the Soviet Union invading the U.S. with bombers. And, granted, that's not as much of a threat anymore, but the fear or the threat of terrorism has only increased. And they had known since Japan attacked Pearl Harbor with kamikaze pilots back in World War II, 1940s, that people had the potential to fly planes into property and cause massive damage on flights. (Right) They've known this is a threat.

And, in addition to that—and this is another footnote in the 9/11 Commission Report—Samuel Byck, 1974, tried to hijack a commercial airliner (Exactly--) from Baltimore/Washington Thurgood Airport (I was just about to--), yeah, in order to fly into the White House and assassinate Nixon.

So it's like they don't know that's a threat and are not taking steps to mitigate this and all the other incidents where planes have been used as weapons? Of course NORAD's going to be drilling this.

And in addition to all these other incidents, they knew that Al-Qaeda possibly had planes, used planes as weapons in 1998. This is brought up by Ben-Veniste in a Commission hearing.

JON

Well they were also aware of Project Bojinka.

ERIK Yeah, and then Bojinka. And then the summer of threat. There was information out there about planes being used as missiles by Al-Qaeda and possibly the U.S. being a target. Everything was there. Just from what has come out, we know that they had enough information to at least harden defenses in the U.S.

The G-8 Summit in Italy, after putting Bush on an aircraft carrier off-shore to sleep at night and then got aircraft guns set up around the perimeter just on the possibility that Al Qaeda attacks the G-8 Summit with planes and they know that the U.S. is at risk. They know these people are in the United States and they're doing nothing to harden airport security or anything.
Sibel Edmonds—

JON One of the things—

ERIK Let me just finish real quick on that point. Sibel Edmonds said that she saw documents proving that the FBI had information indicating that Bin Laden had planned operatives in the country that were going to attack U.S. cities four to five U.S. cities with planes. But go ahead—

JON One of the things that Sibel talks about is that in April 2001, Behrooz Sarshar, he found that yes, there were warnings that showed Al-Qaeda was planning on crashing planes into buildings. From what I remember. I mean, I'd have to go back and look.

Okay, so—NORAD lied. The idea that they never prepared for such things —

ERIK Jon, can I interrupt just real quick—just a quick note on Behrooz Sarshar (Absolutely—)

Sibel Edmonds got the Commission to interview him. They interviewed him for two and a half hours. His MFR is several pages and is also heavily redacted. (Right)

JON Exactly, another MFR or memorandum for the record that is greatly redacted.

Now, with regard to the idea that they never envisioned anything like what happened on 9/11 or were—they only envisioned planes coming from across the ocean and never coming from within?

You know, you mentioned Samuel Byck. There were other instances where there were hijackings taking place within the United States with the purpose of using those planes as weapons. I don't remember them off the top of my head. I did an interview recently with Robbie Martin where we got into specifics. There was one instance where a FedEx employee was planning on crashing a plane into FedEx headquarters, I think.

So the idea that they didn't prepare for that, or didn't envision that, you know, it's absolutely absurd.

ERIK Somebody flew a small plane into the White House trying to kill Clinton.

JON Right, exactly.

Now, another significant document that came to light was titled: "Executive Branch Minders' Intimidation of Witnesses." And I think that was found by Kevin Fenton. Can you tell us about this one? Well, first, can you tell us what Government minders are? Tell us about this document. Tell us about what Government minders are, and how did they affect the 9/11 Commission?

ERIK Sure. As part of the Commissions' work it wanted to interview a lot of people, ostensibly to learn about how the Government actually functioned, not just how it was supposed to function. And, if you're doing an investigation and want to get to the bottom of things, you want to get candid responses from people. Yet the people that they're talking to, a lot of the lower—I mean they talked to a lot of people, from the low level to the high. All the lower-level people who could tell the Commission what they saw at their jobs on the day of 9/11, or in the years leading up to 9/11 if it's intelligence-related work, the day of 9/11 it's more the FAA, military response. But, yeah, a lot of these lower-level people like air-traffic controllers, people in the military whose job it was to respond to domestic crises like these hijackings, and the terrorist threats, and the FBI's/CIA's investigations and what they're supposed to be investigating regarding terrorist threats. A lot of lower-level people saw stuff, and so if you want to get candid responses, honest responses about what these people were witnesses to, you're probably going to want to interview them alone. You're

definitely not want to interview them with anyone who might influence their responses or intimidate them in any way. However, all of these people—there was no interviews conducted where minders weren't present.

And what minders were are these other representatives from the agency that witness/that employee worked for that was sent there by that employee's boss or people even higher up. In practice—let me quote from Kevin Fenton's article about this, also posted at HCGroups.wordpress.com, and he quoted from this memo which was written by Kevin Scheid who is a senior staffer who led Team 2 and Lorry Fenner, an air force intelligence officer and lawyer at Gordon Lederman. And this memo said that:

- Minders "answer[ed] questions directed at witnesses;"
- Minders acted as "monitors, reporting to their respective agencies on Commission staffs lines of inquiry and witnesses' verbatim responses." The staff thought this "conveys to witnesses that their superiors will review their statements and may engage in retribution;" and
- Minders "positioned themselves physically and have conducted themselves in a manner that we believe intimidates witnesses from giving full and candid responses to our questions."

So, given that these people acted this way in all of Team 2's interviews, it's not reasonable to believe that they got candid, honest, open responses to any serious lines of inquiry that they were trying to pursue. And given Zelikow's role in the staff's work, he may have insisted that they were thrown softball questions anyway. But these three staff members complained about this. And it wasn't just this incident either.

There was another memo that also complained about minders interfering with their work in some different incident involving their work with Canada on parts of the investigation.

So, we don't know exactly what went on with the minders and other staff, but if this is any indication, it was similar. And Miles Kara, who was mentioned previously in this call, Team 8 lead staff member, said that the minders were actually a great help to them in the investigation because (Oh, God) it did help them understand what was going on with the Government processes, and what was supposed to be happening, they were useful in getting information that was needed and helping witnesses to understand how to communicate information.

JON Okay, I have something to say now, (Okay).

With regard to Miles Kara, Miles Kara has become somewhat of a 9/11 debunker. And he seems to me like an apologist for the 9/11 Commission. The idea of Government minders intimidating witnesses—the idea of anybody intimidating witnesses—to me the whole Government minder issue completely discredits the 9/11 Commission—in my mind. And what's interesting—

ERIK Even the appearance of it, regardless of whether they actually did influence anything, the fact that they were there taints the credibility of the Commission's work.

JON Absolutely, absolutely. And, you know, a lot of people in the "9/11 Truth Movement" weren't even aware of the Government minders until this document was found. But at the time of the 9/11 Commission, the 9/11 Family Steering Committee released several statements that addressed the minders. The families didn't want them there. And I'm going to go read to you some of their statements.

This one is from September 10th , 2003:

"On August 27 the family steering committee received an update on the Commission's progress. We learned that there has been improved compliance from some Government agencies and that minders continue to be present during interviews even though the chairman and vice-chairman publicly protested."

Another one is from September 2003:

"The FSC, or the Family Steering Committee, is shocked with the use of minders in the interrogatory process and despite the Commissioner's similar objections to minders, as stated at the last press conference, minders continue to be present during witness examination and questioning. The FSC does not want minders present during any witness examination and questioning. It is a form of intimidation and it does not yield the unfettered truth."

And the last one I'm going to read from them is from October 4, 2003:

"When asked about minders by reporters, Chairman Kean admitted that in order to have access to the witnesses, the Commission had to accept the minders. He said the Commission staff believes no one has been intimidated by their presence. Chairman Hamilton, however, added the caveat that it is very difficult to tell when a witness is being intimidated by a minder. To preclude any hint of intimidation, no minders should be present during the interviews. This should not be negotiable."

So, obviously, the 9/11 Family Members were furious that they were there. They did not want them there, and they were still there.

Now I have a quote from Coleen Rowley, actually. It's a very short quote and she says:

"And there were minders in Government that every time you're interviewed, I was never interviewed by myself."

(Laughs) And that's Coleen Rowley.

As I said, to me, the issue of Government minders just completely—it's one of the many, many, many, many things that completely discredits the 9/11 Commission in my mind.

ERIK Couple points on that. Kean, in early July, 2003, he said on a press briefing:

"I think the Commission feels unanimously that it's some intimidation to have somebody sitting behind you all the time who you either work for or who works for your agency. You might get less testimony than you would."

And that's the chairman of the Commission saying that in July, 2003. However, by September 23 of that year at another press briefing he had changed his tune basically saying:

"Talking to staff, what they have told me is that they've done these interviews where the interviewees are encouragingly frank and that they by and large have not seemed to be intimidated in any way in their answers. I'm glad to hear that

it's from the staff that they don't feel it's inhibiting the process of the interviews."

And that was nine days before this minder's memo "Executive Branch Intimidation of Witnesses." It was the subject of the article.

JON Well, Kean has on a number of occasions changed his tune. (Yeah) I can't remember any references off the top of my head, but I remember him saying one thing, as if he was for the families, as if he was, really trying to find out what happened and then a week later he'll say something completely contrary to what he already said. Which indicates to me he had a talking to. (Laughs) You know, by someone, to change his tune. (Yeah) But I have no proof of that, it just sounds like it.

Now, the last question I'm going to ask you—another document that was found had Rich Blee's name listed because a careless redactor left it in. Could you tell us what happened as a result of this disclosure?

ERIK Sure, Rich Blee, very interesting character. Again, much thanks to Kevin Fenton. His sharp eye caught Blee's name in the staff memo that had been prepared. I guess he was just reading through it and noticed that it was in there. And the statement was, let me find that. I don't have it up. Anyway, Blee's name was mentioned in connection with George Tenet and Cofer Black. George Tenet was director of the CIA, Director of National Intelligence and Cofer Black was—what was his title again? (CTC?) It was something counter-terrorism. But, regardless—

Richard Blee worked under Cofer Black. He reported to him and also to Tenet. And Rich Blee would, specifically, was the guy who replaced Michael Scheuer at the CIA bin Laden unit when Michael Scheuer was forced out, essentially, in 1999. And—or 98. And George Tenet released this memo which became a big deal where he declares war on Al-Qaeda supposedly, even though Michael Scheuer, by all accounts, was rabid to destroy Osama bin Laden and his network of terrorists.

And after Blee was put in charge, according to records that had come out—according to what's in the public records so far—this guy basically took no action to insure that the FBI got critical information that it needed about terrorists that were trying to get into the U.S.—known terrorists, Khalid Al-Midhar, involved in the 1998 Embassy bombing. The CIA received information that this guy had a visa to travel to the U.S. and the CIA did not

pass this along on to the FBI, even though an FBI employee detailed to the CIA's bin Laden unit, wanted to pass it on to the FBI, and that same employee later wrote a cable saying the information had been passed on to the FBI.

And I think I'm getting ahead of myself here—this is Chapter 6, Footnote 44 material—but Blee, the guy in charge of that unit and his deputy, Tom Wilshire, was one of the people involved in that incident, and a lot of other incidents where the FBI's work is being obstructed. People at the FBI who sent, who know from other bits of information that came out that there's a plot afoot to attack the United States, and they are rabid to destroy this plot. And there's people within the FBI and CIA who are preventing them from doing the work. (Right) So, Blee is the guy who's in charge of the bin Laden unit.

And, in addition to that incident there's a lot of other incidents where he should have known, where he was responsible, where he clearly did or did not do something which points to him—it's like to believe that this guy had any motive other than wanting the plot to go forward, it's just not credible.

JON One of the things that came from all of this is Kevin Fenton wrote his book *Disconnecting the Dots* (Right) and Rich Blee was a main character in that book. But another thing that happened, the director of "9/11 Press for Truth," Ray Nowosielski, John Duffy, and Rory O'Connor started looking into Footnote 44 and did further research into this whole thing. So the fact that the careless redactor left Rich Blee's name in was very helpful.

And I recommend that people listen to a Podcast called "Who is Rich Blee?" and look into everything that happened as a result of Ray Nowosielski and John Duffy's work. (Yeah)

That's the last question I have—I'm sorry go ahead.

ERIK A bit more information on that—as you commented toward the beginning part of the interview about how John Judge said it's useful to go through Government documents because you'll find stuff in there. That's another thing that Kevin found just by randomly going through stuff that might possibly have interesting information in it. And, as a result of that coming out, Kevin posted his article and the information now being public, the guys that you mentioned that did "9/11 Press for Truth" and then the podcast "Who is Rich Blee?" were able to get interviews with other people. And by

sharing information, such as Rich Blee's name, these people assume they already know this, they know certain other information and they talk candidly with them about what they already know and confirm things that might have been only semi-confirmed before. Now they're on the record—such as Richard Clarke who you mentioned from that interview.

And then after that George Tenet, Cofer Black, and Rich Blee all released a public statement on George Tenet's personal website responding to Clarke's film and certain points that he had made and again began providing confirmation of their involvement from Rich Blee himself this confirmation came.

And in addition to that, because this attention is being created in the online independent community, it actually got a certain bit of mainstream attention with Rich Blee's name and also Alfreda Bikowsky and Michael Anne Casey, two female CIA officers, who were also involved in the failures to prevent 9/11 were mentioned—and who else was it?

In *The Washington Post* I think there was even on their website a blogger commented on Clarke's public statement. And Clarke, again, his point of view is the CIA knew these guys were in their country but they were trying to turn them or they were trying to do something else and things got out of control so they only told the FBI at the last minute. And by then it was too late and that's why it happened, which it's just not credible to accept that story for a number of reasons, and it's just puzzling that Richard Clarke is claiming he accepts it, but who knows. At least he's on the record saying what he has and I guess that's about all—

JON

Well, the point is, is that because of that disclosure a multitude of things opened up for people—for Kevin to write his book; for Ray to do his research. We got a lot of press because of the Richard Clarke interview. It brought a lot of attention to the film "9/11 Press for Truth," because Ray Nowosielski was the one doing the research and he was the director of the film. So it did a lot of good things.

And I think that's the point of this is that we need to see documentation. We cannot accept when the Government tells us that something needs to be classified because of national security, in many cases. So, it's very important to look at these documents and to do a lot of research. If you want—because a lot of times it discredits what's being written in the actual report. And that's the whole point of this. (Yeah)

Anyway, Erik, I want to thank you very much for coming on today. Is there any websites that you want to promote besides HistoryCommons.org, which we both have been contributors to over the years?

ERIK I guess not and I would definitely say support HistoryCommons.org. It runs on a shoestring, very useful research tool, and but also I want to mention 911DataSets.Org also runs on a shoestring doing good work. Scribd is making plenty of money and we are not making any money from that. I think they put ads on the site. They charge for downloads. We do not make any money from Scribd. So don't give them any money. But, I don't know, it's a good public service that the document's out there.

But, yeah, good interview and glad to come on again. Thanks for dedicating it to John Judge, great human being, great humanitarian.

JON Yes, he was. All right, Erik, thank you very much for coming on today and I'm sure I'll have you on again someday.

ERIK Okay, thanks Jon, take care.

JON All right, thanks, Erik.



Chapter/Episode 4 – Ray Nowosielski – September 11, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Ray Nowosielski (RAY)

JON Hi everyone and welcome to my show called "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week we'll be talking with the director of what I think is the most important documentary of our time, *9/11 Press for Truth*. In my opinion, if you are an advocate for 9/11 justice, this documentary is the first thing you should show people. If this documentary had gotten the attention it deserves, I firmly believe we would be living in a better world today.

Hi, this is Jon and I'm here with Ray. Today is the 13th anniversary of the attacks of 9/11. So, before we begin I want to have a moment of silence and then I'll read Ray's bio. So here we go...

Okay, Ray Nowosielski—Ray lives in New York City where he works as a freelance producer, previously for such organizations as the Emmy-winning series *VICE* on HBO and the Oscar winning documentarian Barbara Kopple. In 2011, he was greeted with an outpouring of support after the CIA threatened him and his colleagues with prosecution under the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. He had contacted the agency

requesting that two of their employees respond to serious allegations which were later detailed in a 90-minute Amazon-only "investigative podcast" entitled "Who is Rich Blee?" An advocate for Government and corporate transparency and accountability, he has written for *Salon* and *Truth-Out* and contributed investigations to *The Daily Beast* and *Gawker*. He is best known as the director, co-writer, and producer of the 2006 documentary film "Press for Truth," telling the story of a group of the September 11th widows' and their struggle to see the creation of the 9/11 Commission.

Hi, Ray, how are you doing today?

RAY Hey, Jon, thanks so much for having me on. You know, I know you're not going to toot your own horn, so I'm going to go ahead and do it. You're one of the best human beings that I know and you were instrumental in both our first documentary "Press for Truth" and later the investigative podcast work "Who is Rich Blee?" I've got nothing but respect for you and I'm really glad you're doing this podcast.

JON Well, thank you very much for that. It's very much appreciated.

All right, so we're just going to go ahead and get into the questions, and my first question for you is: What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

RAY Yeah, I grew up in Chicago and Indianapolis, and I was going to school in Chicago at the time, but I hadn't—we were on—the semester hadn't started yet, so I was down in Indiana with my parents and it was a rare morning where I didn't watch some TV to start the day, so I was totally out of the loop. At the very beginning I was taking a shower and was getting ready for work and my Dad called and said, "Are you watching the TV?" and I said, "No." He said, "Turn it on, your life just changed. We're at war." And I think it's really interesting how quickly my Dad was able to sort of put that into a succinct sound bite and call it. Because—I mean, my life and everyone else's life was changed. Of course I balled my eyes out when I watched thousands of people die on live TV as the buildings came down, and how often do you feel—do you know that a new era has begun in a single instant and everyone recognizes that the old thing is done and we're on to a new chapter. It was a terrible day.

JON Right, absolutely, it was a terrible day. When did you first begin to question what we were being told about 9/11?

RAY So, you know, 9/11 did for me what it did for the majority of Americans, which is that it kind of caused me to turn my brain off for about six months. And, you know, I had been politically active. I had strong opinions about things like Government efficiency, Government corruption, what have you. And I was pretty antiwar, but all that, I just turned it off. And I thought, all right, this is like World War II. My generation finally has a purpose. We've got to get ready for this war effort. We've got a real enemy and— I remember, I was talking with a friend of mine, another filmmaker. We were both like 21 at the time, and kind of saying well, I don't really know what to—I'm kind of putting my career on hold and I'm not sure what's happening here and we might need to kind of support the war efforts, see how these things go.

I mean, that's totally where my mindset was until early 2002, there started to be—or mid-2002—there started to be rumblings about this war in Iraq and that just seemed like a total non-sequitur to me, and so I started to have a little distrust for the administration—Bush, and where they were headed. And we got told to go to this timeline—this Paul Thompson's timeline. At the time, it was CooperativeResearch.org, now it's just HistoryCommons.org. And, John Duffy, who I know you know, the co-producer of Press for Truth—he and I just hung out at his house one night, started reading Thompson's timeline and probably read it until about 6 AM. We just couldn't stop. We kept commenting stuff like, "Did you know this?" "Can you believe that?" "What does that mean?" You know? (Laughs) And then from that point on we were thoroughly obsessed with the issues related to 9/11.

JON Well, it's interesting because one of my first forays into 9/11 was reading an article that Paul and, I think, Allan Wood had written called "An Interesting Day," (Yeah) which was basically about Bush's actions on the day of 9/11. And my friend sent me the article and we went back and forth and back and forth—just unbelievable the information that we were reading.

RAY And this was the first event, really this was like the first kind of major event to happen in the Internet age. So I don't think anybody was really prepared for how much information could be out there so fast and how many people would be sort of organizing and that are tracking it or what not. So, yeah, it played out in a totally different way than I think previous big events had.

JON Right. Now, why is it important to you not to be associated with the quote "9/11 Truth Movement" or "9/11 Truthers" in general?

RAY

Sure. I'll just go ahead and let your audience in on the fact that I made you ask that question. (Laughter) And, you know—look, here's the thing—okay, let me say this. Activists of any kind, anybody who sort of puts in for a cause, is passionate about it—is trying to achieve that cause—that grouping of people—tend to be very bad at PR—public relations, at advertising, and marketing—which is kind of ironic because, the whole point is to achieve some kind of goal of change, so you would think you would want to be very good at that.

And so (laughs)—and so, I think I have more of a mind for that. I don't consider myself a conspiracy theorist because most of what I—almost everything I look at is in short time in *The Washington Post*. I mean, basically, I advocate for accountability. I feel very passionately that the system and accountability are broken in corporations and in our Government. And that a lot of the terrible things that we've been seeing over the years, as a result of this broken system of accountability and transparency.

So, I'm very sort of goal-oriented and to me, I feel like people—a lot of people that consider themselves, let's say truthers, or something. I don't think—I don't always get the sense of what they're trying to achieve other than their best kind of—this mystery and they keep trying to unravel it. But like for me, I don't need to know the answer to every little piece. When I see for instance that NORAD clearly changed the times that they said certain things happened on that morning, one might say, "Oh, well, they're in on this," or "they're being ordered to do something" like that—I'm less concerned with that, and I'm more concerned with the mere fact that they clearly committed some kind of crime by falsifying data that went to, let's say, the 9/11 Commission.

And so, I'm just about sort of catching people that do things that we can prove that they've done and were in positions of power and taking them and making them—trying to foster some kind of an outcome that actually results in people being—I guess justice being done.

JON

I completely agree with you. You know, the whole point of being an activist—it's essentially a PR campaign that you have to create in order to reach a majority of people. Now, as the originator of the phrase "9/11 Truther," I feel an obligation to say something about it, a little bit.

Now, there are—

RAY Well, just walking—it just makes like—frankly? Between me and you and your entire audience, like normally it would make me nervous to go on a program called "We Were Lied to About 9/11"—even though, we WERE lied to about 9/11. There's nothing wrong with what you said. And because I know you are one of the smartest, most capable of this particular movement and one that I see eye-to-eye on, and I'm honored to be here, but, it's one of those things where it's like, it does make me nervous that it gets posted somewhere and has my name attached and people who might not listen to the content will simply judge and dismiss. So I know—I try not to be associated with certain things...

JON I completely understand that. But there are two portrayals of what a "9/11 Truther" is. There's mine and the corporate media's. And the following is my definition for what I thought it to be. The article that has this definition called "What is a 9/11 Truther?" was cited by *The New York Times*—they just seem to leave this part out of it for some reason. (Hmmm)

"In my mind, a 9/11 Truther is someone who fights alongside the family members seeking truth and accountability for the 9/11 attacks. In my mind, a 9/11 Truther is someone who fights for the sick and dying 9/11 first responders who need healthcare desperately. In my mind, a 9/11 Truther is someone who does not like how the day of 9/11 is being used to inflict pain and suffering around the world and is trying to stop it. Stop it by using the truth—something we have been denied by our Government regarding the 9/11 attacks."

That is essentially MY definition for the phrase. And then there's the corporate media's portrayal of a 9/11 Truther. You have to remember that very early on, the "9/11 Truth Movement" was mostly about supporting the family members and getting them a credible investigation. And then after the 9/11 Commission—trying to get the answers to the unanswered questions of 9/11, which were prominently displayed on the 9/11 Family Steering Committee's website, and trying to expose the obvious cover-ups that were taking place. And early on we would hear from people like John Judge, Jenna Orkin, Paul Thompson, Nafeez Ahmed (Right), Michael Springmann, Ray McGovern. And the September 11th Advocates, the Jersey Girls, credible people doing and saying credible things. And back then, people like Howard Zinn were on our side.

But I believe that the movement was eventually co-opted, by what I call the conspiracy theory industry (Yep, that's right). Our signs used to say things like "Support the 9/11 Families," "Expose the 9/11 Cover-Up." And then they started to say things like "9/11 was an inside job," and "New World Order," and "WTC7" etc. and so on.

RAY Yeah, that 9/11 was an inside job thing, speaking of people being bad at PR, those black tee-shirts that say "9/11 Was an Inside Job," I don't care if you're the nicest person and most open-minded in the world, and you're talking to the smartest truther, if they're wearing that black tee-shirt, I don't want to be sitting and talking with them, you know? Like it's—

JON Oh, I get it. Believe me, I hate that phrase. I've always thought that that phrase is no different than screaming "Elvis is Alive!" at people. (Laughter)

RAY At least that's how it's perceived, certainly.

JON Yeah, the corporate media helped that industry along by only giving attention to them, in an attempt to paint anyone who questions 9/11 as no different than them. If the corporate media did its job, instead of attacking, slandering, and misrepresenting those who question 9/11, I doubt very much at all that you would mind being called a 9/11 Truther today, but you know, unfortunately, they have succeeded in making a 9/11 Truther the equivalent of a baby killer or a dog torturer.

RAY Well, and the other issue there too is just that after years have proceeded—we're now on the 13th anniversary of course—it's like these issues started with 9/11, or 9/11 opened this, exposed this can of worms regarding the lack of accountability, the lack transparency, and much more. But, now those issues extend into so many things that have sort of sprung from 9/11. That's another thing that I wouldn't—basically, I'm an accountability and transparency activist.

JON Oh, no, I get it, believe me.

RAY 9/11 is one area that is always good to go back to and look at because it's probably the best example you can give of all these different things, you know.

JON Well, what I do—9/11 created what's called the "Post-9/11 world" and that entails a multitude of things—the lies of 9/11, the lies of the Iraq war, the

torture, Guantanamo Bay—just so many different things are under this umbrella of the "Post-9/11 world." And I have a tendency to focus on most everything related to that issue. And I think you do as well. (Yeah)

So I completely understand your apprehensiveness at being associated with the "9/11 Truth Movement" or the 9/11 Truthers. But I think the need to differentiate ourselves from how the media has portrayed us over the years, stems from something that many people share. And that's a fear of being dismissed with one word (Right), actually two, and that's "conspiracy theorist" and "9/11 Truther." And I think a lot of people—

RAY And I know we've only got an hour here, but I'd like to just rip on that for a second. The thing is that not everyone is even as educated about—in fact, most people are not as educated about just most of the things that occur on a day-to-day basis as we would like, and so it's funny because I post about issues like the NSA's surveillance. I've got a major problem with that and so when news stories come out in *The Guardian* or *The New York Times*, I'll post about it, make a comment on Facebook. Or, I'll post about the war on whistleblowers, because I've got a major problem with that, too. (Yep) But I'll post these things and then I'll actually hear from friends sometimes that are kind of like, yeah, Ray's into conspiracy theory stuff.

And it kills me! Because I NEVER mention conspiracy theory stuff on Facebook, and the fact that they think that me even talking about CIA torturing people or NSA eavesdropping on all of our metadata is—that falls into the category of conspiracy theory, even though it's written about every day in *The New York Times*. It's kind of crazy. So, anyway.

JON Well people have been trained essentially that when they hear the word conspiracy theory they automatically shut down. I define the phrase "conspiracy theorist" or "conspiracy theory" as a phrase used by the establishment to silence and/or discredit dissent. That's how I see that phrase.

But, anyway, let's move on because we only have an hour. Tell us a little bit about your background in film. Where did you go to school and so forth?

RAY It's not that interesting (laughs), but I had wanted to be like Alfred Hitchcock, that was my thinking when I went into school, and I went to Columbia College in Chicago. Got a nice little film education, and then came out—honestly, by late in school a couple documentaries really kind of

turned me on to what docs could be, and then that's basically "The Thin Blue Line" by Errol Morris and Michael Moore's "Bowling for Columbine." Of course I've seen a lot more since then, but at the time my exposure to those two kind of led me down the documentary path, and then just sort of right out of school, again, I'd become very into this issue or these multiple issues connected with 9/11 and became aware of the Jersey widows, and then from that point on was obsessed with getting their story to the screen so that—I felt like people would understand these issues if they could just sit there in a room with these widows and hear them talk, and that was kind of the concept for the film, you know?

JON Right. Well, how did you come to be the director for *9/11 Press for Truth*?

RAY You know, I've got to give a lot of credit to Kyle Hence, Rory O'Connor, and my co-producer and stone cold colleague John Duffy, along with a lot of other people, yourself included. Kyle in particular at the beginning helped us get connected to the Jersey widows, helped us find some funding—and we would get it in little fits and starts—five grand here, ten grand here, so we would shoot for a while, or we'd edit for a while and then we'd have to stop and get paid jobs. So this kind of dragged on for three years. But I was sort of the director from the beginning. I had kind of a vision for it and then put together my thoughts on what this would be and so as we went—we sort of kept adding to the scene in different ways that were really important, but I stayed the director.

JON Right. Can you please explain to us the process you underwent to decide what would go into the film and what wouldn't go into the film? And before you answer that, I just remember times when Kyle would send me early versions of the film and ask me, "What do you think should be in here?" (Mm-hmm) And I loved the film as it was, like it couldn't get any better to me at the time, and I'm like "I got nothin'." (Laughs, yeah) But, anyway, what process did you go through?

RAY Well, honestly we let Paul Thompson's timeline be the guide. And so there were a lot of things that he—for those who don't know, he had pulled together I think at the time it was 11,000 different mainstream news stories—so all credible—and it pulled different sort of facts and lines of things out of them and it built these maps—timelines and, yeah, so we gravitated towards—it was kind of like well, this is about 9/11, so let's, for one thing, the very first thing they started to say on the first day being people in the Government, the first few days after 9/11, the first week, was that they had

no warnings. And Paul had documented so much stuff, and of course, now we all just kind of know that there was a flood of intel that had come in pointing to all kinds of things that should of... actions should have been taken. So we thought, well obviously, that's got to be a category.

Let's at least—let's take out the, I guess the floor that holds... kind of holds this 9/11 thing together that there were no warnings and nobody saw it coming. Let's start there. And then we thought well, I mean, what did 9/11 lead to—it led to war in Afghanistan. So how did that actually play out? Because we thought the war was to go after Bin Laden and get Al-Qaeda.

And looking at the details, it just seemed like they let—I mean Al-Qaeda just escaped again and again and again. And Bin Laden escaped, and you could actually follow if you went through these articles, the paths that he took and, they would bomb an airport nearby, but they wouldn't bomb this parade of cars. So it's like, well okay, so then let's kind of debunk what the goal was for the first war to come out of 9/11 was. And then it was sort of like well, was there a sponsorship for this beyond Al-Qaeda? And I would have done this maybe differently now, but at the time Paul Thompson had put together a pretty solid argument for at least looking at Pakistan, and what made Pakistan so interesting, of course, was that the U.S., despite all this evidence, that they were possible sponsors of the attack and certainly sponsors of Al-Qaeda and chosen to partner with them, and it was sort of a mysterious odd partnership that seemed to last no matter what evidence came out to the contrary.

So that was kind of what we—that was the process. That was what we thought of.

JON

Well, with regard to Pakistan, I mean, there are still reasons to question the entire Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed ordering Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire transfer \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta—(Right). There's still reason to bring attention to that issue, even though a document from the 9/11 Commission was discovered that says very simply that the Pakistani ISI had nothing to do with the attacks, but it's redacted. It's so greatly redacted and it doesn't even mention the names Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed or Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (Well—) Basically, because of the reporting about that issue, I firmly believe there's more reason to believe that it happened than it didn't. However, today we could have focused on Saudi Arabia's role or the Saudi Royals' role (Sure), as well as a possible ISI role and so forth.

RAY And, if we were doing the film today, there's no question we would have given some weight to the Saudis if not more to that story. And, an interesting anecdote, Kyle Hence met Barack Obama. He got into an event—I'll tell you the details, they're pretty funny—and got into a line when Obama was running for President and was still a Senator, and got him a copy—well, no, I'm sorry, he got him a copy of Press for Truth at some point prior, and when he got into the event he said, "Hey, do you remember me? I got you a copy of the movie. Did you watch it?" And he said, "Yes, I did." And he volunteered, "I liked it." I don't know if that's true, because you know, politicians. But I always wondered, Obama took a much tougher stance against Pakistan, kind of ignored their sovereignty when it was time to look at Abbottabad and has been bombing out there for quite some time, so I kind of feel bad about that. I mean if we played any role, I'm sure it was fairly minor, but in shaping the thinking there that certainly wasn't what I intended that we needed to attack Pakistan.

JON No, that's one thing that wasn't in the film that I think could have been in the film is a declaration saying that we don't want war with these countries that we're bringing attention to. We want individuals held accountable, but—something to that effect.

RAY Sure, and the partnership question—yeah, the partnership with some of these nations, then it would probably extend beyond ones related to 9/11. We need to look in general at who we are considering our allies and who we're financing.

JON Right. And, what—is there anything in the film that you would like to take out today and vice versa—is there anything that isn't in the film that you would like to be in there today?

RAY Ah, yes, but that's such a gigantic question (laughter) because if I was going to do the film today, it would focus almost entirely around the Who is Rich Blee? side of things. So, essentially, the inside story of this massive screw-up at CIA that many journalists have called the worst intelligence failure of our time. The meat of those details. I mean, that's where my head is at for the last few years. So, I'd do that. The other thing I'd do is I'd like to restructure the film. I think we made a mistake. We basically kept the widows' journeys to the first half hour through act one and we sort of jumped off to follow the issues that they were so passionate about. But I think that was a mistake. We should have basically strung their story

throughout the film so that you sort of kept that dramatic hold. So, chalk it up to me being 25, but yeah.

JON Well, if I were to have a say today, I would put more emphasis on the ridiculousness of the 9/11 Commission (Right), of Philip Zelikow, the fact that there were Government minders intimidating witnesses. I would—the fact that the 9/11 (Yeah—) Commission ignored and censored a multitude of whistleblowers. A lot of that kind of stuff I would have put into the film (Yeah). Maybe some mention of the military exercises and then stuff like that I would probably put into the film. But I still—I love this film. I think it's—I say this and it's hard to believe, but I honestly do believe it, that it's one of the most important documentaries ever made, as far as I'm concerned.

RAY That's extremely kind. Thank you.

JON Well, it's not meant to be nice to you, I just honestly believe that. And that's one of the reasons that I—

RAY Well, the subject matter carried it. The widows themselves are so likeable, so smart, that you can't hear them talk and not feel moved toward their cause and not feel that they're making some kind of sense, you know?

JON Well, I've always said how can you turn your backs on the family members? How can you do that? And this is one of the reasons I gave you the money to finish the film is because it was so important to me that their message, the Jersey Girls' message get out there. And, it was so important to me to bring attention to the work of Paul Thompson. I mean this is why when I spoke to Kyle and he asked me "do you know anybody who might have money so that we can finish this film?" and I asked him what the premise of the film was and he told me and I automatically, I'm like oh my God, I have to try and do everything to get the money to them. And I asked my father and he was kind enough to give it to me and I sent it to you. (Yeah). It was just as soon as I heard the premise of the film, I knew that this documentary had to be made.

Now, how disappointed were you that the corporate media completely—in this country—completely ignored the film?

RAY Yeah, completely. We got picked up by Rupert Murdoch's history channel, but it was history channel Australia. (Laughs) And we got picked up by Al

Jazeera. We played on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, all through the Middle East, and then public television in Poland, public in Spain, you now basically they're PBS.

So, overseas there was quite a bit of interest. I mean, it's hard to remember even back to 2006, what the environment was still like. Two years after the re-election of George W. Bush, three years after we had invaded Iraq, and it was still, it was becoming more acceptable to sort of just to have some dissent, if you want to call it that, to question what the hell had been happening the last few years. But it was not, yeah, it was not something they wanted to touch.

JON Well, 9/11 has always been a third rail. It was not during before the 9/11 Commission, during the 9/11 Commission, the Jersey Girls were on the TV all the time. They were on MSNBC—so it was somewhat acceptable. Even though they didn't get a lot of coverage, they did get coverage (Mmm-hmm) and it was somewhat accessible. But after the release of the 9/11 Report, when the narrative was set in stone, the Jersey Girls became persona non grata. (Right) They would release all these press releases calling into question that, this, that, and the other thing, and they would get no attention. And it just, it was amazing to me, you know, it's unfortunate that at the time *9/11 Press for Truth* was released, do you know who was getting more attention than the movie? It was Ann Coulter, and her remarks against the Jersey Girls. She was all over the networks, and they were—

RAY And her timing on that comment, it was like she'd given us a gift. So we were able to kind of go out to the mainstream outlets that we were seeking and say, "Hey, Ann Coulter just attacked the Jersey widows. It's getting a lot of press and we've made a movie about them" was basically what would be their response. (But, the--) And yeah, the fact that it didn't get attention at that point is—

JON Well, we have to make everybody understand the fact that the media, you know, it's not like we didn't tell them this documentary existed. We worked with DownsizeDC.org, to try and get the word out. We made sure that every member of the House and Senate got a copy of the documentary. So, it's not like—it's not like they weren't aware—

RAY Jon, I got called—I got called in 2007 by a producer from 60 Minutes who said that he—I'm sure he lives in New York, he has a friend who had seen it, was raving about it, something, and he was like "it seems like something

I could see we're doing—we might be doing a story related to these issues and then maybe we could talk to you or talk to Paul Thompson or something. And I said, "Sure." So I waited a couple days, never heard back, and finally I called him and left a voice mail and called him again and got a hold of him and he basically said, "Yeah, you know, I watched it. I don't really see what the story is here." And it's like well, then maybe I could be working at 60 Minutes, because I could think of probably 20 stories you could do just starting from this film, you know? (Right) Go figure.

JON Well, the corporate media ignored it, but the people that did give it some attention were some movie critics and every single movie critic that reviewed the film, gave it positive reviews. How happy were you about that?

RAY It was nice, yeah. That part was good. I mean, you're right, but audiences in general that I saw were mostly positive. The reviews were mostly positive. We got, what was it, *The Boston Globe* film critic who was also reviewing for AM New York at the time gave it 3.5 out of 4.0 stars on AM New York, so we thought well that's something. But, ultimately our goal was not to get reviewed. Our goal was to get viewed.

JON To get attention. At every showing of the film that you attended, how was it received?

RAY My favorite screening was—short answer is, that at every screening—actually, let me tell you about the first one. It was before we—we only had it in a rough cut and we did a test screening for friends, family, and friends of friends and we filled a theater in Indianapolis and they watched it. And when it ended there was just this dead silence in the theater, which I usually take as a bad thing. (Laughs) (Right) Credits were rolling. I was kind of hoping there might be some claps or something. I finally just got up and kind of awkwardly said, "Hey, well, I'm going to be in the lobby if anybody wants to talk." And, what I kind of heard from everybody later was that they were just so bothered by what they had seen and they were still processing. They didn't want to applaud. They wanted to sit there and go "what the hell is going on?"

JON I know. Well—

RAY We had this great screening in Minneapolis. I think it was 9/11 Anniversary 2007, and there was a 700-seat theater that was oversold, and there were

people in the rows, and it was attended by former Governor Jesse Ventura, and the *Time* magazine person of the year Coleen Rowley, who also introduced the film, and that was my favorite. Everybody was incredibly supportive. The media came out. And we ended up going across to a wine bar for the Q&A afterwards, and half the audience followed over and packed in and were asking us questions. Yeah.

It served a purpose. What I wanted to do with the film was—I remember fourth of July, 2002, first fourth of July after 9/11, and I'm at a family barbecue and I remember my aunt saying, "You know what I want this fourth of July? A big bomb dropped on Saddam Hussein." And I thought to myself how does that follow suit at all? Like where is that even coming from? There was no way I could download all the things that were in my brain from Paul Thompson's timeline, from the Jersey widows . . . I just needed to put it out there in a thing where people could sit and watch the journey and get it. And I feel like, at the very least, it accomplished that goal from what people have said.

JON Well, the very first showing that I ever went to of *9/11 Press for Truth* was at a conference that was held in Chicago, in June, 2006, and I sat through the showing and it was actually the first time I had seen this version of the film, so I was just as interested as everybody else in seeing it, and, I always cry at the end—it doesn't matter how many times I see the film, I always cry at the end. (Laughs. Right) And, that's how you feel at the end of the film. I mean, you're just so heartbroken that these kinds of things can happen.

Now, I got to say, with regard to the promising or favorable reviews that this film got, it's gotten more positive feedback in that regard than anything else created for this cause.

And so now, my next question to you is that—some people in the "9/11 Truth Movement" said that the movie was "soft and misleading" and that it "didn't go far enough." What do you have to say to those people?

RAY Well, if you think basically that Cheney was controlling a joystick that morning and flew empty planes or hologram planes into the side of buildings and that there were bombs that took things down, etc., etc., then this is not the movie for you. (Right) Because it's not what we talk about. So, actually, I like that a certain sector of people were so adamant that—I think the term that got used was, a limited hangout. (Right) That's okay

with me. Because, I didn't want to tell their story, that they believe so passionately. I wanted to tell the Jersey widows' story and, hopefully, touch on most of the things that they felt. Although there was not time and we ended up on our own dime doing an additional piece that was a DVD called *In Their Own Words*. It was kind of a companion where we could kind of pull all these other issues that we just weren't able to put into the framework of the narrative to tell. I know you've said you almost felt like that stuff was better than what was in the movie. But, yeah—

JON Well, the second—*In Their Own Words: The Untold Stories of the 9/11 Families* is actually two hours long, which is longer than the Press for Truth movie (Right) (Laughs). There are things in that film that get me angry, get me upset, when I watch Lorie Van Auken start to cry, I get so angry, Ray (Yeah). You don't understand the anger that I feel. Because I want these people to have the justice that they so richly deserve.

I mean, I talk about this a lot. I say I'm familiar with the anger that I feel knowing everything that I do about 9/11, but I can't imagine being somebody who knows what I do on top of having lost someone that day? (Right) That's just unfathomable to me. It's unimaginable to me. When you put yourself in their shoes, it just—to have to watch the names of their loved ones used to do all these horrific things (Yeah) in this country and around the world, and all the while they're being lied to?

RAY The anger that you would feel, right? I mean, and you know, I actually think, see you're a very empathetic guy, and I actually think that's a fairly rare trait among humans. I wish more of us had it, because I think it'd be a much better world if you even try to put yourself in other people's shoes and feel what they feel, you know.

JON Right. All right. The next question is: How important is the site www.HistoryCommons.org and the Complete 9/11 Timeline, in your eyes?

RAY Yeah, Derek Mitchell started HistoryCommons and basically just kind of developed it around, initially around Paul Thompson's timeline working with Paul to give him an outlet for all this sort of research. But they used—I mean, it's so helpful because now they've expanded beyond a single issue. There's Iraq. There's U.S. interventions in various countries. There's all kinds of different things that they—history of CIA torture. And, again, the difference between somebody writing some essays or writing a blog on some different subjects and this—is that every single thing in there you can

click a hyperlink and you can go back to the original story. You check it for yourself. You can learn more if you want. Or, after a while if you've done that enough times, you kind of get to trust—okay, this is a trustworthy timeline, you know. They're not misrepresenting the information here. So you can just read—and then putting it chronologically so that you can really sit there and go like, how did—let's say with the NSA thing—like what is all the information that we publicly know about the NSA scandal, and let's read it in order, skip around, let's just do a certain point, or let's just look at Snowden's role and click that and just see that portion of the line. I think it's a really amazing tool that I think will end up, hopefully, eventually be up there with kind of a Wikipedia, where they do crowdsource information, but this is sort of expert driven information told from all mainstream sources. Yeah, I mean, I can't rave enough about it. And anybody who's a journalist who's been covering War on Terror issues, in particular, uses that site all the time. And I hope they all donate. (Laughs)

JON Well, that's what I want to say. I say this a lot and I think that HistoryCommons.org is literally one of the most important websites on the Internet, literally. (Yeah) I've been a contributor. I've contributed a couple of entries having to do with the family members in the Complete 9/11 Timeline and it was like an honor to me to be able to contribute to this timeline. (Mm-hmm) So again, they're in need of money. They're always in need of money. So if you can support them in any way financially, it would be greatly appreciated. I can't imagine—

RAY And they're developing the 2.0 right now, so now they're really going to kick it up a notch and go to the next level and they need support more than ever.

JON That's great. I just—I can't imagine that site ever coming down. Can you imagine that? I mean—

RAY I mean, think about it, if it ran out of money and one day you just couldn't access all that info (Laughs), yeah, I have no idea what I would do for my research.

JON I would feel naked without the Complete 9/11 Timeline. (Laughs) Anyway, all right. The next question is who is Rich Blee? What was Alec Station? And why did you transition into researching what's known as Footnote 44 of the 9/11 Report?

RAY

Right. Yeah, so by the time we were done editing *Press for Truth*, I had spent so many hours with the footage, with the 9/11 subject, and as I've think made clear, I don't really consider myself a single-issue guy. So I was really ready. I felt I'd done my little piece of it there and that was kind of going to be that. I wanted to move on.

But, the same month that *Press for Truth* came out, one of the Jersey widows, Kristen Breitweiser, who was the only one that never interviewed with us, put out a book called *Wake-up Call*. A very good read, would recommend it. It's a good book. But, she steered clear of going into many of the issues that they'd been passionate about for the most part in the book, except for one chapter. And she devoted an entire chapter to one subject and she called that chapter Footnote 44. And so in reading that it was really hard—as many people have since told us, and not random people, but people who actually worked in the Government—counter-terrorist FBI; counter-terrorist military; CIA; former White House counter-terrorist officials—like they've all sung the same tune there, which is basically to them, this is the 9/11 story. If you were going to look into anything, this is the one. And we just couldn't turn away from it. And it centers around this massive—I'll call it a screw-up, it was deliberate, but I don't think the intention was what the outcome was. But we can talk about that. (Laughs)

But, basically, what's in the CIA, there was this failure for a year and a half prior to 9/11, this deliberate decision not to tell any other areas of the Government that two future 9/11 hijackers who had just attended a major Al-Qaeda meeting, planning meeting, had come to the U.S. And, we can get into all kinds of details. So, basically, we thought well, okay, if people are calling this the worst intelligence failure of our time, or one of them, where does the buck stop? Who would we blame for this? While there are many people you could point to, we thought the number one guy would be the head of the Bin Laden station—the office at CIA that had been deliberately created just to handle Al-Qaeda issues. So who was that guy? And for the longest time we didn't know. And finally, thanks to HistoryCommons and one of the contributors, Kevin Fenton, we came to find out the name of the gentleman was Rich Blee. And what astounded me was a whole year after he had put that name out on the net, not a single mainstream media news source had cited the name. It was still sort of considered classified until somebody ran with it. And since nobody would . . . so we thought let's do a whole piece that examines who is Rich Blee? and why is this important?

JON Okay, so Rich Blee was the person that was in charge of Alec Station. He actually took the place after Michael Scheuer and so that's what that was.

RAY Yeah, he grew up across the street. He was the son of a major CIA figure during the Cold War, grew up practically across the street from the CIA, joined as soon as he was roughly old enough, right after graduate school, and had spent his life there and was advancing—it seemed to me that he was trying to advance a little faster than his father had. So he got his first station—he became buddies with George Tenet, the CIA director, was very close with him, was very close with Cofer Black, the head of the counter-terrorist center, and had come in to sort of shake things up and take things in a new direction. It was under his tenure that all of this, that the worst Intel failures occurred. They could have easily prevented 9/11 and many throughout the Government are still very angry to this day about the fact that they weren't given the info that would have allowed them to take action.

JON Well, one of the things, or one of the people that Kristen Breitweiser has a problem with, and she mentioned it throughout her book, was George Tenet. Now, can you tell us some of the lies George Tenet told to the Joint Congressional Inquiry and the 9/11 Commission?

RAY Yeah, absolutely. My favorite one is—so, this all centers—it doesn't all center around, but this story kind of really starts to get hot in January of 2000, when the CIA, via the Bin Laden office, finds out that there's going to be a gathering of various high-level Al-Qaeda figures in Malaysia. And so it monitors that meeting and coordinates quite a number of different CIA stations, different foreign intelligence stations to follow people from their points of origin to this meeting. They were outside the meeting. They got photos, they got video. And then, they supposedly—well, okay, so they find out that one future 9/11 hijacker has a U.S. visa—that's going to expire within a very short amount of time, so if he's going to use it, it's going to be soon. And they—there's a lot of things you could say about it, but bottom line is they prevented the information from going over to FBI and the White House and then they sent an internal email at CIA saying that info had been passed so that nobody would get a wild hair up their ass and decide to go ahead and do it. They thought it was already done.

And so the biggest lie from Tenet, one of the earliest ones, was when the first investigation by the Congress Intelligence Committee started with the Joint Inquiries. He went before them, and at that point all they knew was

that they had found one cable from March of 2000, that came from the Bangkok station that basically said: Hey, guys, we want to let you know one of these people who attended this meeting has in fact arrived in the U.S.—traveled to the U.S. And so somebody—I can't remember, you may remember—I can't remember which member of the committee asked the question, but they asked Tenet straight out—

JON It was Carl—

RAY Levin?

JON Yeah, Carl Levin.

RAY Okay. So, Carl Levin asked them straight out: "Why did you—or why did no one take action about this?" An Al-Qaeda member inside the United States. Tenet had the brass ones to say: "Nobody read that in the March timeframe." And Levin said: "You're telling me this came in your office saying Al-Qaeda's arrived in the U.S. and nobody read that memo?" He said: "Yes, nobody read it in the March timeframe."

Now, cut to a couple years later, his own Inspector General, the CIA Inspector General John Helgerson finishes an internal investigative report into this matter. He concludes that 50 people at CIA were aware of the information that these guys had a visa and that one had traveled to the U.S. And it just so happens that 50 was about the number of employees at the Bin Laden station working for Rich Blee (Right). So, that was a big one. A bigger one though, when we talked with the head of the 9/11 Commission—we managed to get an interview with him in his office back in 2008, Tom Kean—I found him a likeable guy. I know we've got our issues with the way the investigation was handled.

He, on a personal level, seemed all right. And, we asked him and he pointed us to the fact that they asked Tenet straight out—and I since have seen the video—did you ever meet with—it's the summer of threat, your hair was on fire you're telling us, you're trying everything to get somebody to take action: "Did you ever meet with the President in the month of August?" Remember, that was THE month before 9/11. And he said: "No." And then Congressman Roemer, he just seems dumbfounded. He's just kind of blinking and looking at him and he says: "You never met with—did you speak with the President on the phone?" And he said: "No, we weren't

talking about that then. I never got the President on the phone." Roemer: "You never talked to the President the month before...?" He said: "No."

Right afterwards they send a message: "Oh, George was mistaken." And, you know, this was after he can't be questioned about it. (Right) Oh, George was mistaken. He actually—he flew down to Crawford, Texas, and met with him once. Then met with him again at the White House on like two days before the end of the month. So he met with him twice. So now we have no way to know what they discussed during this key time period. And, Tom Kean, we asked him straight out: "Do you think he misspoke?" And his answer was: "I don't think he misspoke. I think he misled." (Snicker)

So—(Well—) . . . and he also said: "Look, nobody ever forgets a meeting with the President. You're working in the White House, you meet with the President a lot, nobody ever forgets a meeting with the President. When you get time with the President, that is special and you remember it." So—

JON

Right. All right, now, you kind of went over this really quickly, and this is one of the most interesting aspects of the whole Alec Station story to me. And it has to do with Doug Miller and Mark Rossini, they were two FBI agents assigned to Alec Station, CIA Officer Michael Anne Casey, also assigned to Alec Station and, Alec Station's deputy chief, Tom Wilshire. And I'm going to read—this is a rather long (laughs) question, but it has to be read so people understand exactly what happened. And all of this information is from www.historycommons.org.

On January 5, 2000, Doug Miller writes a cable to notify the FBI "that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa." Under orders from Tom Wilshire, Michael Anne Casey blocks this cable. Later in the day, Casey distributes a false cable to CIA stations overseas "saying the information that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a U.S. visa has been sent to the FBI 'for further investigation.'" The next day, according to author James Bamford, Mark Rossini was "perplexed and outraged that the CIA would forbid the bureau's notification on a matter so important." He confronted Casey on the subject. And the reason according to Casey for not notifying the FBI was that "the next attack is going to happen in Southeast Asia—it's not the bureau's jurisdiction. When we want the FBI to know about it, we'll let them know." Rossini protests, saying, "they're here!" and, "It is FBI business," but

to no avail. Even though he is an FBI agent, he cannot pass on the notification to the bureau without permission from his superiors at Alec Station. The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General will later call the failure to pass the information to the FBI a "significant failure" but will be unable to determine why the information was not passed on.

So, let me recap this really quickly. Somebody from the FBI wanted to draft a cable to send to the FBI to notify them that one of the hijackers has a U.S. visa. They were blocked by somebody from within the CIA who later that day sent out a false cable saying that the FBI was notified. And then the next day was confronted by one of the FBI agents, Mark Rossini, and she said, she gave a reason as to why they couldn't do it.

So, my question to you is—It sounds to me that the real reason for not sending this cable has a criminal aspect to it. Do you agree or disagree?

RAY I don't know if the REASON for not sending the cable has a criminal aspect to it—the not sending the cable has a criminal aspect to it. And it's only further so when—so at the time we could call it a breach of protocol. Now, I actually have been trying to get in touch with a lawyer to break down each of the myriad crimes associated with some of these figures over the years, beginning with that and moving forward, but when it absolutely became a crime was in October of 2000, several months later.

So let's say the CIA has their own gameplan—and I tend to believe that the CIA had not had a lot of victories on the "War on Terror" and was feeling a lot of—the pre-9/11 War on Terror, the one going on that nobody really knew about it. And the FBI had been the lead agency under Clinton and they had taken this law enforcement approach, and they'd been fairly successful. If an attack occurred or an attack, you know, sometimes they would stop an attack, but they would round up a cell, they would put them on trial using the old-fashioned justice system, and they would put them away.

And, so, the CIA needed a big win. And they hated John O'Neill, the head of the FBI's whatever, the counter-terror unit, and so they wanted to, in my opinion, they took an opportunity they knew if they gave the lead to O'Neill, it would become an FBI thing and maybe they felt he would bungle it—I don't know. I can't get inside their heads. They decided to go another way, and we could speculate on what that was, but they withheld the info.

Now, cut to October of 2000, the USS Cole gets bombed. Well that same planning meeting that the guys who had entered the U.S. had also been attended by the leaders of the Cole bombing—the masterminds. And so as these crack John O'Neill FBI investigators starts using old-school techniques, no torture, tried and true techniques, detective and interview and so forth, they were able to figure out basically who the masterminds were and started to see that all these people had met and also exchanged money in a time period in January, 2000 in Malaysia.

So they asked CIA: "Do you know anything about this?" And Ali Soufan, the FBI agent in charge sent three messages over the course of about a six-month period, each one more detailed. Each one asking: "Do you have any info?" The first one they sent back a message—and, again, this went to the Bin Laden office, so we know who can take some blame here—they sent a message back that definitively said: "No." They ignored the second two requests. What Lawrence Wright, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who wrote *The Looming Tower* about this subject, has said is that he's always felt that this was obstruction of justice and the criminal investigation by the FBI of 17-dead U. S. sailors.

But I also think it was part of the reason why they continued to withhold it up until 9/11—and, again, this is only my view. But, at that point they had a choice to make. Either come clean and say: "We have information about these people connected to the Cole." And then just take a giant slap on the wrist because they basically are responsible for these deaths by not sharing that information. Or, they could double-down and keep withholding and sort of hope that the FBI finds out these guys are in the U.S. on their own. And, I believe that's basically the choice they made and it blew up big time in their faces, quite literally, on 9/11.

JON

Well, now, we talk about one of the things the 9/11 Commission emphasized a lot was that people weren't sharing information. And I, I don't know why they were not sharing information, but to me the individuals who made the decisions not to share information should have been held accountable. I've said this before. If you own a business and somebody loses a million dollars in your business, do you reward that person? (Right) Or do you fire that person? And you fire that person. You hold them accountable so that these kinds of things don't happen again. And in a lot of cases, in too many cases, with regard to 9/11, we saw that people who failed to do their job were rewarded and promoted. And Michael Anne

Casey, the individual who blocked the cable under orders from Tom Wilshire and then sent the false cable out, she was actually promoted, I believe, after 9/11.

RAY Well, certainly the mysterious redhead, the one named Alfreda Bikowsky, who was the office manager working closely with Tom Wilshire and the direct supervisor of Michael Anne Casey, she certainly was promoted and was just promoted again and again within that—even before 9/11 she got a promotion to deputy chief of Alec Station and then, I think, within about a year or year and a half after she was promoted to chief of Alec Station. And then when they closed the Bin Laden unit Alec Station, they formed a sort of larger War on Terror unit that was called the Global Jihad Unit and she became in charge of that. And to this day, continues running the War on Terror in collaboration with the counter-terrorist center chief of CIA.

They're basically the two key players. So she was involved with drones, she was involved with the failure, to some extent, to get Bin Laden the first time. She was involved with the development of the torture program, the mistaken rendition of at least one individual that's German, an innocent German who happened to have the same name as an Al-Qaeda guy, and on her instinct alone, they held him and tortured him for five months. So you point out in kind of an abstract way, the beauty of this idea of accountability and how simple it is—that you reward the behavior you want to see, and you punish the behavior you don't want to see because you're trying to create an outcome that's positive going forward. Well, this story gives us the lesson of that. Why did we need to fire her? Hold her to account, or all of these people, at that time. Post-9/11 when we had the opportunity. Why? Because if you don't, you get all of this stuff that I just listed that they continue to do afterwards.

JON Right. Well, I've always, and this is pure speculation on my part, but I've always felt that the reason that nobody was held accountable with regard to 9/11 is because the minute that you start holding people accountable, they start to talk. (Right) For instance, you tell somebody they didn't do their job and then they say: "What do you mean, I didn't do MY job? I DID my job. It was so-and-so that blocked me (Right) from doing more of my job." And that's—names start to be told. And that's why I think people were honestly not held accountable. And—

RAY I agree, the other issue too, was that they were in a little bit of a spot. So, right after 9/11, the Government announces a new era and they realize

they're going to need a lot of experts on Al-Qaeda. But there weren't that many. There were like 50 inside CIA, somewhere in that number in FBI. So, they immediately turned to those people.

But their greatest mistake became the springboard for promotion because they suddenly were not only sought after and needed but the group that they were a part of, that office and agency, suddenly became the most important at the CIA. Came to dominate the agency, and ultimately dominate U.S. policy and strongly influence it going forward.

So when George Tenet found out in November of 2001, when basically a CIA historian came up and said: "We've been combing the archives and we basically found this whole story" that you and I have just been talking about having Tenet on record, a couple of times actually having said: "This is bad." And so one must question why the Congressional investigation didn't have more information about that story when it started the following year. Why the 9/11 Commission a whole three years later still didn't get that story, there was clearly a cover-up. And that can be a loaded term. It certainly applies here. Keep that story under wraps and protect those individuals and that has resulted in multiple tragedies led by those individuals.

JON Absolutely. And the families certainly deserved to see people held accountable, I believe (Yeah), which is something they never saw.

Anyway, my last question to you is: Is there any website or something you would like to promote?

RAY Yeah, not really. If you haven't seen *9/11 Press for Truth* yet, you can rent it from Netflix, or you can find it online. We've never taken it down (Laughs). Or buy a copy, if you want to support it. And then I would send people to the Facebook page "Secrecy Kills." You just search "secrecy kills." If you go into the "about" section and you will find links to the Who Is Rich Blee podcast which goes into first-person stories telling them essentially what we've discussed here and gives links to the other works we've done in this area, and regular updates on the subjects.

JON And also, obviously, HistoryCommons.org. (Of course) We want to bring as much attention to that site as possible.

RAY Listen, before we wrap up, KBDI was the only television agency in the country to give us, not once but twice, platforms to play Press for Truth, basically the PBS of Colorado and so we've got to thank them and we've got to thank the folks who hosted screenings of the movie in the first couple of years it had come out. The massive support. We made a movie, but it was everybody else that actually got it out there.

JON Right, and also to point out KBDI, they got so much praise from so many people for showing that movie. It was really quite amazing and it kind of made me feel good to see all that praise.

Ray, I want to thank you very much for your time today. It's really been an honor for me to have you on the show today. I want to thank you for making this film, and I want to thank you for continuing to seek the truth. And for being a friend.

RAY Well, Jon, back at ya on all of that. There's no better person to have this conversation with than you, so as soon as you asked me, I knew it was going to be a conversation that I would enjoy, and I really appreciate it.

JON Well, thank you very much, Ray, and good luck with everything, with all of your endeavors, and hopefully maybe we can have you on again sometime.

RAY Sounds good.

JON All right, thanks a lot, Ray.

RAY Take care, Jon.

JON Bye, bye.

RAY Bye.



Chapter/Episode 5 – Coleen Rowley – September 16, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Coleen Rowley (COLEEN)

JON Hi everyone and welcome to my show called "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show is going to focus on the importance of whistleblowing. Many people have put their jobs, their lives, and their freedom on the line by whistleblowing. If not for many of the whistleblowers that have come forward, we would not know about much of the corruption taking place within our Government and elsewhere. They are an essential part of having a true democracy and, in my opinion, should be treated like the heroes that they are.

Okay, this is Jon and I'm here with Coleen Rowley.

COLEEN Hi, Jon.

JON Hi, Coleen. How are you?

COLEEN Hi, fine.

JON

I'm going to go ahead and read her bio for us.

Coleen Rowley grew up in a small town in northeast Iowa. She obtained a B.A. degree in French from Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa and then attended the College of Law at the University of Iowa and graduated with honors in 1980, also passing the Iowa Bar Exam that summer.

In January of 1981, Rowley was appointed a Special Agent with the FBI and initially served in the Omaha, Nebraska and Jackson, Mississippi Divisions. In 1984 she was assigned to the New York Office and for over six years worked on Italian organized crime and Sicilian heroin drug investigations. During this time Rowley also served three separate temporary duty assignments in the Paris, France Embassy and Montreal Consulate.

In 1990 Rowley was transferred to Minneapolis where she assumed the duties of "Chief Division Counsel," which entailed oversight of the Freedom of Information, Forfeiture, Victim-Witness and Community Outreach Programs as well as providing regular legal and ethics training to FBI Agents of the Division and some outside police training.

In May of 2002, Rowley brought some of the pre 9-11 lapses to light and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee about some of the endemic problems facing the FBI and the intelligence community. Rowley's memo to FBI Director Robert Mueller in connection with the Joint Intelligence Committee's Inquiry led to a two-year long Department of Justice Inspector General investigation. She was one of three whistleblowers chosen as persons of the year by TIME magazine—and that was in 2002.

In April 2003, following an unsuccessful and highly criticized attempt to warn the Director and other administration officials about the dangers of launching the invasion of Iraq, Rowley stepped down from her (GS-14) legal position to go back to being a (GS-13) FBI Special Agent. She retired from the FBI at the end of 2004 and now speaks publicly to various groups, ranging from school children to business/professional/civics groups, on two different topics: ethical decision-making and "civil liberties and effective investigation."

I'm going to read a little personal bio that I had written for Coleen. On September 11, 2004, I attended Pacifica Radio's "9/11 People's Commission" in Washington D.C. Coleen was one of the panelists, along

with other people like Sibel Edmonds, John Judge, Ray McGovern and others. That was the first time I'd met her. She probably doesn't remember, but I just walked up to her when I had the chance to thank her for what she had done. Like many whistleblowers, Coleen is a hero to me. Over the years, I have watched her grow as an activist, and it truly has been a pleasure. She tries so hard with all of her endeavors and, as I said, it is a pleasure to watch her. She is a true leader, and I know that many people appreciate what she does.

So, hi again Coleen. How are you doing? (Laughs)

COLEEN Yeah, that was the long one. The short one is just that I taught Law and Ethics. But, that's—thank you so much for having me.

JON That is not a problem. I figured you deserve the full treatment, so I read the whole bio.

Okay, so we're just going to get right into the questions. What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

COLEEN Well, it was ordinary until I walked by a television when—and I don't, till this day, recall now if it was the first or second plane. I think it had to be the second plane. But, there was either—there might have been a re-broadcast of the plane flying into the building. And so, like within—I walked by and a secretary was in there watching it and I turned around and I said, "Oh, my gosh, it's—this is connected to the guy that they're investigating in Minnesota." And I walked right into my boss's office and he had already called the agent in whose name is known—I should say, too, that nothing I really talk about is—it all comes from public documents because there was a trial in the Moussaoui case, one of the only 9/11 suspects to be tried in all these years. What they call the mastermind is still in Guantanamo and hasn't even had a trial. (Right) All these years later, and maybe can't. I mean there's been a lot of talk that they can't even have a trial because of what's gone on with torture, etc.

But, in the Moussaoui case, a lot of the information did come out. I think it was in 2006, that that trial took place. So it still took a long time, but some information, public documents came out that way. So, I'm speaking only from those and from the investigative reports, the Inspector General, and the 9/11 Commission reports. Otherwise, even retired FBI agents cannot speak freely. They must get everything they write or say pre-approved by

the FBI, until they're a hundred years old. It doesn't matter the age. Which is something people don't understand, how tightly guarded information is now. I know I'm digressing here, but it kind of does tie in with the whole situation of 9/11.

JON No, no, it's okay, go ahead.

COLEEN Yeah, I'm digressing, but this is the top—this is how it works. People talk about, they have like war stories that they will tell about their famous kidnapping case they worked and they won't ever get pre-publication for use of those things. They'll talk in their own settings and to like the "Jaycees" and things like that. They'll even in some cases even write stories about this. But those are never a problem.

But when it is something that they really are tightly controlling, then of course they will use anything you say as a pretext to be classified. And this has happened now with you where they classified information that was not even originally classified. That's the case that's going to the Supreme Court right now of Robert MacLean. Yeah, he got a telephone call, a text on the telephone call that was not classified at all about a threat and he talked about it. So that's a case. Thomas Drake—none of the documents that Thomas Drake had with him were classified.

So they use these things. And, in my case, the memo that I ended up writing later was not classified, but they used the words "French Intelligence" on that memo to black that out, as if that was classified. And even though that was all over the news that the French had given him intelligence.

So, that's the kind of environment we're dealing with to begin with. But on 9/11, of course, the first thing that we on the way to trying then after all those weeks of the agents not being able to search Moussaoui's personal affects and laptop, the first thing that the thought was well, will there be anything in the items? Or, are they that compartmentalized, ya know that there won't be? And, of course, it did turn out once that warrant was obtained, and some further investigation took place, and the information that connected Moussaoui was not in his laptop. It was in his personal affects, and there were two or three things, through telephone numbers and to an indirect money receipt that came actually from the mastermind Ramzi bin al-Shibh. Had a fingerprint right on the receipt, on the money order that was sent to Moussaoui.

So, in any event, the day turned into obviously, a nightmare for everyone. (Right) And, your heart's in your mouth when you see those things. We had seen Oklahoma bombing. Not that—you know, a few years before, and it's like you see this kind of bombing thing occur in the United States, or even in an Embassy, and it's like Oh my gosh! Oh, this is terrible. You can just imagine how many people are being killed.

But, the thing about 9/11 for the agents, is that they immediately knew very quickly. I mean, knew, I say know but within a high degree of probability who were the culprits. The idea that it was Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda's group is right in the affidavit that was already drafted. And so, I mean, this is already drafted in August. And so, this is what the reaction I had AFTER 9/11 when Condi Rice and many others—"no one would have known that they would hijack planes"—and all this idea that no one would have known these things. Well, it was known and there were warnings. And that was the part that I think my memo served to eventually to try to uncover.

JON Right. Absolutely, there was so much information. It's really unbelievable today, 13 years after the fact, knowing what was available and what wasn't done. Now—

COLEEN And people forget those—the part that people—of course, we all have very short memories on this stuff, because things keep happening. The events are unfolding now as a result of 9/11. I mean, you can trace so much. Many of the—even the Islamic State now can be traced to 9/11. I mean, really, there's a dominoes almost. One hits another. And so, because of that people focus on the latest things and they forget the earlier part. Most people have forgotten the Anthrax case. They don't even recall it now, and it happened just a week or two after 9/11. It looked quite connected, by the way. And there's a book out now about the Anthrax investigation and really showing a lot of the gaps and flaws and that, etc. but people don't even remember that that had happened. (Right)

In the eight and a half months before the first bit of information, before journalists like Michael Isikoff and eventually Seymour Hersh was one of the first, but Isikoff was there, and there were a few others, too. They were getting little bits and pieces of this information, and the Phoenix memo had leaked maybe two weeks before I was called in to the Joint Intelligence Committee. And this was actually nine and a half, eight and a half months after 9/11. Up till that point, even the Senators on the intelligence committees were really clueless. Because again the administration—Condi

Rice is telling them nobody had any idea. They were really covering up all of the warnings that they had even gotten. (Right) Richard Clarke, who later spoke out about this. He wasn't obviously not talking publicly.

JON

That's one thing I've always wondered, Richard Clarke, like him or not, when he came forward and he apologized to the families, it put him in a great light. People loved him for that. And so imagine the Bush Administration, they could have gone that route. They could have said that yes, there were clues that this might have happened. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful or something. And they would have come off in a better light, and people wouldn't think so much into the information that they were aware that this was going to happen.

So, it tends to, at least for me, it makes me think that they knew a hell of a lot more than we even know. The fact that they went through all those trials.

COLEEN

Well, but you have to—I think a lot of people that are maybe outside, not only Government, but just big institutions, institutions that have a lot riding on their reputation and on—and it's not just—their money, their reputation—look at the Catholic priests. My goodness, they believe themselves protecting the Catholic faith by keeping their dirty little secrets secret. And not being more honest about it. (Right)

So, when those groups occur that way, and certainly Government is one, there is always, I mean, you might have been slightly more honest. You might have found someone that would have been not quite as, almost in a way, that's a reckless statement to say, "we had no idea that someone could fly a plane into a building." Especially when you know there's a document that shows that there were plots before this.

And so you think, well, Condi Rice, my goodness, she has a PhD., and she's got to realize that somebody's going to find that there were actually documents about plots that said planes could fly into buildings. So why would she have said that? I mean that was really, you know, whatever. But, you know why? I think this happens because the very first thought that occurs to people in these situations—and it's really everyone. Again, when you're in a big institution and you have a lot to protect if you've—this idea that the truth has to be covered up. And maybe it's almost subconscious. Again, I don't think that people in these things are necessarily any worse or badder than others. The Catholic priests here, but the first thing is we can't

tell anyone. We can't tell anyone, what happened. The truth. We'll find a way to get this out so it'll be a little sugar-coated, or whatever. Eventually, they might learn, but we're not going to go out on day one and say, yes, we were getting lots of warnings and we didn't even hold a meeting beforehand, etc.

So, I think it's kind of the norm and there is really the rare exceptions where officials have this more enlightened view that they have to be more honest, at least from the start. That is quite the exception when you find that happening. (Right) And it's much more the norm that—gather the wagon, circle the wagons and we'll figure out what to say. We'll have our story, you know, this is my story, and I'm sticking to it. That's much more the norm on any bad thing that happens.

JON Right. Now, you testified before the Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11, but not before the 9/11 Commission. Your story is mentioned in a footnote in the back of the book on page 540. Did you try to contact them, or did they seek you out at all?

COLEEN No, and there's a reason for that. Nobody in the FBI that I know of would have done that. And here's the reason is because the Joint Intelligence Committees that began, like I said, about eight, about seven months after 9/11—and the backdrop to that was that the Bush's team were fighting this like tooth and nail. They had written letters, I think, to some Senators who had floated the idea of having an investigation of 9/11. Dick Cheney, especially, had written a letter saying you can't do this, etc. So they were really against it.

So the only way that the House and Senate Intelligence Committees were even able to start this—the only way they could even get this started a few months afterwards—and, by the way, all along the time the agencies were compiling their story, or their timeline of events. They would say it was the facts. But it was, they were very skewed and cherry picked, etc. And they would probably circle things in red that were too secret that they couldn't come out, etc.

So, that process started in the agencies about compiling a timeline, etc. but the actual intelligence committees did not start until about, I think, seven, six-seven months after 9/11. And the only way they were able to do that, I think a couple things, was—I've discerned this from news articles that there was a deal made, and I discerned it from Eleanor Hill's talk, too—the head

staffer of the Joint Intelligence Committee, when she finally gives the report, she prefaces her report by saying: "But, you know we were not allowed to look into the highest levels." The actions of the President. (Right) Says: I'm not of that rank. I don't know what rank Eleanor Hill was, but you know, in the very same thing happened with General Taguba, who was a 3-star general, so he could perhaps look at people lower than his rank, but to look at people up the hierarchy, General Taguba can't find fault of the people at the top. Because, you know, he can only find Lyndie ENGLAND and the people at the bottom.

Eleanor Hill essentially said the same thing. She said: "I can only—I was limited." Well, that's probably why it was even allowed to get started in the first place is that it was agreed that they would not go up. That they would look at the mistakes made at the lower levels. (Right) People like myself, people like the agent in Minneapolis, and Harry Samit, etc. So, that's what they were looking at to begin with. But that Joint Intelligence Committee was to look at the intelligence—intelligence oversight. So, they were supposed to be looking at FBI, CIA, NSA and maybe some others, but those were the main ones. Maybe, I don't know, some others but the three main ones.

So, when that was in the process, my memo led to a more in depth investigation of the FBI's failures. So, that went to the Inspector General, and you'll see that cited in the footnotes also in the 9/11 Commission. My Joint Intelligence Committee's work is cited as well as the Inspector General of the FBI. Maybe there was a little bit of the Inspector General at the CIA. I'm not sure how much they did, but I have also gathered from everything I've read since then that the only reason that you know more about the FBI failures is then that later—it took years and years, of course, but later then the Inspector General report that my memo had actually directly led to, it finally became declassified in 2006. And so, after—oh, maybe it's 2007. No, it's 2006. And so—it was right about the time after the Moussaoui trial I think they declassified it.

So, that's why people even know a little bit about some of the failures in the FBI. To this day, because there were no whistleblowers that I know of at the CIA or the FBI, or at the NSA—excuse me, there were at the NSA, but they were either fronted to the side or their information—I know Thomas Drake, gave his information about 9/11 and I don't know his information just went into a black hole or something. (Right)

So, that's what I'm saying is that the only reason we even know a little bit about the FBI—there's three main ones. One is the Moussaoui case. One is the Phoenix memo. And the third one were the two hijackers who had come into California but the the information the FBI finally got, but very late. And then what actions they had taken. And that was kind kind of the biggest one. But the only reason we know about those things is that Inspector General report was conducted and later was declassified.

So, the 9/11—now we're going to fast-forward. Your question about why the 9/11 Commission—the whole, at least this is what my understanding was, and I don't know if this is in writing anywhere, but this was definitely, I think, a verbal, verbally said, and you could probably find news reports that when they finally, when Bush and Cheney finally had to allow, in the summer of 2001, after some of this had hit the media—my memo, the Phoenix memo, and some other, maybe Richard Clarke. No, he wasn't speaking out yet, but some of this is starting to become public. The families were, of course, pushing, pushing and finally Bush and Cheney had to allow this 9/11 Commission. But, it was to be extremely limited. I suppose, again, they were to be off-limits, they themselves. That was one thing. They were not to be re-doing or reinventing all of the work that had been done already by the Joint Intelligence Committee. That was a pre-condition of the 9/11 Commission. As far as I know. This is at least what I was told, and I think this is actually, verbally was said.

Now, they were supposed to look at things like the communications SNAFU and why the first responders were not communicating. They were supposed to be looking at, I think, building structure and why would it have collapsed. Issues more on the FAA business and why the response was not quick enough. There were other things. Other issues, that were considerable actually, too, and when you look at the whole 9/11 Commission, the one chapter, which is called, let's see, System Was Blinking Red. I think it's Chapter 8, or something like that—The System Was Blinking Red. That's a small, tiny part of the 9/11 Commission. And that's the part about what intelligence was known. And the reason that probably Zelikow just wrote that from these earlier, the work done by the Joint Intelligence—you can just see. I mean, he's footnoting everything and they write a little narrative of this.

Probably, between you and I, too, I think Jamie Gorelick maybe said this once—that 9/11 Commission report might not have gotten read. It didn't get read very much anyways. People bought it for \$10, but I don't know how

much it actually got read. When I give talks I've often said, "How many people have read the 9/11 Commission Report?" And I may have one in a hundred. And I'll say, "Well, how many have just looked at it?" And then I may have like one in a hundred people in an audience that will actually say they've looked at part of it. (Right) And I'll say, "Well, Chapter 8: The System Was Blinking Red. Have you read that part?" you know? But I think that was the part, actually, that was more interesting. And so, for readers, to put that in there and basically rehash what was the conclusion of the Joint Intelligence Committees investigation and the Inspector General's report, that actually made it more interesting. The rest of the stuff that seems—to be honest, I haven't read it all myself.

JON Well, from what I've seen, there are memorandums for the record available from the 9/11 Commission that shows that they did speak with certain FBI agents who were part of this investigation or that investigation. And the mandate of the 9/11 Commission as it says was to provide a full and complete accounting of the attack and specifically including those relating to intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, diplomacy, immigration, non-immigrant visas, and border control, the flow of assets, the terrorist organizations, commercial aviation, the role of Congressional oversight and resource allocation and other areas determined relevant by the Commission for its inquiry.

So, they could have spoken to you, and from what I understand the 9/11 Commission, yes, it did start where the Joint Congressional Inquiry left off from, that was the basis or the foundation for a lot of what the 9/11 Commission had to say. But I still think they should have spoken with you. Anyway, let me get to my next question.

COLEEN Yeah, it would have been consistent. Because they would have said: Well, she's already—and I did get extensively debriefed both—and actually even also by the Inspector General investigation afterwards, so—I mean, I was debriefed a couple of times.

The one thing—yeah, I know, I'm, you haven't asked me this, but—the one thing that was left out of the Inspector General's report that I was told would be a part of it, was the cover-up. That was the part, because when I wrote my memo and they started this, I said well, okay, but now will this be a part of it? What happened after 9/11? These things? And, yes, oh of course. And when you finally get that Inspector General 400-500 pages,

there's nothing in there. That was totally left out. I sent them documents. I sent them all kinds of things, and that was left out.

JON So what was left out, specifically?

COLEEN Well, okay, after 9/11 my memo is written about what occurs after 9/11. You can just read my 12-page memo. (Right) It's about the fact that they weren't being forthright about this. And the more or less the cover-up and stuff, and that—there's even a meeting in the FBI after 9/11 and all—I'm sure, you can just imagine CIA and NSA were more so than the FBI even. And so, that was supposed to be in that Inspector General, in the purview—and I was told it would be. And it never—and, of course, we talked and I was debriefed about that. That's just left out. (Right)

So, I—and the bottom line is I don't find it serious that I was not called by the 9/11 Commission because that would actually be consistent because they are picking up from—they already talked to me. Am I going to say something different to new faces? Obviously. I mean, that would have to be the case though. Now they may have talked to people that for some reason hadn't been talked to in the course of the Joint Intelligence Committees.

Mueller, I know, and Maureen Baginski were interviewed by the 9/11 Commission and they are at the highest levels.

JON Well, according to 9/11 Family Member Patty Casazza, many whistleblowers were afraid to come forward before the 9/11 Commission on the basis of what happened to Sibel Edmonds and the retaliation that she received.

Did you receive any retaliation? And what's the worst case of whistleblower retaliation that you're aware of?

COLEEN Well, in my case, I was able, and I was extremely lucky, so mine is an unusual case. I did not actually—ya know, they couldn't make this distinction between leaking and going to your Inspector General. But if you go to an Inspector General internally, as Thomas Drake did, or internally even on 9/11, his information never even surfaced. Oh, and then yes, you are retaliated against. Or at least they put you in the insider threat program, or whatever.

And so, in my case, I wrote this memo in the course of the investigation, I myself did not hand it to a reporter or anything, but it got out—probably Congress did it. And they probably knew that this was the only thing that would really start maybe to help open up some of this investigation and information. I'm guessing that somebody in Congress has been around the block before—

JON Can you tell me—

COLEEN And knew this, and knew that if you did not get it public, that it would have no—would not be able to get the truth out. Now I've since learned, I didn't know any of this at the time, but I've since learned that unless the information gets out to the public, if it's held inside a secret system, then the chance is it would still, it will still, it can be buried for 40-50 years in some of these cases.

And, so, I think maybe someone in Congress said: We want to know the truth about 9/11. This memo is important. And probably somebody there leaked it to the press. Because it leaked to the press, then Leahy and Grassley called me to testify to the Judiciary Committee, which was—they were having. I forgot there's a third one, the Judiciary Committee had its own investigation about the judicial issues. So, there were actually three investigations. And so they called me to testify just about two weeks later. Now when I was going to be testifying to the Judiciary, four Senators—Leahy, Grassley, who were the two heads of the Judiciary, and then our two Minnesota Senators, Paul Wellstone and Mark Dayton—all four of them wrote letters to Ashcroft and to FBI Director Mueller requesting that I not be fired, okay?

So, it took four Senators, along with being on the cover of *Time* magazine—because I was on the cover within about a week and a half of this—it took being on the cover of *Time* magazine and four Senators to keep me from being fired. I mean, if you're asking what retaliation, that was extremely lucky on my part. (Right) I probably wouldn't have actually been fired. I was a very well respected person. I had no blemish on my career, nothing in my personnel file that they could pull out. But, what would have happened is yes, I would have been persona non-grata. I would have been treated like, terrible—

JON Well, I remember you telling me that people within the FBI may not have been retaliated against, but they certainly looked at you differently. And I think you were—

COLEEN Yeah, and there's one other thing that's different in my case, too, but it's not different in every case is it wasn't just me. All of the agents, the case agent and the supervisor were all determined to tell the truth. So, determined, in fact, that in the FBI, knowing that this would still be buried, the Moussaoui case itself could have been buried. This happens. There are whole entire cases that rather than tell the truth they don't even prosecute. This happens. When there's really egregious—why am I talking? Whitey Bulger—I don't have to go too far. All I have to do is mention the Whitey Bulger case. He committed like 20 murders in the course of the time period that the FBI was operating him, for heaven's sakes. (Wow)

And so, you have some of these egregious cases. I mean if you don't understand the dynamics of what you're dealing with in Government, then you have this kind of naïve attitude. And, by the way, it's not just Government. It really is any of these big institutions that have a lot riding on the line. And when they do something bad, of course people are always going to make mistakes, and we're human, and some of them are negligent, some of them are reckless. But even the negligence things, people are loathe to tell the truth about.

JON Well, there's one thing—

COLEEN But in this case, the agents were determined to of course not to—they had a lot of integrity. One was a former military officer, a lot of integrity. And so, I knew that there would be, in my memo, for instance, I knew that there were documents and I knew that there were other people who would be telling the truth. And that's the same, really, with Thomas Drake. He knew there were others that knew the truth about the mass surveillance and stuff. So, when you're completely alone, and that's another—even Sibel Edmonds, she tries to get other people around her that knew things to come forward. So, when you are completely alone, there are some cases where you are the sole person who knows the truth. That is even quite a bit even more difficult. (Right)

JON I asked what's the worst case of whistleblower retaliation that you're aware of. To me, it was Bradley or Chelsea Manning, who had the worst form of

retaliation being put into that cell and now he's serving years in jail. (Yep) Do you agree?

COLEEN Yeah, of course. And, of course, he also in terms of the number of documents that were, that he obtained and gave out, that is a large number. It's not just like one document. There's all different examples and as time has gone on, the draconian punishment that any whistleblower is facing has gotten greater and greater. Of course now we're looking at life in prison as being the highest punishment under the old 1917 Espionage Act.

JON Right. We'll get to that in a little bit.

COLEEN Edward Snowden, you know, was indicted and would be facing probably the same, almost life in prison term, as the Daniel Ellsberg case. (Right) But, there's something even worse than that, and I'm looking for that next one, which is actually now execution. (Jeesh) Because the Espionage Act allows—well, the death penalty. (Right) And every time, even when Manning was first arrested, that was the question is will he face the death penalty. (Right) And it was no, no he'll face life in prison whatever.

But now, there actually is something more. And, of course, this is the sad thing about people in Government. If it's a minor thing, a fraud. Let's just say a fraud. Because most people think of whistleblowing about fraud, that the tax payers' money is being spent on a \$500 toilet seat, and some contractor is making \$485 of profit on a toilet seat. (Laughs) That's the old fraud that was outed, actually by Grassley—Pentagon fraud in the '80s or something, '70s or '80s.

So, that's what's normal—you know what? You would never in your right mind something that minor if it is just something like monetary fraud. You would hardly ever even consider taking these kinds of risk to be a whistleblower at this point. (Right) What really has to be is perhaps not even the risk to a couple of people. Look at the Anthrax case. There probably are people who know a little bit more about what happened in the Anthrax case, or whatever. But only six people died in the Anthrax case. (Right) So maybe that isn't even enough. Maybe it actually has to be a threat where thousands of people or more, if it's a lie about starting a war or something, maybe it has to be a million people or more that we actually say: Well, my life doesn't matter. I'm just this little person down at the bottom of the level here and who am I when we have thousands of people that could be facing this serious threat, or whatever. That's maybe what it—

I always talk about the significance of the issue and the significance. It absolutely has to be significant. It has to be a very important thing. It has to be almost life and death. (Right) And I think as time has gone on, and now the pressure and the administration's willingness to use these draconian punishments in order—and now, not only on whistleblowers, but on members of the press. On people that—

JON *The New York Times* reporter. I can't remember his name.

COLEEN Risen.

JON Risen, James Risen.

COLEEN Yes, Risen's facing being jailed because the Supreme Court denied hearing his case that there could possibly be any protection of a journalist source. They turned that down about three months ago, I think, four months ago. (Right) And now, he is facing being jailed. He probably won't be just as a strategic move. I don't think so, because he won the Pulitzer Prize and there's just a lot of backing for James. The New York Times backs their reporter. But you wait and see, like that case of the AP where they called and Fox when they called the reporters conspirators (Mmm-hmm), they called them espionage conspirators. The next one, you don't have a reporter of the same stature as Risen and the New York Times, yes. They will probably be then prosecuted. Every one of our generals has called for this now. Petraeus has called for it. Keith Alexander has called for it. They are calling for treating members of the media as "spies" under the Espionage Act if they publish—

JON That's ridiculous.

COLEEN Well, it's ridiculous! You have to understand, this is where it's going.

JON Yeah, I know.

COLEEN And the public doesn't understand this. They are still—Oh, Hillary Clinton, she's our first lady President. So, people are really don't understand that we are in this situation now after 12 years after 9/11 and it just continues to deteriorate in terms of adhering to the law.

JON Well when each abuse takes place and nothing is done about it, it just continues to happen (Exactly), we see it over and over again. All right, let me get to the next question.

This is a quote from 9/11 Family Member Patty Casazza:

"Sibel Edmonds brought us many whistleblowers and I submitted them personally to Governor Kean who was the Chairman of the Commission, the 9/11 Commission and I said: These people are not being subpoenaed. They will not come before the 9/11 Commission voluntarily unless they are subpoenaed, and he promised me to my face that every whistleblower would be indeed heard and most were not heard. Sibel was only heard because we dragged her in and surprised the Commission on one of the days we were meeting with them that we had her with us."

Now, what does it say about the credibility of the 9/11 Commission that it did not hear what every whistleblower had to say or apparently didn't seem to even seek them out?

COLEEN Right, right, very good point, and that would probably be the crux, or I would say one of a—a main rationale for calling for a new or further investigation of 9/11. That alone would be enough. In addition to Patty's firsthand information about Kean promising her and then kind of renegeing on this. Besides that, I think Shaffer, Anthony Shaffer, who knew about Able Danger. Didn't he go directly to Zelikow? (Yes) Did he actually talk to him? There you go.

JON He spoke with Zelikow and a couple of other people and none of the information ever found its way into the report. And after it was reported, I think by *The New York Times*, that Able Danger identified four of the hijackers a year before 9/11. Then the 9/11 Commissioners, I think, denied knowledge of Anthony Shaffer and then it was found out that he did in fact meet with Philip Zelikow. So, that's how I seem to remember that story.

COLEEN Yeah, I kind of—I have a vague—that jives with what I remember, too. So, he's another case. He's actually one that they talked to but it never makes it way. The other one I mentioned already is Thomas Drake. (Right) A senior executive at the NSA is—I don't know if it was the 9/11 Commission directly, or if it was the Inspector General—again, what I said before, with

some of these Inspector General investigations on the side were also then incorporated into the 9/11 Commission (Right) and so they obviously were keeping tabs.

So, this is what I know about the NSA and again none of this seems to find its way into the 9/11 Commission report is that Bill Binney, one of the—highly respected, 31-years in the NSA, one of their top mathematicians and code breakers, of course, they realized about this massive surveillance after 9/11 and he then retires, or resigns, because he doesn't want to be a part of this unconstitutional illegal action that Bush has gotten Michael Hayden to go along with after 9/11. But they knew the information about the programs that were targeting that Yemen safe house and calls—we all know, this comes from public documents, by the way, I had no way of knowing this when I worked in the FBI. This would never have—we're all compartmentalized so this was nothing I learned in the course of my career, but I've learned it since in all of the things that have been made public. And Bill Binney went to the Department of Defense's Inspector General and, this information, so did Thomas Drake. They all made a complaint. And this led to an investigation. But, again, it's an Inspector General. That's all in a secret system.

JON Well, Inspector Generals from what I understand, they can't actually hold anybody accountable. All they can do is recommend that people be held accountable.

COLEEN That's right, and it's worse than that because when an Inspector General—they'll often say that they're independent, but in many cases the Inspector General isn't really independent if they're inside—

JON Well that's when we found out about with regard to the DOD Inspector General is that he may have been corrupt. That he may have been helping, you know, cover up like Able Danger, like NORAD lying before the 9/11 Commission, and so forth. I think that was reported by the New York Times.

COLEEN Yeah, I mean, there's maybe three or four reasons for this. One is that you don't get to be an Inspector General—nobody's going to call me, after I retire and say: "Coleen, do you want to be Inspector General?" [Laughs] That ain't gonna happen. So, the people that are selected to be Inspector Generals had sterling insider careers, typically, and that's why they get asked to be this position in the first place, and they can be counted on, etc.

Then the structure itself, like they'll say they're independent, but many times they still are inside the agency. (Right) The structure of the Department of Justice one was external from the FBI. So, that was already a plus. And there were Inspector General investigations, of, for instance, the FBI lab before this that actually were able to put out a lot of truth. And the reason for that is they weren't working for the FBI Director. They were working for the attorney general or to the side of the attorney general, but they were, kind of even though in some ways in a little competition with the FBI. And so there were—they had some capability. But, yes, even in cases where they found pretty clear wrong-doing. Let's go back to the FBI lab one and the cover-up afterwards and, oh my gosh, it's an egregious thing when you know the whole truth about Frederic Whitehurst was the FBI laboratory whistleblower and, they practically forced him to have a nervous breakdown and fired him, and he turns out to be vindicated by the Inspector General. But, yet, nobody was, of course, not disciplined. Not even disciplined as far as I know, let alone fired. And then, and what happened as a result of that is the same persons now go on from there and there's been more results of even that case.

And so, that's the problem with being in a secret system. If it's not—and Congress knows this. Why do we have Feinstein—bless her intelligence heart when she's quite sympathetic with secrecy and everything else, but yet —

JON Sure, now that she knows she was spied on (Right). But before that she was all for—

COLEEN Well, she's got a strange stance because she's for secrecy overall and certainly in a general way she was friends with Clapper and all of these, very close with them, but she even before the torture issue apparently of course we don't know how bad this is right now but it sounds like it is really pretty egregious, and the fact is covering up for lower level people like these contractors and people did die and drills to their heads and guns to their heads and all these things that they even exceeded the guidelines. So even that has turned Dianne Feinstein into someone who wants the information public. And she's been fighting tooth and nail for this. For what? Five years. This torture report is now five years, costs \$40 million. It's 6,000 pages. They've whittled it down to just a few hundred, I think, four or five hundred pages, and even then they're fighting over black-out redactions. If you can just imagine this kind of situation, and this is actually on lower level the findings of course that are the most strident are going to

be on the lower level not even Government employees but contractors. This is how bad the system is. And, again, it's why information is power and people know it. Of course, this is well known. And why you have this really strong reluctance to tell even this little bit of minimal truth unless a reporter gets hold of a photo. Unless a reporter gets hold of a memo and then they're—or you have Edward Snowden or Chelsea Manning giving documents to a reporter, or sources like Deep Throat giving information out, you will almost never have an ability to unravel the truth. (Right) Every case you look at where even a little bit of truth came out, it really required this extreme—If we had good systems and everything, it should not require people risking their lives to just get the little bit of truth out, but that's—

JON Well that also gets into the press issue of this country which is abhorrent. The corporate news is just—there's no investigative journalism anymore. They're just essentially handed talking points from the Government and, you know, that's the news. But—

Okay, let me get to—we only have a couple of questions left, and I know you're limited in time.

Whistleblowers under Bush were retaliated against, but it seems that retaliation against whistleblowers has increased under the Obama Administration. In an article by Peter Van Buren entitled, "Obama's War on Whistleblowers" he writes, "The Obama administration has been cruelly and unusually punishing in its use of the 1917 Espionage Act to stomp on Governmental leakers, truth-tellers, and whistleblowers whose disclosures do not support the President's political ambitions," and that "the Obama administration has charged more people (six) under the Espionage Act for the alleged mishandling of classified information than all past presidencies combined." If you could have a sit down with Obama, what would you say to him?

COLEEN You know, to be honest, people in power, power corrupts, and so after six years as President, he's been around the block and he knows the score, etc. so in straight terms of giving him some kind of facts or whatever, it would be like—do you remember, Sherron Watkins goes in to the boss, the head boss of Enron, Kenneth Lay, thinking that she's revealing to him about the inflated profits and the misreporting, etc. in the shell companies. She thinks that if she can just get this info to Kenneth Lay and tell him the truth that she knows about Skilling and the other ones at Enron, then she walks out thinking oh, now he knows, something can be done. He writes, he turns

around, because he's the head of the whole thing (Right), and he turns around and writes a note: "Fire Sherron Watkins." (Laughs) Okay, so this is out of the movies, by the way, but this is the type of people—many people when they're working, do think that if they can just get the information to the right person—

Okay, in the United States, we of course people think of the President should have the power to, you know, let's say to tell the truth, to really do the right thing. They think he should be because that's who they voted for. And there's a lot of power around that President that are really pulling the strings and controlling, in many cases almost making the puppet just a stand-up figure that, you know, reads speeches and isn't really making any decisions on their own. (Right)

What I would do, if I had a time to do this, is I would try my hardest, I would ask, of course, Obama to bring in some of these powerful people that he knows are powerful—(Laughs). No, but maybe it's people from Wall Street, maybe it's people from military industrial and maybe it is people like Clapper and Alexander, etc.—Alexander is no longer because he's gone—but people like that. So, bring those people in. And then the way you would approach talking to them is trying to tell them why these things are not working and why this is all back-firing and hurting them. I think very few people understand that we are in a way all of humanity are in this together and without truth you just keep building on sand and everything that you're doing—right now, some people it's kind of becoming obvious that this supporting terrorist groups in the past, and if we are talking about 9/11 that Charlie Wilson's War and, all of those things that were covered up. They end the Charlie Wilson's War on a high note as if arming the Mujahideen in the Taliban that became the Taliban in Al-Qaeda, like that was the end of the movie. Oh, boy, we really accomplished something. That was just great. Charlie Wilson was a hero. The CIA gives him their top prize.

Okay, so, that's, that's—of course people who watch the movie still thinks that's the case.

JON

Well, now that you brought that up, I have to mention that throughout the '90s we used the Mujahideen and other terrorists in the Balkans and in the Caucasus and, after 9/11 we used terrorists like Jundallah within Iran. We used—we aligned ourselves with what they call Al-Qaeda-linked groups. We've done it in Syria with the so called "Free Syrian Army." A lot of those people were supposedly linked to Al-Qaeda and so on and so forth.

So, this is something that we have been doing for years.

COLEEN Not only have been doing—there's—in the course they always say someone's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. (Right) So when we're on the other side and we want to either destabilize a Government that we don't like, yes, then we would pick a group. The ones we think are best controlled and best in line with the U.S. national interest and there'd been—there had been whistleblowers about this before, because it almost never has worked. And it's always led to the problems of the group either—or, dictators, too, picking people to topple and installing somebody else who's a dictator, and this almost always turns badly.

JON It sounds like you're talking about the Ukraine. (Laughs)

COLEEN Yeah, well, there are all—there was a CIA whistleblower John Stockman, who wrote a book decades ago about Angola, and how they picked this rebel group, you know, freedom fighter, but yes, a lot of terrible killings and violence involved, and then eventually later on they turn against each other. The CIA turns against the guy that he had been operating and stuff. This happens all the time. It's really a norm.

Now, the public can't know this, of course. Because they are told these myths about fighting for freedom and all the rest. So, this kind of stuff can only be in secret systems like the CIA (Right), where you pick groups. And the Charlie Wilson War, of course, because they're trying to make this into a heroic thing because this is, it led to the end of the Soviet Union. So, this was this big victory for the United States, and yes, it was through Arming of the Mujahideen.

Today—by the way, this stuff never ends. Today, they are debating in Congress—in fact, I just made a call to my Congressman that they are going to be discussing arming, the so-called moderate, good rebels, because Obama's plan—

JON We have a patented, moderate rebel detector, you know (Yeah) (Laughs) (Right), we only pick the good rebels. (Right) I always found that so funny. Like, basically, it was becoming public knowledge that we were aligning ourselves with "Al-Qaeda-linked groups," and once that information came out, we started to hear about how they're trying to differentiate between the

good rebels and the bad rebels, and that they had the ability to do this. And that's absolutely absurd.

COLEEN Well, the latest news from the family, or a representative of Sotlof's family, is that the good rebels sold him to the bad rebels that beheaded him. I mean, you can't get more direct than that. I mean, one of the victims of Islamic State was given to them or sold to them by the good rebels. (Right) I mean this is—and so to say that you're fighting Islamic State? I mean it makes no sense at all. (You know--) Yet, today, I will just venture a guess. I'll venture a prediction that probably overwhelming vote, maybe a couple of people will vote against arming the group that actually sold the poor journalist who got beheaded. If that's—that's—it's mind-boggling how terrible this is. But I will imagine that will happen. And do you know why? Because the truth is buried in this stuff, and luckily, that family member's representative did go public on this a few days ago, but that's just one little fact, but there's more than that.

Chechen, the Boston bomber, for instance, was connected, or had gone back to Chechnya, and stuff, well, there's a whole group led by one of them, former CIA director Woolsey, and he's got a group of this, you know, trying to help the Chechen rebels in Russia. And so, they'd done this with the Mujahedim-e-Khalq in Iran, which was a dissident group in, Iranian group, that were on the terrorist list but they took them off the terrorist list—

JON You're talking about the MEK?

COLEEN The MEK (Yep) that just happened about a year ago and now there's a move the same thing with the Chechens. Well, that has, these all have impact, because this idea that there are so-called terrorists that we're told that we have to fight, and meanwhile, the truth is a lot more complicated, in that (Absolutely) that our own Government is working with and behind and arming, and you're starting to see this a little bit. When I write on Facebook a lot of times they'll say "we've seen this movie before." (Laughs) "Have you seen this movie before?" and I'm referring to Charlie Wilson's War, because at the very least there's some little bit of public information that has made it into popular culture. That was on PBS as well. The American public should know that this was a mistake to have armed this group and that they later turned against us, etc. but it's continuing even today as we speak.

JON Well, it's insanity and the definition of insanity is repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results. Now—

COLEEN If I was able to talk to Obama, I would try to really be on his side, on all of their sides, and explain why this is so—they're being very short-sighted and that this isn't going to work. That's what you have to—I think—you never just say, oh this illegal, this is unethical. You have to explain why this is really going to come back and blow back. I you think about somebody would have warned Nixon. Maybe if Chuck Colson hadn't been the creepy person he had been involved. Maybe if he had taken Nixon, says: You really can't be doing this. This is all going to come out later, and boy are you going to look terrible. Blah, blah, blah. Maybe if they had done that. If you listen to the tapes of Nixon, nobody is telling him that he's going to be hurt as a result of this. Years later if he'd known or been warned he was going to be hurt about this and it would hurt the country, etc. you never know. (Right)

But I think that's really the only shot you have with most of these people is explaining how this is going to hurt their own interests and actually hurt the larger interests of the entire United States.

JON Well, but I start to think that destabilization of the region might actually be something these people want to happen. We got Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the U.S. helped to create the so-called free Syrian army and then, you know, that incorporated into the Al-Nusra Front and then Al-Qaeda in Iraq went into Syria and it all became basically a blur, just the whole thing was a—they all became essentially the same and now we've seen, you know, they got rid of Al-Maliki who was Iran-friendly. Basically, Isis—to those who want the War On Terror to continue, they are the Isis on the cake, so I say. (Laughs) And they were essentially created by the same people when you look at it. And it's just insanity.

Okay, let me get to the next question and we'll finish this up soon.

Are whistleblower protections that exist today adequate? And I think there's an obvious answer to that—

COLEEN There have been some—I will just say one thing. There have been some recent changes and some of—and there's also a major whistleblower case going to the Supreme Court, going to be argued in November by this air marshal Robert MacLean who only gave information to a reporter when the

TSA was cutting back on marshals on flights that there was a threat to. I mean, you can't from a factual standpoint, you can't get better facts for whistleblower protection. If our Supreme Court, heaven knows, because in their so-called wisdom what they might do, and there's four or five of them that I have very little faith in. So, if they—that case would be a real bell weather for people to be watching. If that case loses, if Robert MacLean is not vindicated and not—and actually the lower court held in his favor and the information wasn't even classified—if the Supreme Court says: No, Robert MacLean, you're out of luck. You need to stay fired. You need to be punished for speaking out of school, there's no hope. There's just zero hope. If that happens. But there—wait and see what happens there. If they hold in his favor, we still probably don't know how this is working out behind the scenes. They claim you can go to Inspector Generals, etc. and they claim there's been some fixes to it. So, I would perhaps—maybe I'm too optimistic, but I might hold out a little hope that it has improved slightly. I simply don't know and I don't think anyone knows until that first case comes along. The next Thomas Drake. The next Bill Binney and we actually know if there's any chance of something working. (Right) And certainly this Supreme Court case everyone should watch it in November. Robert MacLean is the name of the case.

JON One thing about Bill Binney, I recently wrote an article—one of the things that he brought to light was the fact that the NSA was aware that the two hijackers in San Diego were in San Diego. They previously denied having that knowledge because they said that they were tapping the phones of the terrorists but they could only get the one side in Yemen, they couldn't identify where the call was coming from. That was their story. So, Bill Binney exposed the fact that the NSA did know about their location and so forth and they didn't tell the FBI, to my knowledge.

COLEEN And the CIA knew too.

JON Right, none of these things happened in a vacuum. There's a whole list of things. You know, we talked about Inspector Generals. Porter Goss went to, I think it was John Helgerson who was the CIA's Inspector General, and asked him to write the report about the CIA's negligence or activities concerning 9/11, to not call anyone out essentially. Not to give the idea that these people need to be held accountable. I think—and I think he did that. I think Helgerson rewrote the report for Porter Goss to be like that. But, anyway—

COLEEN Like I said, it's not surprising. In fact, you don't even have to be very explicit in these systems. There's no need for explicit, explicit—everyone knows. Everyone knows what's expected of them. (Right) And they know if they're going to act like General Taguba and tell the truth that they tortured at Abu Ghraib, they know what's going to happen. They know what's expected. They wanted Taguba to say something, and he knew that. Everybody knows. (Right) You don't have to say: General Taguba you better whitewash it. You don't have to say that.

JON One last thing, with regard to the Isis and so forth—and what I said was that I think destabilization may be the goal—that essentially enabled us to get back into Iraq, which is where we wanted to be in the first place. Obama fought to stay in Iraq, but was forced out because of the status of forces agreement and that they couldn't have immunity for certain people. So that—we're now back in Iraq and we now may have an excuse to bomb Syria, which is what we've wanted to do all along. So, that's why I said that.

But, anyway, what do you have to say to potential whistleblowers out there?

COLEEN Well, I said this earlier, this is going to have to be a personal decision and, I think, someone like Edward Snowden learned from the experiences of the prior NSA whistleblowers and Risen's sources, etc. so he was watching this and knew that he could not—the only chance he had of getting the information out and of possibly succeeding in making a difference. Although we still have our fingers crossed on that, because the reform is still attempting not to reform at all. But his only chance was to get out of the—leave the country and find some relatively— asylum safe place. The world, these places where you could possibly be safe is shrinking. Because the U.S. now controls, what, 800 military bases all over the country, the NATO, the Five Eyes, and we're kind of now witnessing of back into a Cold War situation, or maybe even like a pre-World War I situation, where China, Russia, Iran, and maybe some others are in that category. Again, the U.S., the NATO, and that Pacific Rim—Japan, South Korea, and so—

JON The client-states of the U.S. Empire.

COLEEN Right, so we're witnessing this kind of bipolarization again, very similar to what happened—and all it takes when this happens, it's extremely dangerous, extremely stupid. Now, that's again what I would tell Obama. Very stupid what you're doing, because all it takes is a spark and you end up

with World War I, and it could even be mistaken now. Now we're nuclear-armed, so it's like this is the most dangerous and stupid thing that we could be doing. We need to be—at the very least, people talk about a multi-polar world, which actually then you have a little more balance and people are going to tend to maybe get along a little bit better in a multi-polar world, rather than a bipolar. (Right) Us versus Them.

And, so, whistleblowers are needed, and I think that if you're looking at keeping quiet about something very important, and very wrong, and also so critical to life and death and the future of humanity, etc., I think that you have to figure this out for yourself and then, I think—I always say, always try. I mean, that's what I said right from the start. I always said: Always try. And sometimes I even have to argue with myself, because it seems so futile many times to try and, especially like we are, always trying to stop the next wars, and now here we are in like this rollercoaster (Right) of war after war, and they get worse and worse.

And now we're facing off against Russia, a nuclear-armed Russia, and you can hardly explain this to people. And then the apathy in the United States, because there's no media. There's no mainstream media that will. (Right) But, a tipping point—these things, the reason people should stay somewhat hopeful and a whistleblower should still be hopeful that they can accomplish something. I mean, Edward Snowden is an example. He's so far managed to get a lot of information out. He's even appearing in these electronic appearances through encryption (Right) and stuff. And so, he's been successful. In some ways, the modern technology facilitated someone like Snowden to be able to get information out and still from a distance and still be safe. And, the other thing is all it takes is for this tipping point to be met, and I look at Vietnam War, which was not ended by Daniel Ellsberg's whistleblowing, you know? He did what he did, ready to go to jail for decades, and after two years, the Vietnam war hadn't even ended. And then, you had Deep Throat being a whistleblower. You had Jane Fonda. You had, of course, the rising public protest against the Vietnam War. And then people like Walter Cronkite turning, finally.

You probably can identify five or six things independent of each other that all came together and when the final thing came together, which was then, was kind of the unraveling Deep Throat through Woodward and Bernstein, because that was the final nail in the coffin—then, things changed.

JON Well, you know, my hope has always been that people come together for 9/11 again, but this time to expose the fact that we were lied to about 9/11, and thereby taking away the justification for all the horrible atrocities taking place in the name of that day. When 9/11 happened the first time, we came together and were told to go shopping and so forth, to continue our daily lives (Right), when in fact we should have been asking the questions: How did this happen? Why did they, you know—How did this happen? Why did this happen? And who was ultimately responsible for this? You know, those are the kinds of things we should have been asking, and we weren't. But the families did and the rest is history, but—

The last question: Are there any actions or websites that you would like to promote?

COLEEN The main action that I want people to promote is do something. You know, just the Nike motto: "Do something, at this point." (Right) There are lots of things that can be done. Watching this happen is not an option. And I don't care even if you are kind of, oh well—I mean, I called my Congressman just now about this vote on arming the so-called good rebels in Syria, and my Congressman is a war hawk. He's never seen a war he didn't like, so. But, you know what? I think—I talked to a staffer, maybe it helped influence his staffer. I think that you've got to try and I think people should not give up hope. I think that we never—they always say the dawn—the night is darkest before the dawn, or whatever. And I think that people have got to do something now. There's some chance that—I'm looking out at the tea leaves in the media and I think that there are the wiser people out there that are—well, Kissinger, I mean, I'm no fan of Kissinger. He has blood on his hands from all the things he did, but when he is finally getting a little bit afraid of what's going on. And even he has been cautionary. When Henry Kissinger is out there trying to caution us, I'm telling you folks, this is the time, get off the couch and really say: Hey, we have got to stop this. We have got to really reverse, reverse course from where from what put us on this path after 9/11—this so-called War On Terror that has just metastasized. And we have got to reverse this now and really, absolutely, start with the truth. (Right) And a truth commission about this should be one of many things that should be done right now to reverse.

JON Well, one thing that Cindy Sheehan says is that everybody should do at least one thing a day for peace. And, by the way, she asked me to say hello to you from her.

COLEEN Well, I'll pass it back. She's still one of the few with integrity. It's real difficult to fight against the wars of an empire when you're living inside and you see people constantly being swayed by these humanitarian war arguments, etc. by their political party, and she is one that really has integrity on this. So, please, give her my best too.

JON And you're also one who has major integrity. All right, Coleen, I want to thank you very much. It's been an honor to have you on the show. Maybe sometime I can have you on again. But I hope everything's going well for you. And, again, thank you for coming on.

COLEEN Yes, thank you so much for everything you do.

JON All right, thanks, Coleen. Have a good day.

COLEEN Okay, bye, bye.

JON Bye, bye.



Chapter/Episode 6 – Lorie Van Auken – September 27, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Lorie Van Auken (LORIE)

JON

Hi, everyone. Welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network. This week's show is going to focus on the 9/11 Commission. The 9/11 Report was sold to the world as the definitive account of 9/11 and nothing could be further from the truth. Many people continue to point to the report as if it's credible and it's not. There is an old saying: "It's not the crime that gets you. It's the cover-up." The 9/11 Commission and its report is the cover-up. It's so important for the world to know how corrupt and compromised the 9/11 Commission was.

Here's a quote that is relevant to today's topic:

"You can do an investigation and if you don't really want to research an area, you just don't look at it. If you don't ask them all of the questions or you don't let them tell you the whole story, you know, then you can write a report based on half-truths."

And that is from 9/11 Family Member, September 11 Advocate, and Jersey Girl, Mindy Kleinberg.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with Lorie. Hi, Lorie.

LORIE Hi, Jon.

JON How are you today?

LORIE I'm doing well.

JON All right, wonderful. All right, what I'm going to do, I'm going to read your bio.

Lorie Van Auken was the wife of Kenneth Van Auken, a bond broker at Cantor Fitzgerald on the 105th floor of Tower 1 who was killed on 9/11. She, along with 9/11 Family Members Kristen Breitweiser, Mindy Kleinberg, and Patty Casazza were greatly responsible for the creation of the 9/11 Commission. Together, they were famously known as the "Jersey Girls," but are also known as the "September Eleventh Advocates." Lorie was part of twelve 9/11 Family Members that made up what was called the 9/11 Family Steering Committee. She, along with the others, helped to monitor the 9/11 Commission, to supply 100's of well researched questions for the 9/11 Commission to answer, she worked with staffers of the 9/11 Commission, she helped the others fight for more time and money for the 9/11 Commission, and since the time of the 9/11 Commission, she has continued to be an advocate for 9/11 Justice.

And, that's her official bio. What I'm going to, I wrote a little personal bio for Lorie, and I'm going to read that now.

The very first time I emailed Lorie Van Auken was after the release of *9/11: Press for Truth*. I wanted to let her and the other Jersey Girls know that it was my pleasure to give the makers of the film the money they needed to finish it. I wanted them to know how important it was to me that their story be told. In that email I said, "This letter might seem a little odd coming out of the blue like this, but to be honest, this is the first time I've had your contact information. I asked a friend for it and he sent it along. I am very grateful that he did." Now, Lorie can attest to this. Since that time, I must have sent her well over a thousand emails asking questions about this or that having to do with 9/11, wishing her a happy Mother's Day, wishing her

well on the holidays, wishing her well around the Anniversary of 9/11, etc. and so on. I am honored to have been one of the people to receive the different press releases from the September Eleventh Advocates over the years to post on the Internet. In the original email I sent to her, I said I was "grateful" for her email address. Years later I can honestly say that I am grateful, honored, and humbled to have had the ability to communicate with her and to build a relationship with her. She is one of my biggest heroes and I can't say enough how much I respect her and I am honored to have her on my show today.

So, that was for you.

LORIE Thank you very much, Jon. That was very sweet.

JON Aw, you're very welcome.

All right now, if people have listened to my show, you know that the first question I ask is what was the day of 9/11 like for you? I have decided to make a rule not to ask family members that appear on this show that question. If you want to hear Lorie's story, I recommend listening to her testimony before the 9/11 Congressional Briefing that took place on July 22, 2005. I will provide a link.

So, Lorie, we're going to get right into the questions. (Okay) The first question is: How did you, Kristen Breitweiser, Mindy Kleinberg, and Patty Casazza meet?

LORIE Let's see, Mindy and I both lived in East Brunswick, New Jersey, at the time. We met through a mutual friend and it was right after it all happened, so we were pretty torn apart. We got to know each other going to the support group in Princeton where we were with other family members. And then, not too long after that, there was a family informational meeting at one of the attorney's offices and Patty and Kristen were there and Mindy and I met them and started speaking with them and the rest is history.

JON Really? Okay, that's interesting. Do you know how Patty and Kristen met? I think it was at a church or something? I don't remember.

LORIE That may be. That sounds familiar. We actually started to speak to Patty. She reached out to our support group for some other issues and we offered

our help to Patty and then some other things occurred and we just started to talk to Patty. And we just started to exchange ideas and that's how it began.

JON Right. Okay, next question is: For most Americans, questioning the 9/11 attacks didn't come naturally. However, to people that lost someone that day, questions would inevitably come up. What was one of the first things you questioned about that day?

LORIE I think one of the first things I ever questioned was how the south tower fell. It was hit in the corner and it seemed to me that that top piece of the building should have just fallen over, but it kind of righted itself and fell straight down. And that was weird. I was an art major back in my college days and that just didn't seem like the right physics for what had happened. So, that was my first question, and also on that day I remember seeing footage of President Bush sitting, reading to an elementary school class, and I just was wondering why he didn't get up and just kind of do something Presidential. It just seemed to me that having him stay in that classroom while the country was under this attack was bad form. (Yeah) And I was screaming at the TV, "Get up! Get up and do something! We're kind of in trouble here."

And, so those were, I think, my first questions.

JON Right. You told me, long ago, that you're a visual person and you said that you're an artist. I actually saw a picture of you doing a doodle—I don't remember where it was at, maybe the Louvre or something, and it was very good. (Oh, thank you) With regard to the buildings, because you're a visual person, it didn't look right to you, so that makes sense. With regard to Bush in the classroom—what I generally do is I ask people to put themselves in the position of the President at that time. And, it made no sense whatsoever.

First of all, he was in a highly publicized location. They made sure people were aware he was going to be there. They were five miles away from an International airport during a time when kamikaze hijackers are supposedly slamming them into buildings, or were slamming them into buildings, and so forth. And if this President—we've learned over the years how much information was given to the administration, so they had a pretty clear understanding, as far as we know, that something was coming and so here was this President just sitting there. And if I was President, I would say: "What do you mean America's under attack?" Or, after hearing about the first plane, obviously, you would think that after hearing all the warnings

and so forth that something would have clicked. And he would have gotten up and excused himself from the children and gone into the other room. And said this is what we've been told about and so forth, what—

LORIE But the children would have been in danger. If those were my kids in the room and the country was being attacked, you would think the President would have been one of the first targets or a high-level target. (Yeah) And so the children sitting in that room—because people always say well, what was he supposed to do? Scare the kids? Well, you don't have to scare the kids. You just say, excuse me children, the President has something important to take care of. You don't have to scream it. And the children would have been in mortal danger being in a room with somebody who was a potential target. So, it seems to me that anybody that gives that any thought would have said, oh yeah, he probably should have gotten out of there.

JON And there's a story of Ari Fleischer holding a sign telling him not to say anything yet. (That's right) So, he was being directed—

LORIE To stay there. (Right, exactly) Which seems in contrast to what we heard had happened to Vice President Cheney who was supposedly whisked by, I think those were his words (Right). Whisked. They carried him under his arms, whisked him out of the room that he was in. Why did that same treatment not happen to the President of the United States. It never made any sense to me. I mean, once they—

JON Exactly, and he stayed there for the seven minutes after being told America's under attack, and he stays there for a half hour longer, and then gave a little press briefing. So, it's really incredible.

All right, the next question, and I want people to listen to this question because these words, once they were told to me, I've never forgotten them. You said that at a time when your children were traumatized by the loss of their father, you had to go to Washington D.C. to fight for an investigation. When was the first time that the four of you went to Washington D.C. to fight for the 9/11 Commission, and who did you go to see?

LORIE We went to Washington—Chris Smith, our Congressman Chris Smith was absolutely great and his—Mary Noonan works in his office as the chief of staff, and they were really helpful. I think they were Patty's Congressmen in that part of New Jersey that she lived in. And they were really very helpful.

I think the first time we went to Washington was—we weren't fighting for the Commission yet, but I think we went to Chris Smith's office for some reason. I think it was February, 2002, that we went. I believe it might have even been Valentine's Day. But the first time we went to Washington to, as a group collectively begin the fight for the commission, it was actually for a rally, which was June 11, 2002, I believe, and we, the four of us went down. We had really begun the process of gathering the families and beginning to ask questions and started to say we need an investigation. So, I believe that was the first time we ever went, and we went to see—I think we saw Chris Smith. I know we saw Don McKean and there were others that we went to visit that day.

JON There were family members from another tragedy that influenced you. I don't remember what it was. Can you tell us about that?

LORIE I think it was Pan Am 103 and Bob Monetti was in our support group in Princeton. He helped start the support group up. And they lost family members. A few of the people that had lost family members from that tragedy helped being our support group. It was sort of like pay it forward. And Bob Monetti was really very helpful to us. He's one of the first people that suggested to us we should go to Washington to fight for an investigation. It wasn't going to happen. There was legislation for an investigation that was just languishing and nothing was happening, and if we didn't go fight for it, nobody would. So, he encouraged us to go, and that's really where the fire got lit.

JON Right, and I remember reading about the rally and that took place a couple of months after the leak, or a month after the leak, of the August 6 PDB, which so people know, was a warning that Bush got on August 6th, 2001. It was called "Bin Laden determined to strike within the U.S." It talked about hijackings or other types of attacks. It talked about 70 FBI Al-Qaeda related investigations currently taking place within the U.S. And it talked about other things. But if everybody remembers, after 9/11 we were told repeatedly by our politicians and by the media pundits who repeated what they said that there were no warnings. That we had no idea this was going to happen. And so on and so forth. So, after the leak of the August 6th PDB, the fight for an investigation became polarized a little bit and helped, I think, with the rally, I would think. Did it?

LORIE The rally was not as well attended as we would have hoped. But it was well attended and there was press there. As far as what the family members,

people that were affected by September 11, as with all groups were not a homogenous group. We were all very, very different. Some people had very young kids. Some people had just gotten married. Some people weren't married, yet some people had lost children. (Awful) It was just—everybody was different, at different grieving stages, and it was hard to get people up and out of bed. People were really in a bad way. And it was so, everything was so public. And it was really very difficult. You were watching the planes hit the buildings over and over again. (Yeah) Pretty much on a daily basis, hourly in some cases. And it was very difficult.

So, to get everybody mobilized and get everybody down to Washington was, for some people, just too hard to do.

JON I remember it was reported on by *The New York Times*, but I don't remember seeing a lot about it elsewhere. (Mm-hmm)

Now, how many hours did you spend reading and researching about 9/11, and do you still do this to this day?

LORIE I spent pretty much all my time reading and researching at the beginning, because it was really hard to find things. I kind of had like a graphic image of myself being sucked in the computer with just my feet sticking out. (Laughs) You know, my kids were upstairs and I was in the basement where my computer was researching, so people would call me up that they were hungry and things like that. So I had to stop for wheels and to drive them places. But at night, especially after everybody was in bed, I would go downstairs. I couldn't sleep, so I was very busy researching and I was on the phone with different people and emailing different people. And it was, it was a rough time. But a lot of hours. Pretty much all my free hours.

JON You were kind of like the designated researcher of the four of you, weren't you?

LORIE We all researched, but I guess some of us were sort of more addicted to it than others, whatever. (Laughs) So I was pretty, I got pretty good at it. But, everybody did. Everybody got pretty good at it. So, and each of us had our own areas of interest. The timeline always fascinated me, so I sort of—that was sort of my thing.

JON Right. The timeline she's talking about was created by Paul Thompson. It was originally at CooperativeResearch.org. It has since changed over to

HistoryCommons.org and I honestly believe it's one of the most important websites on the Internet.

LORIE But that came later, actually. The timeline I'm talking about is the things that actually happened on September 11, like what time the planes took off (Okay), what time they hit the buildings, what time they were hijacked, what time—that sort of thing. I was actually interested in the timeline just because it was also one of those visual things to me. Something I could sort of wrap my head around and understand.

Yes, Paul Thompson—when he started sending out—we started to see his research, that was, for me it was like a meeting of the minds. Because it was like, oh my God! This is what I was looking at. There was somebody else that did a timeline. I don't remember who it was—that did everything color-coded, and it was also a revelation because it was like wow, look how organized this is. (Right) Because that's what you needed to really begin to try to figure out what had happened, what the protocols were supposed to be, what was supposed to happen, how that should have gone, and how it went instead. And the timeline was pretty critical to understanding that.

JON Right, absolutely. When you start to look at things in context by going through the timeline, certain things start to make sense. So, it's very important to look at the history starting from the day of, or starting from as far back as 1979, when Zbigniew Brzezinski made the decision to arm the Mujahideen and so on and so forth.

Now, with regard to 9/11, I always ask people: "What qualifies as suspicious behavior?" Patty Casazza once described the Bush administration as being the "biggest adversary" for the creation of the 9/11 Commission. As it turns out, they were also the biggest adversary against the Congress investigating 9/11 and there were also shenanigans with regard to the different Inspector General reports.

How surprised were you that they did not want this investigation?

LORIE I wasn't surprised. Each of us had our own levels of surprise of the four of us. And, of course, with the rest of the Steering Committee later on. I was not surprised, because as I started to look at the different things, it looked to me like the behavior was very suspicious in a lot of cases and people were all of sudden doing jobs that they normally wouldn't have done. People that were supposed to be at different places in different positions in Government

were just, that day not there. It just went on and on like that. So, I wasn't particularly surprised if they didn't want an investigation, because it sounded to me like they may have had something to hide. You didn't know what. What we're talking about there, I still don't exactly know, but it's—it wasn't a surprise.

JON Their excuse at the time was they didn't want to take resources away from the fight on the War On Terror. And that's just such a ridiculous argument. In past incidents, like Pearl Harbor, they set up commissions within days to investigate.

LORIE And you would have thought that if it was a surprise attack, that they themselves would have wanted to know how it was that they were able to—that the terrorists could succeed against this big nation of—with all of this budgeting for this very thing, you would have thought that they would have jumped at the chance to investigate this because it was incredible that 19 people could really defeat the U.S.—entire U.S. military. You would have thought they would have been really good to see how that happened.

JON It really is unbelievable. When I read in January, 2002, on CNN that Bush and Cheney asked Tom Daschle—CNN said they asked him to limit the scope of the investigations, but Tom Daschle later told us that they asked him not to investigate the attacks at all. When I heard that, you know, a light bulb went off in my head and I asked my question: "Why would the President and Vice President, of all people, not want to know exactly how and why this happened, so as to make sure that it could never happen again?"

And, because of that, I started to pay attention a little bit more to what was going on with regard to 9/11. So, to me, it was just unbelievable.

Now, looking back, how surprised are you that people—and I use that term loosely—like John McCain and Joe Lieberman were two of your biggest supporters for a 9/11 Commission. And, I say that—I use the term loosely, John McCain and Joe Lieberman have been such supporters of the wars that are going on. It's really criminal as far as I'm concerned, but anyway—

How surprised were you?

LORIE Joe Lieberman was Senator for Connecticut and there were people who lost family members from Connecticut. So, he had a lot of constituents coming

down to ask him for an investigation and things like that. So, that wasn't too much of a surprise.

John McCain didn't come to our rally. I believe Joe Lieberman came to the rally, but McCain didn't come to the rally. And our rally was pretty early on in the whole process and they were—some of the Republicans—okay, Chris Smith is a Republican, and he was concerned that if he went it would seem that he was partisan. But we kept saying, no, if you come, you're going to make it bipartisan and that's really what it should be. People that died on September 11th were members of all different parties and many countries, as well. (Right)

So, we weren't really concerned with politics and partisanship. To me, this was, and for all of us, it was necessary for everyone to get involved and ask the questions that needed to be asked and investigate as to what had happened to, again, yeah, keep the country safe and never have this sort of thing happen again. What had gone wrong, that 19 hijackers could defeat an entire U.S. military with a budget that is pretty astronomical.

So, John McCain did not come to the rally that day. He sent his people to the rally and then we met with him afterwards. And, Lieberman and McCain worked together on a lot things, so I guess, ultimately, it's not that much of a surprise that they worked together with this.

So, Lieberman was actually really helpful. We got sort of at the end of our ropes with shenanigans. The way things were being handled were like we were getting the runaround. So, somebody would say, well this person doesn't want the investigation. And then we'd go to that person and they'd say, no, it's not me, it's so-and-so that doesn't want the investigation. Then they'd go, no, it's not me.

So, we got crazy, and after a little while, we were begging Joe Lieberman to please have a meeting with everybody in the room, all of the parties in a room, and that way we could see who really was sort of stopping things. And Lieberman was cooperative and he had everybody come to his office, and we met around a giant table. And we could see that it was Bush and Cheney that was good at keeping things from moving forward. You know, it was the White House.

So, at that point, we were able to circumvent that, and that was sort of really the turning point for when we got the commission.

JON Right. I had read that John McCain, one of the reasons that he did it was because of how he was treated during the 2000 elections by Karl Rove, and so he wanted to get back at Bush and so forth. I don't know how true that is, but—

LORIE I never heard that before, but as our events sort of unfolded, back then, like McCain and Lieberman worked on a lot things together, so it doesn't really surprise me that, if Lieberman was sort of on the side of doing it, that McCain would have helped. And I—listen, we really had a pretty good reason for wanting an investigation. It was kind of hard to argue once you really looked at it.

JON To me, the idea of even thinking about terms like Democrats or Republicans, with regard to the murder of 2,976 people, it's absolutely absurd. It has nothing to do with politics. It's non-partisan—as far as I'm concerned. I mean, it really has nothing to do with it, as far as I'm concerned.

LORIE Right, that was our attitude and I think eventually that argument became hard to refute.

JON Right. When the 9/11 Commission started its work, one of the first things Thomas Kean said was that they were not there to "point fingers." Were you and the other family members expecting the 9/11 Commission to use their subpoena power and to hold people accountable for things like perjury?

LORIE Yes. We were. We were very dismayed when we learned—because that was the point of the investigation was to sort of find out what had happened and then, if people had not done their jobs, they should have been reprimanded, fired, you know (Yeah), whatever happened, because you really wouldn't want people that couldn't handle an event like that to just stay in a position where they might've needed to make those kind of decisions.

So, it didn't really make sense to keep people in those positions, or promote them, or whatever else, if they really weren't able to handle the stress of that position. And, so they should have been held accountable and they should have been demoted or fired or whatever else. Criminal behavior should have been punished. And none of that happened.

JON Right, and at the end of the 9/11 Commission they said people all across the Government are responsible and so forth, so we can't point fingers. It was really ridiculous to me—

LORIE Everyone's responsible, therefore, no one's responsible.

JON Exactly. Now, when Kristen testified before the Joint Congressional Inquiry, making the argument for the need for an independent 9/11 Commission, she explicitly said that we need accountability. So, obviously, it just seems like that's what everybody was fighting for and it never happened.

How was the 9/11 Family Steering Committee created and what was its role?

LORIE Well, there were a group of us that sort of kind of got together and worked together when we were fighting for the commission. It was different family groups, the heads of different family groups that had already been created for other reasons, and a bunch of us just started to go down to Washington and kind of continue the fight and really understood the continuity of what we were doing and who we needed to go speak to. And it became this sort of dance where you understand that you have to go to this person to get to that person to understand what this committee is doing and that committee—you know, Washington is a very interesting place.

And so once we got the Commission up and running, the Family Steering Committee was that group of people that had done all this sort of background legwork already and really knew what was going on, so we continued to do our jobs and then called ourselves the Family Steering Committee, as in steering the commission. We were supposed to, in our view, really sort of watchdog the Commission, make sure that the areas that we wanted to see investigated got investigated. We had high hopes that we'd have influence on people that would be testifying and the questions that were being asked of the witnesses. And, it was disappointing. (Laughs)

JON Right. To say the least.

LORIE—the way things went, but that's how it turned out.

JON Well, in the beginning, when 9/11—oh, by the way, with regard to the 9/11 Family Steering Committee, just so people know, there is a website out

there right now that was the 9/11 Family Steering Committee's. It's 911IndependentCommission.org. And—

LORIE We chip in—the Family Steering Committee chips in to keep that running.

JON That's great. That is very important. There are so many things on there, and I've read as much as I could. As far as I know, I've read it all. But there's a list of unanswered questions. There are statements made by the 9/11 Family Steering Committee during the time of the 9/11 Commission, which to me are invaluable, because it shows the problems that they were having all throughout the 9/11 Commission.

LORIE Yeah, it's a pretty accurate history because it was done real-time, so when you look back at it, you can really see the roadblocks and what issues we were faced with real-time during the fight for the Commission and during the Commission.

JON Right, exactly. It's a wonderful resource of information.

In fact, just briefly, the issue of Government minders, the individuals who accompanied witnesses and intimidated witnesses, and answered questions for witnesses, and you know, gave witnesses the idea that their agencies might hold them, might retaliate against them if they said such and such, were a problem during the 9/11 Commission. And there was a document that was found, I think in 2009, from the 9/11 Commission that talked about the Government minders. And, I had no idea, I went through the statements of the 9/11 Families Steering Committee during the time of the 9/11 Commission and on three separate occasions you guys addressed the Government minders. You did not want them there.

That's just one of the many things that you learn—

LORIE Yeah, we were pretty outraged about that because we really felt that if you're going to have people come testify, they need to be able to tell what they know. They need to not be intimidated to not be able to do so. (Exactly) And we were intimidated, so we were outraged really at the time. We knew about it and we were really besides ourselves trying to get that to not be, but we were not successful.

JON Just unbelievable.

In the beginning, the 9/11 Commission didn't hold people under oath, and you had to shame them into doing so. What kind of steps did you take to do that?

LORIE We begged. We pleaded. (Laughs) We explained why this was a terrible idea. They had subpoena power and they had the power to put people under oath, and we said what you're doing is going to make your work look really insignificant if you don't have—if you don't swear people in. That's how that's supposed to happen. (Right)

The first, I don't remember how many hearings, they did not swear people in, but a few hearings into the whole process they began to swear people in. I think even they saw—maybe they watched the tapes, and it just looked like a Mickey Mouse operation when they didn't swear anybody. (Smirky laugh)

JON Right. It's a shame—the idea of when you hold people under oath, is the idea that if they lie, they're held accountable. And, even though everybody eventually was starting to be held under oath, nobody was held accountable. So, it didn't mean anything anyway.

LORIE Yeah, I mean, you know the bottom line is I think, however, if you're a Government person and you're sworn in, I think that it makes you be more truthful even if you're not going to be held accountable. (Oh, right!) Because you never know in the future what could happen, and so therefore, I suspect that it was a little helpful to have people sworn in.

JON No, no, absolutely, it was very—it's a good thing to do.

LORIE It also got us off their backs. I suppose that was helpful, too.

JON Right.

In 2006, you and Mindy Kleinberg released a report showing how poorly the 9/11 Commission answered the families' questions. On the 9/11 Family Steering Committee's website, there are a list of questions the 9/11 Commission failed to address. How did the families decide on which questions would be submitted to the 9/11 Commission?

LORIE We all wrote questions and we submitted them.

JON (Laughs)

LORIE We would just write them and we passed them around. We had a very rigorous editing process which took forever, but we'd write questions and we'd pass them around and whoever was next on the list to get the questions, or whatever was being passed around, would edit it and clarify it to make the question clearer, to make sure that everybody knew what the person meant (Okay), so that if the question got asked, it would be clear.

So, we all—with a group effort, people would submit questions. And, like I said, different people had different areas that they were more interested in, or an area of expertise. So, that was kind of the questions you tended to ask anyway. Then you'd pass it around to the group and everyone would see the questions and we'd write the list and we'd edit it, and bring it with us to Washington and we'd hand it to the commissioners and we would sit there with bated breath hoping they would ask the questions.

JON Right. How frustrating was it to see witnesses brought forward to testify, and not see your questions being asked?

LORIE It was really very infuriating, because a lot of times our questions were more in depth than the questions the commissioners would ask. We researched everything and we had better follow-up questions in a lot of cases, and it was very frustrating and very infuriating to not get to the point, which is what we were—had gotten pretty adept at, because we really spent so much time doing this, so it was upsetting to not see our questions asked.

JON When I would watch the 9/11 Commission Hearings—and I couldn't watch them live. I watched them on their re-broadcast late at night on C-Span. It was infuriating to me to see—it was like the friendliness, the camaraderie between the commissioners and the witnesses—the friendly banter back and forth.

LORIE It was a waste of time. Our thing was that it was a waste of time. There was a time limit on each commissioner on how long they had with each witness, and every time they spent five minutes saying how great the person was, their hairdo (Right), they were really taking away time from the point of the entire investigation or the entire commission, and why we were all in Washington, not with our families. So, every time they did that, we were really upset by it. (Right) And it wasted a lot of time.

JON It's unbelievable to me. When you wanted Condi to testify, there was a time when Condoleezza Rice and the rest of the Bush White House didn't want to testify, and they had sent in Richard Armitage in Condi Rice's place and you guys walked out in a protest. Did you ever actually see the Richard Armitage testimony?

LORIE We probably saw it broadcast because we did a silent walkout when Armitage was testifying and we were, so obviously—we started to watch it and then we were just, they were asking questions of him that should have been asked of Condi, and so we all silently got up and walked out. And we did a press conference at that time and said—and I think we watched it later on, but it was what we thought. They were asking questions of the wrong person who could not answer those questions that Condoleezza Rice needed to answer.

JON The reason I asked that was it was infuriating to me to watch him testify. They were asking him questions about basketball. You know? It was just absolutely absurd.

The next question, in this line of questioning: How infuriating is it not to have all of your questions answered, and in a credible fashion?

LORIE Well, I mean, I think that's pretty obvious. It's completely infuriating. The reason that we asked for the investigation was because we were told it would be very difficult to really have any kind of court action against anybody in the Government. So, this was sort of our only hope at getting at these answers, and to not have the questions asked in any fashion at all, and then to not have the follow-up questions asked, which after somebody answers something, there comes another question a lot of times that wasn't asked either. It was really, it was very tough, because we would have rather have done all of this in a court of law. (Yeah--) Where there are rules about stuff like this, you know?

JON It seems that when 9/11 gets into a court room, like the Moussaoui trial, things get exposed. Like Harry Samit came in and testified that he—

LORIE That's because there are rules. You have to be sworn in. You have subpoena power. You're not asking for subpoena power, you have it – (Exactly). There are rules about cross-examinations, and about—it's already done. We had to reinvent the wheel with the 9/11 Commission, using that as best we could, using the court as a model. But the bottom line is it wasn't funded

properly, it wasn't handled properly. The subpoena power wasn't used until way later in the game. People were not sworn in. I mean you could just go on and on. If it was all just handled in a system that's already set up to do this—the court—you would have hopefully seen more truth coming out. But, I guess not necessarily, because things get blocked and there was always the answer that they couldn't subpoena something, or they couldn't have something because it was being—sources and methods needed to be protected. Or whatever. (Right) There still would have been things that they could have done to block information from coming out even in a court.

But yes, a lot of things came out in this stuff. You read those transcripts in the Moussaoui trial and you look at that information. There's a lot of information there.

JON Yeah. In your opinion, which people in Government should have been held accountable, but weren't? And how ridiculous—and we already talked about this—but how ridiculous was it that people that should have been held accountable were instead rewarded and promoted.

LORIE Our opinion was that everybody that had anything to do with things going wrong on September 11 should have been held accountable. And we were outraged that they were rewarded and promoted. It was very upsetting to see that.

JON Well, are there any specific individuals that you would have liked to have been held accountable?

LORIE Well, I mean, you could just go through the list. George Tenet probably should have been held accountable for some of what went wrong. Rumsfeld should have been held accountable. Cheney, Bush, I mean, there's a whole line of people in the Government that should have been held accountable for what happened, and they weren't.

JON Yep. Condoleezza Rice, she should have been held accountable. (Exactly) So many people should have been held accountable.

What kinds of things did the Bush Administration do to give the 9/11 Commission a hard time?

LORIE Well, we talked about this already, as well, with the minders. (Right) What comes to mind. The funding. I mean, just the fact that Bush and Cheney

would not be called in to the Commission. They wouldn't testify in front of everyone and that they did it—

JON How ridiculous is that?

LORIE —behind closed doors with no recording devices so nobody knows what they said even to this day. I mean, they gave them a hard time from A to Z.

JON Right. I remember that there was something about how Alberto Gonzalez was stonewalling. Anytime the 9/11 Commission wanted documents, he made it very difficult for the 9/11 Commission to get documents. And with regard to documents, I heard that they were given a lot of junk. Like things that had absolutely nothing to do with 9/11. Just boxes and boxes of paper that really wasn't relevant to what they were trying to investigate.

LORIE Yeah, we heard the same thing. (Laughs)

JON Wow, yeah, that's ridiculous.

At the time—just so everybody knows, the following questions are about Philip Zelikow, and Philip Zelikow was the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission. He was in charge of the staff. He was in charge of the investigation, essentially. He decided which witnesses would be brought forward, what questions would be asked, etc. and so on. And the man, essentially, to me, is a criminal. But take that in the context for these next questions.

At the time, what kinds of things did Philip Zelikow, the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, do that frustrated you?

LORIE He was a little difficult to deal with. He basically didn't really like it when we spoke to staffers. So . . . we used to have these kind of conference calls where Phil Zelikow would be on the phone and the Family Steering Committee would be on. And there'd be staffers, but he really didn't like us to address the staffers very much and he really wanted to see what was going on all the time.

JON How did he expect you to communicate with them?

LORIE We communicated with some of the staffers really before Phil Zelikow had the kind of idea that we were. But then later on I think he probably told

them, told the staffers not to talk to us directly so much. So that's sort of the message that we got. So that was pretty upsetting.

But, it was just hard to understand that there was this sort of—these figure heads in Kean and Hamilton. And then really what was happening behind the scenes was that Zelikow was sort of running that show.

JON Right. And—from what I remember, he wrote a complete outline of the final 9/11 Report with Ernest May. Before the investigation even started. You guys called for his resignation I think on two separate occasions and they refused. There were a lot of things—

Oh, one of the things I wanted to talk to you about was his attempt to try and link Iraq with the 9/11 attacks. There's a story in Phil Shenon's book, I think after Laurie Milroy testified, you went up to him and confronted him about that. Do you recall that?

LORIE Yes, we had a meeting after that and I was outraged completely that he was trying to say that Iraq had anything to do with September 11, and Laurie Milroy's testimony was really laughable at the time. It was just really beyond the pale that they were trying to sort of put that off on the American public that people would now have to, you know, would believe this at all (Right) that Iraq had something to do with September 11. We knew at the time that was just ridiculous, and it was just another horrible—

JON It was a pretty good indication to me as to who he was working for. You know? Who would that had benefitted? The Bush administration. (Yeah) Who did relentlessly try to tie Iraq to 9/11.

LORIE Yeah, I think that's probably true.

JON Now, knowing what you know today about the kinds of things he did, how much would you like to see him in jail?

LORIE I'd certainly would like to see him demoted. (Snickers) I'd like to see him never work in Government again. That's what I would like. Because I know that would be really a pretty big punishment for him. Not just in Government, but he teaches and, I don't know if he's just retired, but he is a teacher and I would like to see him just sort of be put out of business. That would be great.

JON Right. You'd like to see everybody know that this man, his credibility, he has none. He did horrible crimes, as far as I'm concerned, during the time of the 9/11 Commission. And, you're right, he shouldn't be brought out to do lectures and the things that he does. Anyway—

When people openly lied and you knew about those lies at the time of the 9/11 Commission, did you take any steps to tell staff or commissioners that you were aware of these lies?

LORIE Yes, any time we saw something that was not right, we would email the commissioners. We emailed them every single day. We were either emailing them questions, or we were telling them what follow-up questions that they should have asked, or we would like them to ask in the future, or that somebody did not tell the truth about whatever we knew to be true. And we would send our evidence and our research and we were very busy, very busy.

JON Right. Especially the NORAD lies, which they told a lot of lies.

LORIE Yeah, there were three different versions of their timeline and it was pretty ridiculous, actually. (Yeah--) We were like, well aren't those the 0800 people? The people who like keep track of every minute and log everything in and have the time down to a second of what they're doing. How would they not know their timeline or have it not be logged in somewhere? It never really made any sense to us, not from the beginning.

JON Well, there was a meeting, I think, between NORAD, the FAA, and the White House on September 17, 2001, and Bob Kerrey said that it seemed like something happened in that meeting that caused almost a necessity to deliver something to the public that was different than the truth. So, that's like an indication that the White House is directing the lies being told by NORAD, but we don't know for sure.

LORIE Well, we know that their timeline—again, back to the importance of a timeline—we know that their timeline would really tell us a lot if we actually knew exactly what unfolded and what should have happened with protocols and with fighters being sent out after the hijacked planes, and things like that. We would know a lot if we knew the real facts about how that all that went down that day.

JON Right, there were so many contradictions—go ahead.

- LORIE Yeah, so I mean, that would be a reason why they would not want that to come out. If they were hiding something, there's a lot of factual data that timelines just don't lie.
- JON Right. And with regard to NORAD and things like Able Danger, they were referred to the DOD IG, Inspector General, and it seems, apparently, I forget what the report was. I think it was Frank Rich from *The New York Times* that said the Inspector General that worked for the DOD was essentially corrupt, was a Bush puppet. So, any of the reports that he wrote, which let NORAD off the hook, which said things like Able Danger, they never found the chart, or whatever, we can't trust those Inspector General's reports, essentially. So, I just wanted to point that out. (Mm-hmm) During the time of the 9/11 Commission, you and the other Jersey Girls were on TV a lot. After the release of the report, and the official narrative was set in stone, you very much became persona non-grata. Every effort that you made, every press release you wrote, were virtually ignored by the corporate media. How frustrating is that for you?
- LORIE At the time, it was very frustrating. We just had hoped that we'd be able to really reveal more of what we knew, but once the Commission came out with its report and everything had a nice little neat bow on it (Laughs), they were done, because they didn't really want anybody questioning that anymore. So—
- JON I just think people should really take a look at that. That the fact that the corporate media—they just started to ignore them. And that should say something about how horrible—
- LORIE They basically were saying this was the answer that we got. Your investigation is done. There's a bow on it, a nice little tied gift here. And so, that's it. You're done. (Right, exactly) It was very hard to sort of go back and say, but you didn't answer ex-amount of questions, because they were moving on. They were done.
- JON It was unbelievable to me. There were so many press releases that said things that were so explosive, to me. Like you called the 9/11 Commission derelict in its duties. You questioned the voracity of the entire report. I mean, these were just some of the statements that were made in some of these press releases. And it was just—if the American people knew what

you were trying to tell them, it would just be a different world today, I think. And, it's just a shame.

LORIE We felt that we would just get everything down on paper. We would just write what we knew and anybody that had enough interest to read it, would know what we had to say. And that was the only thing we had at that point.

JON Well, I highly recommend that people do read the press releases that you've written over the years.

Does this have an impact on your willingness to remain active?

LORIE You know, essentially, yeah, I guess you get a little bit crazy from beating your head against the wall, but you know, you just also get tired. And I think they count on that. It's a pity that we couldn't really get a real investigation to see what had happened and then hold the people accountable the way they should have been. That would have been much more justice, in our view, for the victims of September 11.

JON Right. Is there anything you would like to say to the corporate media who has ignored you all these years?

LORIE I just guess they're doing what they perceive, or what they're, you know—the corporate media is basically paid for by the people that advertise with them and they have their own marching orders. So, it's not—the press is not necessary free is what I'm trying to say.

JON Right, and I, many times over the years, I've said shame on them for ignoring you guys. And, again, shame on them.

Right now, there is an effort underway to get the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry released. Greatly so the families can use them in a lawsuit against Saudi Arabia. You fought hard for their release at one time by releasing a petition that ultimately got 17 thousand signatures, and even then, Washington D.C. didn't budge. Do you think D.C. will budge this time, and are you part of the lawsuit against Saudi Arabia?

LORIE I am part of the lawsuit against Saudi Arabia. We said, okay, if the 15 of the 19 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia, and the funding came from Saudi Arabia—even though the 9/11 Commission said the funding was of little practical significance, we disagreed. We think that the funding of anything

we would hope that eventually those pages would be released. It doesn't seem 13 years later that you're hiding—that sources and methods are relevant anymore, and that's the only real reason for redaction. So, it's time. It's time to release the 28 pages. For anybody that's listening.

JON Right. And, we pretty much have a good idea as to what's in those pages. You know they talk about, or Bob Graham has written about the fact that the Bandar Family was connected to money of two of the hijackers in San Diego, and one of the things I heard about during the—when the 9/11 Commissioners interviewed Bush and Cheney is that when Bush was asked about this he pretty much ignored the question. When he was asked about Bandar, specifically, he avoided the question. So, I thought that was interesting.

With regard to the 28 redacted pages—with regard to the 9/11 Commission, they have yet to release all of their documentation and a lot of the documentation that they have released is greatly redacted. So, the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry are important, but there's also a lot of other things that have to be released as well. And you'll find a lot times in the documentation that's released from the 9/11 Commission, it contradicts what's in the report. So, that's why it's very important to get a lot of these—to get all of these documents released.

BREAK

Okay, we're recording again. Unfortunately, we had some technical difficulties. Lorie got disconnected. And I think you're on a landline.

LORIE Yes, I am.

JON That's pretty weird. Anyway, we were just talking about Saudi Arabia, the 28 redacted pages, the pages from the 9/11 Commission—all these things need to be released.

Is there anything that you would like to say to someone that is just starting to question 9/11, or is there anything you would like to say about why it's so important to point out the fact that we were lied to about that day?

LORIE I would just say to anyone that was starting to question 9/11 that they should just read everything they can get their hands on. They should look at the Family Steering Committee's website, as we said before. They could

watch *9/11: Press for Truth*. They could read Paul Thompson's timeline book. They could read—there's a ton of books out there that really speak to different questions about September 11. The Moussaoui trial documents are very interesting to read.

It's to really—our history is to—what's important really for everybody to understand.

JON Right. There's a lot of information out there and it's very—if you really look at 9/11—I tell people, don't listen to me. Do your own research and eventually you'll come across something that you'll question about the 9/11 attacks. It's virtually impossible to avoid it if you honestly take a look at that day.

Now, is there anything that you would like to say to the people in the Middle East and elsewhere that have been affected because of how that day is being used?

LORIE You know, just that it's a pity, it's a terrible thing, people are blamed for things that they didn't do. Or, it's a terrible thing for people to have a country that they're living in be attacked by anyone. So, it's just a really sad situation.

JON And they're still using 9/11 as the justification. The bombing in Syria, the President said the authorization for use of military force that was implemented after 9/11 is the justification for the bombing in Syria. I mean, it's used for so many horrible things—and we were lied to about that day. And so, in my mind anyway, I don't think there's a justification for anything that's being done in the name—of that day, in the names of your loved ones, and so forth. At least that's my opinion.

LORIE Well, we were pretty upset about the whole, you know, Iraq, them trying to connect Iraq and September 11th and, you know, we did try to speak out at the time, so. (Right) It's really hard to fight City Hall, as they say.

JON As they say—but one thing Kristen Breitweiser said—look what four people did. Imagine what eight people could do, what sixteen people could do, what 32 people could do, etc. and so on. People do have power. They just have to get together and use it.

And we talked about does this have an effect—with corporate media ignoring you, does that have an effect on your activism. And I think that the family members have given us the tools over the years. Movies like *9/11: Press for Truth, In Their Own Words: The Untold Stories of the 9/11 Families*, your report from Mindy telling us how poorly the 9/11 Commission answered your questions. As you said, there's a multitude of things out there. They've given us the tools. The families have given us the tools that we need. We just need to use them.

And, Lorie, I very much want to thank you for taking the time today to talk about the 9/11 Commission. I'm very sorry for your loss, for the loss of Kenneth and I hope that one day we manage to get you some form of legitimate justice and truth for what happened that day.

LORIE Thank you, Jon, that would be great. (Laughs)

JON It would be great. So, again, thank you very much for taking the time today. And, good luck!

LORIE Okay, thanks. You're welcome.

JON Thank you very much, Lorie.

LORIE Okay. Take care.

JON Bye, bye.

JON This show is dedicated to Kenneth Van Auken



Chapter/Episode 7 – Dr. Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed – September 30, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Dr. Nafeez Ahmed (NAFEEZ)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show is going to focus on how Governments use terrorism as a proxy. If you saw the film *9/11: Press for Truth*, you will hear Paul Thompson ask the following question: "The question to me is who else was involved with Al-Qaeda? Was Al-Qaeda used as a tool just as in the 1980s the Mujahideen were basically used by the U.S. Government?" I believe with regard to 9/11, this is an extremely important question that needs to be answered.

Okay, hi, this is Jon and I'm here with Dr. Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed. How are you doing, Nafeez?

NAFEEZ I'm great, Jon. How are you?

JON I'm doing well. All right, I'm going to read your bio.

Dr. Nafeez Ahmed is an investigative journalist, bestselling author and international security scholar. He has contributed to two major terrorism investigations in the US and UK, the 9/11 Commission and the 7/7 Coroner's Inquest, and has advised the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, British Foreign Office and US State Department, among other Government agencies. His new novel, *ZERO POINT*, predicted a US-UK re-invasion of Iraq to put down an Islamist insurgency there. Nafeez is a regular contributor to *The Guardian* where he writes about the geopolitics of interconnected environmental, energy and economic crises via his Earth Insight global column. He has also written for *The Independent*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *The Scotsman*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Atlantic*, *Quartz*, *Prospect*, *New Statesman*, *Le Monde diplomatique*, among many others. And I also think *Raw Story* was one of them at one point. Is that right?

NAFEEZ That's right! (Laughs)

JON I'm glad I remember that. All right, and I wrote a little personal bio for Nafeez.

He does not know it, but Nafeez is a mentor of mine. Over the years, Nafeez has given me insights into many things that have been invaluable for my activism. He is a walking encyclopedia for many issues, and not just about terrorism and 9/11. I highly recommend watching his movie *Crisis of Civilization*. In my opinion, Nafeez is brilliant in his analysis of many issues. I highly recommend reading and watching what he has to say.

So, with that, how are you doing, Nafeez?

NAFEEZ I'm great. Thanks for the bio, was very kind of you.

JON Oh, no problem, you deserved it. Just so everybody knows, this is actually the first time that Nafeez and I have ever spoken. We've emailed. We've corresponded. We've talked on Facebook. I was at locations that he was at and we just never got around to talking. So, this is our first time.

Anyway, my first question to you is what was the day of 9/11 like for you?

NAFEEZ Oh, wow. I mean, that's—I mean, what I remember really is just it seemed like a lot of people just being completely, utterly shocked watching it on television. I think at the time I was living in Brighton and had been living

there not too long, actually, about a year or so, and it just completely was, just I mean, happening. It was just completely and utterly just shocking. It took me, and obviously everybody else, completely by surprise, and I think glued to the screens all day long. I think it was awhile before I began to think of it more critically about what actually happened on the day. It certainly was a catalyzing event, as it was for many people in terms of my writing and my desire to kind of get to the bottom of things. I think 9/11 was a major push in that regard. I mean, I'd been writing a lot at the time. I mean, I didn't actually have a degree at that time, but I'd been writing a lot. I'd been publishing on a couple of small alternative news outlets and I remember when 9/11 happened and I began kind of just trying to understand it, trying to deal with the kind of the backlash on Muslim communities in the UK. And, kind of, as a writer at the time, I wanted to find a kind of a way of responding to that and a way of kind of understanding and making sense of 9/11. And so that kind of led me on a path to just reading, learning, trying to understand more, and eventually I began to put together the bits and pieces that came to form my first book *The War on Freedom*, which came out nearly six months later, actually. I think it was summer of 2002. Yeah.

JON I don't know if that first book is actually still available to get—*The War on Freedom*.

NAFEEZ I think it is.

JON It is? I looked once, anyway, it was hard to get. When Nafeez's books, incidentally—when I go into a bookstore, they're one of the books that I look to see if they have, and they rarely ever—I don't think I've ever seen one. (Laughs) It's one of those books that you have to go to the front desk and order. But he wrote, yeah, *War on Freedom* and *War on Truth* and you talked about the backlash against Muslims because of the results of that day, and that's been one of the things that I've fought for, fought against, for as long as I can remember. It really saddens me when someone, for instance, pushes someone who looks like a Muslim in front of a train in New York City just because they're Muslim. And it doesn't get nearly the attention that it should in this country. And it's just horrible. Muslims are our friends. No differently than Christians, Jews, and so on and so forth. But, yeah, that really hits home for me. The hatred against Muslim people as a result of 9/11.

What is your definition of Al-Qaeda?

NAFEEZ

I mean, my definition of Al-Qaeda, this is an interesting one. I think the basic way of understanding Al-Qaeda at the moment is that they were basically an organization of a loosely kind of—a loosely organized network of militants that were originally recruited in the context of the Cold War. You know, and the Mujahideen, recruited by the CIA, and used against the Soviets. And that core kind of organizing principle that brought these people together around which we saw the kind of development of the Islamist ideology that has defined Al-Qaeda's vision of the world, and its ambitions for expansion and the way it operates toxically in the kind of terrorist attacks that it undertakes and so on and so forth. I mean, I think this Cold War period was a very crucial period for the formation of the group. And, of course, I think after that I think we saw the expansion of the group due to the fact that so many different foreign fighters were recruited from many different parts of the Muslim world, hundreds of countries.

And I think that's, I mean, that is really the essence of Al-Qaeda is that. What we have today is the legacy of that network, where we have multiple different ethnicities of people who have basically some kind of relationship to the network in the past and then have gone on to be involved in new theaters of conflict and that kind of have continued the kind of efforts to basically expand and can kind of grow this network have also gone on in many different ways. I think what you're getting at with that question, I would imagine, is this debate over Al-Qaeda's kind of existence in relation to different state intelligence agencies. And I think, obviously, that's a pretty important question, and it's worth remembering that, you know, Robin Cook, the foreign minister, British foreign minister, the Guardian actually wrote a few years back before he sadly passed away. I think this was about one year after 7/7 and he was talking about Al-Qaeda and the origins of Al-Qaeda. And interestingly he pointed out that Al-Qaeda at the time, when it was first conceived, really actually referred to a database of Mujahideen. So it was used by the CIA. Which is interesting, it was the first time that anybody had, anybody at that level had officially kind of referred to Al-Qaeda in that sense, as relating to some kind of intelligence database of operatives. So, that was an explicit indication of Al-Qaeda's function when it first came into existence as some kind of an arm of, a covert arm of CIA or other intelligence agencies. And, of course, I mean, what's interesting, something that I've also mentioned in the past is that the Arabic for "database" qaida ma'lumat and Al-Qaeda as is known, Al-Qaeda means the base and ma'lumat means data, or information.

So, actually, the kind of colloquial term for database often used in Arabic is simply in some parts referred to in short Al-Qaeda. So, that kind of explains the origin of the term. So, I mean, that kind of brings us into a whole other set of questions, but I think it's very difficult to pin down, you know, come up with a very simplistic definition of what Al-Qaeda is today as a consequence.

JON

In my opinion, I've said before that I think there are many definitions for what Al-Qaeda is. There's the variety that are created through FBI entrapment. There's the "long-reaching tentacle" myth created by the corporate media. There's the variety that are labeled Al-Qaeda that are actually insurgents against the Empire. There's the variety that believe they're a part of Al-Qaeda or believe in the things Osama bin Laden has said. And, finally, as you were just alluding to, there's the variety that have a multitude of intelligence agencies and/or Pentagon connections and are used as a proxy to destabilize countries and Governments.

And, you were talking about Robin Cook and the database, there was actually a formation, I believe in the early 90s of what we would consider to be Al-Qaeda and it has a list of names—it's on HistoryCommons.org, I'd have to go look for it—but there was a meeting of the minds and they formed what they called Al-Qaeda and it's unfortunate that no one else has verified Robin Cook's claims, and unfortunately he passed away, so we can't really ask him about them.

Now, can you please tell us what the strategy of tension is?

NAFEEZ

Well, the strategy of tension originated as a description of covert operations that were going on in western Europe that can now be traced back to the CIA and MI6, particularly, operating through an architecture of secrets, secret agencies, a network of secret agencies that were really to do with the NATO countries and not to do with NATO military units that were linked to the respective Governments and national military intelligence agencies of the respective countries. And the idea of strategy of tension was the notion that there would be an effort to basically mobilize right wing groups to either masquerade as communists or actually fund and create communist groups that would engage in various kinds of provocation and insurgency or various kinds of activities that would ultimately discredit them in the eyes of the general population. So it was very much in the context of the Cold War and of the U.S.'s kind of geo-political goal to dominate western Europe and to exert NATO as hegemony over western Europe as a kind of principle

security architecture. And to kind of, basically, to push away the kind of danger that these countries might shift toward socialist kinds of values or of course, the danger of it described as being a communist threat. And this is quite interesting because a lot of the historical data shows that the Soviet Union—there was really very little prospect of the Soviet Union actually invading western Europe at this time. But there was a need for—in order for Europe to stay within NATO, and for the U.S. to kind of consolidate this western European security architecture through NATO, which involves, obviously, all sorts of things from economic aid to military aid, intelligence corporation, or the rest of it. There needs to be this idea that the Soviets were ready to invade western Europe. For me the strategy of tension was actually about, very much about, kind of trying to demonstrate the extent to which the Soviets were involved in subversive and dangerous activity which could indicate a threat that required the U.S., and European countries, to kind of be ready and to kind of police the domestic communist thoughts and to kind of keep an eye out for radical communist activities and all of the rest of it. Essentially justified an extensive surveillance of academics, of activists, journalists, all sorts of political, all sorts of kind of surveillance and kind of monitoring.

So, I mean, that sums up the idea Strategy of Tension and people who are interested to come and read more about how this policy played out as it should read. I think it's definite historical work by Daniele Ganser in his book *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe*, specifically focusing on Operation GLADIO in Italy. The book is called *NATO's Secret Armies* and it's published by Routledge, which is you know a very, very reputed academic publisher.

JON Right. I also recommend—there's a documentary from years ago from the BBC that did a series on Operation GLADIO, and we'll get into GLADIO in a little bit. So, essentially, the strategy of tension is using, I guess you could say terrorism, or what people consider false flag attacks in order to influence policy and so forth.

NAFEEZ That's it. I mean, I think—I mean, I'm wary of using the term, terms like false flag attacks—

JON Oh, so am I. (Laughs)

NAFEEZ Yeah, I mean, it's fine, I mean, it's just that I find the term to be used in so many different contexts by people who—reading about these things but

often believe in theories which don't really necessarily have much evidence for them. And then so the term false flag has become this kind of catch-all term (Yep) to kind of capture anything that happens. So, I'm quite wary of using that kind of terminology. I think it's really important that people who are serious about understanding history and understanding what's going on in the world today, will try to be as precise as possible in the type of language that we're using. I mean, obviously, I understand what the term is getting at, and I kind of agree with it to that extent in the sense that what we're talking about here is deniable operations. Operations which are carried out that the CIA can basically wash its hands of and say but we didn't do that. We're not involved in that.

And obviously that's the whole point of having a secret intelligence agency, to be able to do things which a Government will not be able to do publicly but do secretly so that it can deny involvement in that. And that's kind of the essence of the idea of false flags. But I think in this particular context we are certainly talking about operations where we have terrorist activity being in some way promoted or facilitated in order to influence the decisions, political decisions of local populations. And in that context where the idea of false flag does become relevant is in the sense that, you know, there is a very deliberate and conscious effort to project an enemy external to whoever, you know us. And that enemy is basically where we have then this idea of a false flag. But what's interesting with that is that sometimes it doesn't have to be a false flag.

Sometimes it can be a case of actually having a real group of terrorists do something that they've provoked into to doing it, or that kind of thing. But, I mean, people often find it difficult to stomach, but it's worth looking at special forces operations manuals over the last few years. I mean, there was one that was released by Wikileaks—I think it was 2008, a special forces manual, which was restricted. But if you have a look at these kind of documents, you begin to see how actually central that kind of thinking—you know, whether we call it the strategy of tension, or we call it more colloquially false flag terrorism—actually, this kind of strategy's referred to very, very directly in these documents as the kind of use and abuse of terrorism in order to covertly, in order to basically influence populations.

JON

Right. Well, you were talking about the terminology of false flag attacks—honestly, I got that from Wikipedia. I looked up the definition for strategy of tension and I got that from Wikipedia. But, I hate that phrase. And the reason that I do is that as you said, it's been so over-used and like within

hours of something horrible happening there are people out there saying false-flag attack, false-flag attack. (Absolutely, absolutely, yeah) And what's happened, you know, what's happened is it's become a keyword that essentially shuts people down from hearing anything else you have to say after that. (Yeah) Because it's been so over-used. It's like the boy who cried wolf. (Yeah) So, it's definitely one of those phrases.

Now, we were told that any relationship that we had with the Mujahideen ended after the Afghanistan/Russia war. Why is this statement false? And can you name some instances in the 90s where terrorists were used as proxies.

NAFEEZ Well, this is obviously something I've been working on for a long time. But I think just the narrative that we kind of separated from Bin Laden after the Cold War. It's still today promulgated very widely as conventional wisdom. The story is, essentially, we teamed up with—we used the Mujahideen in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and after the Soviet Union collapsed, there wasn't any need to kind of maintain connections with these guys and they turned against us, and ever since then Bin Laden's been fighting his War on Terror against us.

War OF Terror against us. I mean, and that's the kind of general way of seeing it. There's certainly some truth to that in the sense that clearly there are these networks. We've seen from information that has come out in the media and from whistleblowers who've come out on the record and talked about what the thing they had been investigating.

It's very clear that there are very real—these Islamist networks affiliated to Al-Qaeda that have been planning attacks and killing people and committing atrocities sometimes against western targets. I mean, and this is a real phenomenon. But, where it gets complicated is in the claim that there was this clean break with these networks, which just is completely and utterly false. It's so false, it's absurd.

On the contrary, actually, after the Cold War our use and proliferation of these different Mujahideen networks really proliferated across many strategic areas. And I think one of the first operations began in 1991 in Azerbaijan when we had various groups that were literally flown in to Azerbaijan and they basically were on behalf of—all this happened under the kind of the rubric of this American company, interestingly called Mega Oil, but we had some of the same guys that were involved in the Iran

Contra scandal who were actually involved in Mega Oil and they were funneling the Mujahideen from Afghanistan into Azerbaijan in order to basically destabilize the Government and kind of install a Government that was more friendly to locals, to the United States' local interests.

And in the end they did succeed in changing the political configuration there and getting their favorite kind of client dictator Ilham Aliyev to the dynasty effectively in Azerbaijan has kind of reigned over there and has been very, very amenable to kind of corporate investment and British petroleum, and other major western companies are heavy investors there. And that, interestingly, then paved the way for operations involving the Mujahideen to extend into the Balkans.

So, from '92 to '95 we had this situation where, obviously, the U.S. was going through a crisis, the IMF World bank structured adjusted programs had effectively destroyed the Yugoslav socialist economy. They were increasing ethnic tensions due to the collapse of wages and sort of massive austerity measures and all that kind of stuff.

Interestingly, the CIA had actually predicted that the impact of the IMF World bank structured adjusted programs would basically be the complete justification of Yugoslavia. So, there were elements of the establishment that kind of knew what was coming.

And so, we had this situation where eventually that things really broke down. War began to—broke out in that part of the world. And our role in that was—people talk about our role in terms of trying to have humanitarian peace keeping and get peace keepers in, and that we failed to kind of protect Srebrenica, and all of that is true. We had the very real genocide of something like 10,000 civilians killed in Srebrenica by the Serbs, and that is a very valid reality.

However, what is not really looked at is the direct role that the Pentagon played in really accelerating the conflict because what emerged from the Dutch Government investigation into the failure of the Dutch U.N. peace keepers to prevent the genocide with Srebrenica even though they were there on the ground. The appendix to the investigation was written by a Dutch intelligence expert. I think he name is Professor Steve Weeb, who referred to Dutch intelligence files, which basically document extensively the role of the Pentagon in literally flying in Mujahideen from Afghanistan,

from other Azerbaijan from other areas into Bosnia, and essentially using them as shock troops.

So, that element of the conflict is something that isn't well known. Now these guys, obviously, were very extreme, they were quite happy to use tremendous violence, and they did play a role in accelerating the conflicts. There were faces of these shock troops, these mercenaries, that the Pentagon has brought in effectively, are killing Serb civilians and massacring whole villages and committing other types of war crimes—and so, we played a very interesting role in effectively dividing and ruling this territory and destabilizing the region.

We can have a big debate about why this took place and what the objective was and maybe it was just short-sited, or whatever. But that kind of strategy continued in Kosovo, again, when we kind of teamed up, teamed up with the KLA, which is, of course, much more well-known. But what isn't so well-known is the extent to which the KLA, again, was very much affiliated with Al-Qaeda and there are many, many press reports that confirmed, at the time, that senior Bin Laden operatives had actually got to travel to Kosovo, including Ayman al-Zawahiri's brother. Obviously, Ayman al-Zawahiri is currently considered the Emir of Al-Qaeda. His brother went to KLA and was a senior commander there, and he basically actually participated as a leader of the KLA unit and was involved in recruiting and funneling people into various Mujahideen networks into the KLA. These are the same people that we again sponsored in the conflicts of the Kosovo conflict.

Now, in the aftermath of all of this, we've now seen a situation where all of this destabilization has played an interesting role, and is essentially eroding any kind of drive that may have existed locally for nationalist, socialist types of politics. And, instead, served to allow the United States on the one hand to establish a series of military bases in all of these countries heading toward eastern Europe, towards the border of Russia. And, at the same time, also allowing the United States and Britain to have a much bigger political and diplomatic role in the region which has allowed them to kind of push forward a very market-oriented set of economic principles that has opened up the region to foreign investors and allowed the U.S. and Britain to kind of go in, most interestingly, to pursue this Trans-Balkan pipeline, which is basically, which is operational at the moment, and which plays a major role now in the transport of gas across Europe.

So, there's lots of different explanations as to whether—how this has occurred but at the end of the day I think it's pretty clear that throughout this period—and I'm only talking about the Balkans here—and there's many, many other cases happening around similar times in this context or where we've seen these Al-Qaeda affiliated groups being used by our intelligence agencies for these geo-political purposes.

And I think that's kind of the real issue—I think it raises the question as to what extent we really did break away from these groups.

JON

Well, there—just so everybody knows, there are entries on HistoryCommons.org that goes over some of this—especially the Pentagon, flying in people and so on and so forth.

One of the things that you mentioned was people from the Iran Contra scandal, and sometime in March, 2007, Seymour Hersh of *The New Yorker* wrote a report that essentially said that the Iran Contra veterans that were working out of Dick Cheney's office were using stolen funds from Iraq to arm Al-Qaeda-type groups and foment a larger Sunni-Shia war and—let's see—it's just interesting—people should know a lot of people from the Iran Contra affair are involved in these type of operations and they were very much involved in the Bush administration.

Now, after 9/11, there were other instances of us, again, using terrorists as proxies—and I want people to understand why it's so important to bring attention to this issue. One of the main reasons is that it takes away the legitimacy for the entire "War on Terror." If you're supporting terrorists, how can you be having a war on terror. And it's just absolutely ridiculous. And, people need to be held accountable for their actions with regard to this.

But after 9/11, we used the CIA, ISI connections, to use Jundullah in Iran—during what happened in Libya, we allied ourselves with Al-Qaeda-linked groups. The people John McCain photographed himself with, and in Syria, you know, the Saudi Arabians armed, funded, and sent in rebels along with Qatar and Kuwait, and then we started training rebels in Jordan to send in to Syria in an effort to take out Assad—and before we started arming or training rebels in Jordan, we were sending the "rebels" intelligence and some aid and arms and so forth.

So, there's no such thing as a moderate rebel. What do you have to say about moderate rebel?

NAFEEZ Well, I think—I mean, this is a complex issue because Syrian opposition and Syrian rebels are made up of like a huge number of different factions. I mean, by some estimates there's something like over a thousand different groups and entities. The one thing I would emphasize—again, when we kind of look at these issues it's important to step back and especially when we're not specialists in the regions. Kind of step back, have a little bit of humility and kind of try to understand the region. Try to understand the complexity, realize that we're probably not going to be able to.

And in that context, I think it's important for people to realize that what happened in Syria, there was a very real uprising. And after the regime—it was an extremely brutal regime. And, for people who are basically now—you know you get some idiots who basically think that because the Americans or the British don't like us so therefore we need to kind of recognize that Assad is a good guy. You know he must be a good guy because they're against him. We have to remember that before this whole kind of concerted effort against Assad began a couple years ago. Assad was being used in the concept of the War on Terror, there was ample cooperation with the CIA and with the rendition programs he was facilitating (Right), he was facilitating torture on behalf of the CIA. It's rough to turn around on the one hand and say Assad's a bad guy, he's a bit of a joke. Because he was a bad guy, we didn't like him, but we used him when we needed to. So, to what extent he was a bad guy is really relative. He was a bad guy, but you know, he kind of was bad enough for us to use him when it came to torturing. It's like with terror suspects, which you know, we decided that we didn't want to prosecute them in a court of law, so we'll just torture them instead. So there's a real question mark over there. But in terms of—Assad is a genuinely horrible guy and he did run a very sectarian regime that generally discriminates against [AUDIOBAD] And I think in the context of some of the problems the country was facing there was a regional drought in the country which led to migrations of farmers inter-cities because their crops were failing. And most of those guys therefore would soon be moving to these kind of slightly wealthier urban areas that were dominated by the elitist. Those were the kind of clans that were dominated by Assad. So, what we have that kind of created these more sectarian tensions because obviously at the end of the day, you know, Assad's favorite people are from his own clan, people of his own ethnicity. And so really tensions started to build. And people really started to feel the

problems. This kind of recession and the unemployment issues kicked in and all the rest of it. So when the uprising took place, in the context of the wider, you know, Arab Spring, which was already kicking off everywhere else, it was a real uprising. There were people who were genuinely on the street. They were angry. (What---) But what we all know—

JON Go ahead. I'm sorry.

NAFEEZ No, it's fine, don't worry, Jon. What we now know is that there were efforts to co-op this uprising, to co-op this rebellion, which actually began even before it kicked off. In a recent *Guardian* piece I wrote, I mention a Wikileaks cable that showed that the State Department was actually aware that the drought in Syria was causing problems and they knew there was going to be unrest. And that was early as 2008, I believe. Now, in 2009, we know according to the former French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas—speaking on French mainstream TV, he said—he was in Britain in 2009, and he was told by foreign officer officials that they were planning something in Syria and they were working with people on the ground, opposition groups, rebels to foster some kind of move against Assad. So what they showed as early as 2009 the British and U. S. Special Forces were on the ground doing something, messing around. So when the uprising kicked off, we already had people there.

Now, in 2011, we know from the cables that, not the cables, the emails that were obtained by Wikileaks from STRATFOR—the U.S. private intelligence firm. We know that those guys had meetings with Pentagon officials where they were told that in 2011, they were on the ground, working actively with rebel groups, conducting operations, planning operations, providing aid, providing training and that the whole point of this kind of activity was to destabilize the Assad regime from within. So, this process of co-opting these rebel groups was accelerating. We also know from all of the kind of press reports that have come out, whether it's *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, that the United States began covertly coordinating funding for these rebel groups from some of the most dictatorial regimes in the region, namely Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait—and we also know that classified assessments of the nature of this funding and who the funding was going to shows that the vast bulk of the money was going to essentially the most virulent, Islamic extremist rebels that were affiliated to Al-Qaeda. And that's not of a surprise given everything we've discussed because that's who these guys have always been funding—Saudis, Qatar—that's who these guys know. They don't know

anybody else to fund. They have established networks and links with these guys, so they're going to fund the same guys. They're increasingly—the rebel movement began to get hijacked. There were genuinely secular, moderate factions—and there still are moderate factions in the Syrian movement. However, those have increasingly become marginalized as this money has poured in. And it's got to a point where when groups like Al-Qaeda kind of become, began to increasingly kind of hijack this rebel movement and rebel operations, and we had the emergence of the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS and all the rest of it, and you know, some several other kinds of Al-Qaeda groups have been active there as well. Well, the moderate rebels because they were having so many issues and so many challenges, they began to welcome these groups purely because they were militarily very competent. They had training, they had a lot of experience and they often came with heavy weapons as well. And we know, for example, that we have very, very strong circumstantial evidence that what was going on in Benghazi, in the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, was a covert CIA operation to smuggle heavy weapons across the border to the Syrian rebels. So—and that was actually being done with support of local Al-Qaeda groups. So, this whole kind of involvement of Al-Qaeda is something that was directly facilitated by what the U.S. intelligence services were doing on the ground.

So, the question—that brings me to your question, Jon, of this issue of are there moderate rebels—I mean, I wouldn't say there is no such thing as a moderate rebel—I think that does a disservice to the people, the real kind of genuine people who are resisting Assad—and having a very genuine resistance movement. But I think at the same time we have to debrief this situation where to not call out the reality of the extent to which the moderates have been sidelined in terms of the power, it would also be a disservice, because they have been sidelined. And now we've got to this point where, before James Foley was killed, his location was passed on to ISIS by certain moderate rebels. So, we've got this situation, where I think the question of to what extent is there a real kind of moderate force in Syria, I think it's maybe a little bit too simplistic, but it is a legitimate question in a sense that, okay fine, we might have some moderate people there, but how the hell do we access these guys because they've gotten to the point where they're working together.

I mean, after the airstrikes—you probably maybe were going to mention this—after the airstrikes that we've had, the moderates have signed a pact with ISIS saying that we'll both fight with you.

JON The point of my question with regard to moderate rebels is that nobody has the ability to really differentiate between what would be a good rebel—yes, you talked about there being legitimate rebels out there, but when the U.S. is arming and funding and training people, I don't honestly think they care. Or I don't think they have the ability to distinguish or I don't think they put much thought into it.

NAFEEZ I think on that issue, there's two things to say, I think. First of all, there's the somewhat more measured kind of mainstream criticism which is the—they don't have the ability to really vet the rebels. And I think if we look at the vetting process, I mean, there was a Mother Jones investigation into the vetting process, which shows that basically the vetting process is completely pointless. And the arms are being supplied to so-called moderate or secular rebels and they're still ending up in the hands of the extremists. So, there is this thing of they don't have the competence. They don't have the knowledge. They don't know what the hell they're doing. You know, and I think that's obviously the case.

But the second issue is, like you said, do they care? And what we've seen consistently over the last three to four years that we've had this— involvement—been involved in Syria. It's not actually so much that—it's not even that we don't care. It's actually that from all the evidence that we can see, the United States and Britain are knowingly coordinating assistance so people that we know will end up with them basically being radical or passing the weapons on to people who are radical. By radical, I don't mean progressively radical in a good way.

I mean radical in an extremist way. In a very dangerous way. It's not something—you say two or three years ago we've had classified assessments which showed that we've got the Saudis going in there and we've got Qatar going in there and they're supplying according to some estimates, something up to a billion dollars of aid is actually being supplied in total by these gulf states. And we now—no, our classified assessments are saying the majority of that funding has gone to the extremists. Now for us to then be coordinating with the same people and keeping the same very loose vetting arrangements—there was an investigation by *The National*, which is the Dubai newspaper, which basically shows, again, the same thing. There's a command and control center in Jordan. And it's got Turkey involved. It's got Saudi, Qatar and all the other guys involved. You've got Israeli commandos, Jordanian commandos, U.S. and British and French commandos, they're on the ground training these guys. But what they said,

actually, these guys literally don't care. They've devolved the vetting process to local rebel commanders. (Right) There's no centralized vetting process. So they have deliberately devolved that vetting process to local commanders because—and they know that those guys are going to basically let in who they want, and train who they want, and allow who they want in. And, over the years, we've seen that despite our own kind of oversight processes determining that, these are the extremists that are getting funding here. We've just said, hey, let's just carry on. (Well, what--) And now we've got the same guys enrolled in this so-called coalition to fight ISIS who have been doing this—creating this problem, and now we're using them to fight the problem.

JON Isn't it ridiculous?

NAFEEZ Ridiculous doesn't begin to describe—I mean, it's literally like we have the same structure in place that has created this problem and we haven't even changed anything. (Yeah) What we've done is we've packaged it and said this is our coalition and we're now fighting a war.

JON One of the things—

NAFEEZ The only new thing in this picture is basically we now have airstrikes in Syria and Iraq.

JON And also Israel is bombing Syria. They just blew a Syrian jet out of the sky the other day.

With regard to Iraq, and I've been saying this for quite a while now, there are people in Iraq who just happen to be angry about a decade's worth of sanctions that killed one million people. An occupation that killed upwards of 1.25 million people. The wounding and displacement of millions more. The torture at Abu Ghraib. Flushing Korans down the toilet. Blackwater hunting Iraqis for sport and all of these things—there's no statute of limitations on the anger that these kinds of things create and I can imagine that there are a multitude of individuals within Iraq who still oppose essentially what the empire is trying to do.

What do you have to say about that?

NAFEEZ I think you've hit the nail on the head, Jon. I think this really speaks to the kind of the veil that we have on International politics today where we've

launched this self-righteous war in response to this network, this terrible network which is rampaging across the region, and which has committed these horrifying atrocities against journalists and aid workers. You know, and it's terrible. But, what's ironic really here is that we think that it's justified to go and bomb indiscriminately in these countries in response to these atrocities that have been committed by ISIS. And what's sparked off is not the killing of the Yazidis, which we've highlighted in the media, but what really triggered it was those beheadings of—and the televised videos which really made people angry. Understandably, made people very upset and so they need to do something to stop this, put an end to it.

JON Isn't it interesting—sorry, go ahead.

NAFEEZ Well, if you want to follow this logic through, with this particular type of moral logic, what then is the correct response of the Iraqis. The Iraqis who have been, as you've said, over a million people have been killed through sanctions, through war. We've had complete and utter brutalization of Iraqis in these state sanctioned prisons, which the U.S. has run themselves. Stories of rape. Stories of torture. Stories of electric-shock therapy. These horrific stories of extra-judicial executions. The shooting people in the streets. I mean, we've had stories, not just of Blackwater mercenaries contracted with the defense department shooting people in the streets. We've also had stories of U.S. Marines shooting people in the street, indiscriminately (Right), given orders by their commanders that anybody with a red scarf in the street should be shot. And then it becomes anybody who is out in the open outside of curfew should be shot. We had the carpet bombing of Fallujah, the complete and utter destruction of the –

JON Using depleted uranium which has caused thousands of people from what I understand, to become sick.

NAFEEZ Well, absolutely. I mean, look, we had the destruction of schools, hospitals, roads, sewage infrastructure. We've had the complete destruction of a society—

JON And on top of that—

NAFEEZ We had the chemical weapons, depleted uranium, as you said. In Fallujah, the rates of deformities that have been flagged up in multiple peer review studies is appalling. To this day, you have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of children coming out with these deformities, horrific

deformities, and there's no recourse. There's no—there's nothing that they can do.

So what is the—the question really is, what is the response then? Do the Iraqis have the right to now launch air strikes on the U.S. and Britain? Do they have the right (Sure) to basically now bomb London or Washington D.C., or New York? Because that's the logic. The logic is that we have the rights because of these beheadings, because of some of these killings that ISIS has done, we have the right to basically go there and basically conduct indiscriminate airstrikes and kill, some so-called terrorists. And I also think there are real terrorists who are being killed, but also there are civilians who are being killed.

JON In Syria—

NAFEEZ In Syria, yeah—by following this logic, what we see here is that this is the logic of the terrorist. This is the logic of terrorism. Is that you killed some of ours, so we now have the right to basically kill as many of yours as we want to. And that is exactly what ISIS is doing. ISIS is doing exactly what they've learned from the United States, from Britain (Right). We have the right to basically bomb the crap out of you. No wonder if it says they're planning to target us. Because that's exactly what we're doing to them.

JON To anyone who would have thought that 13 years of bombing and killing people indiscriminately wouldn't result in a few people getting angry, are just not very intelligent.

NAFEEZ Well, our intelligence agencies predicted this. Again, another thing which is kind of left in the memory hole is that MI5, MI6, the CIA, all of these agencies predicted that the war on Iraq would be a recruiting target for terrorism, and that Al-Qaeda would become more prominent in Iraq as a direct consequence of the U.S. invasion and occupation. And that's what's happened. So—

JON Well, one of the things I wanted to point out—

NAFEEZ --exactly what we expected to happen.

JON One of the things that I want to point out and I mentioned this earlier as far as one of my definitions for Al-Qaeda. Glenn Greenwald wrote a piece years ago—let me see if I can find the quote. Right.

On June 23, 2007, Glenn Greenwald wrote about how insurgents in Iraq were being referred to as "Al-Qaeda" more frequently. He states: "What makes this practice all the more disturbing is how quickly and obediently the media has adopted the change in terms consciously issued by the Bush administration and their military officials responsible for presenting the Bush view of the war to the press."

And so, that's what I mean, the insurgents in Iraq were eventually started to be called Al-Qaeda—and I have no doubt that there are individuals in Iraq who believe they're part of Al-Qaeda, and so on and so forth, but you know, how did it start? Were we just calling them Al-Qaeda?

NAFEEZ You know, there's a really valid debate to be had around this, because on the one hand, it's clear that there was a deliberate effort to label any kind of insurgent groups in Iraq, any kind of resistance as linked to Al-Qaeda. Because this really allowed the U.S. to demonize these groups and see them as terrorists. And, of course, there were people conducting various terrorist activity.

But this is where it gets murky because, you know, I mean, [AUDIOBAD] who is—he was one of the only unvetted reporters in Iraq at the time. And he did an extensive investigation into Zarqawi and the role, the way in which the United States really latched on to the persona of Zarqawi and used the ideas of Zarqawi as really a lynchpin, to kind of promote this specter of how there is this centralized Al-Qaeda resistance group that is—that has got its tentacles everywhere and is responsible for all of the different attacks and everything else going on.

But when he tried to track down this Zarqawi guy and his personality, and who he was, and where he came from, and the nature of his network, he found increasingly that it was just really nothing there, substance, to really back up who this Zarqawi character was and whether he really existed. And there were real question marks in Iraq as to whether Zarqawi actually existed. And the deeper he dug, the less kind of firm ground he found to really justify this idea. And to kind of back that up in my recent piece which is published in a number of places in truth-out and a couple of other places, how we created the Islamic state, this article I wrote.

I look into some of the kind of the backgrounds of what we did in Iraq and one of the things that was interesting was a U.S. Special Operations

University report which referred to the psychological warfare operations where the United States is covertly promoting the Zarqawi ideology in order to basically discredit him in the wider Iraqi public. And it referred to the U.S. prompting press reports and making radio broadcasts to show how horrible and kind of demonic and disgusting Zarqawi and his ideology were.

But this is where we start to get this kind of image that the U.S. was really playing a big role in projecting this kind of idea of this resistance. And what was interesting in this Special Operations University report is it refers to very specifically as the goal of these kinds of psyops, I mean, refers to psyops quite directly in the text, was to accelerate what it says. Red on red operation. So, in other words, red refers to enemy. It's color-coded for enemies. In other words, to get the enemy fighting the enemy, in other words, divide and rule. All of this stuff was kind of promoting that Zarqawi was effectively about trying to get the different groups in Iraq that could be a problem that were opposed to U.S. occupation fighting amongst each other. And the report specifically said that they wanted to get, they wanted to weaken, not just the militants but also the more peaceful Sufi groups in Iraq, who were also opposed to the U.S. occupation. As well as to basically to delegitimize the Bathists as well.

And this kind of feeds into this general idea that yes, there was a deliberate effort by the U.S. to kind of just demonize any kind of resistance in Iraq as part of the terrorist movement. It was kind of a catch-all term. But to kind of add insult to injury, the United States actually was funneling at one time arms to the Al-Qaeda-affiliated factions in Iraq, and this was occurring around 2005. There was a report in *Asia Times* by the late Pakistani Bureau Chief of *Asia Times*—he was actually murdered by people think elements of the ISI, the Pakistani Intelligence Services, but he's a very highly respected journalist. And he reports it from Pakistani Defense Forces that the U.S. was covertly supplying arms through Pakistan to—basically getting the Pakistani army to supply weapons to militants linked to Al Qaeda, linked to the Bathists in Iraq, and the idea, according to these sources, was that they wanted to head off the threat of a Shiites kind of dominated Government.

JON Well—

NAFEEZ It's interesting because at the same time they were actually supporting that Government and they still are. But you can clearly see that this divide and

rule strategy entailed playing off a lot of different entities against each other.

JON Well, now that we've brought up specific intelligence agencies—the Pakistani ISI, who incidentally is notorious for murdering journalists. My next question is which intelligence—and now we're going to start to talk a little bit about 9/11, specifically.

Which intelligence agencies are notorious for using terrorists as proxies?

NAFEEZ Well, I think the intelligence agencies that have been using Al-Qaeda proxies—United States intelligence agencies, and specifically I would say the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, indirectly the FBI in the sense that the FBI have used kind of moles and infiltrators to co-opt extremist groups—

JON And, also to create them—but go ahead.

NAFEEZ Yeah and to create them in order to have these entrapment organizations. Entrapment kind of operations.

In the UK, definitely both MI5 and MI6 have had links to terrorist groups or groups that are involved in recruiting terrorist activity. The MI5 has come up in relation to the group [AUDIOBAD] according to a number of intelligence experts, as well as MI6. MI6 has also had links to Al-Qaeda. In fact, I had a—I did a story on Sibel Edmonds' revelations on Gladio and her efforts to kind of release (Right), this information to the *Sunday Times* and one of the interesting conversations I had with the *Sunday Times* journalist who was covering the story is that he said he spoke to a senior official at MI6 who confirmed to him the central thrust of what Sibel Edmonds was saying about the financing and the covert support to Al-Qaeda affiliated groups in Central Asia all the way up to 9/11 was true. And this MI6 guy apparently told this guy that—but this was after a very real policy that both Britain and the United States were involved in together.

JON Well, what I would like to talk about with regard to that *Sunday Times* report, that very first one mentioned Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed as being a part of the nuclear black market. For those of you who don't know, there is an allegation that Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed, who was the head of the Pakistani ISI who was instrumental in getting Musharraf into

power ordered Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire transfer \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta, the lead 9/11 hijacker.

Now, I have never seen anyone in Government or in any of the investigations denounce these allegations or explain why they're incorrect. Because they're not reported in the 9/11 Report, even though it was one of the questions that the families put forward. So, with regard to Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed, he was mentioned in Sibel's story with regard to the nuclear black market. He's mentioned with regard to the 9/11 attacks, and yet, this is two times the 9/11 Commission was essentially told about Mahmud Ahmed and they really didn't focus on him to my knowledge in the 9/11 Report. So that was interesting. In other words, it was two times Mahmud Ahmed was brought before the 9/11 Commission and he seemingly wasn't a person of interest.

Now, you talked about the reason that the *Sunday Times* stopped doing their series was because of the fact that it was true? Who told them to stop?

NAFEEZ

Well, I mean—I mean, this is where it's interesting, because when I spoke to the *Sunday Times* journalist he described—I mean, there was some kind of editorial pressure. Now, Sibel Edmonds had the impression that there was pressure from state department. That there was some kind of meeting between state department officials, basically people from the U.S. Embassy, and the editor from the *Sunday Times*. And after that meeting the story was pulled. Now, the journalist I spoke to wasn't aware of that specific meeting, but what he did say is that there was pressure of some kind. There was a sudden decision that was made to pull the story, and he basically—I mean that's when he actually got—I mean, this guy is actually not with the *Sunday Times* anymore. He left the *Sunday Times* to set up like some kind of charity. He's doing a lot of really exciting interesting work. But he's not a journalist. He's not even involved in journalism now. So, it was weird that he actually was frightened to tell me the mechanism that led to this. He actually really kind of sounded—what he did say is that Look—he said to me: "Look, I really don't want to go into this and I can't tell you this. But there is a mechanism linked to these intelligence services at the *Sunday Times* which sometimes can come into effect." (Wow) And I was like: "What the hell are you talking about?" And he just clammed up and said: "Look, I really can't say anything else. You know?" (Right) And, obviously, he was speaking off the record anyway. But despite the severity he just didn't want to say anything.

So there's something really murky going on and all I know is there was some element, from this—I mean, and this guy's a really good journalist and an incredible guy. So we know there was some kind of insidious pressure that was exerted at the *Sunday Times* to kill this story. To stop what Sibel Edmonds was revealing to come out—

JON

Let me explain who Sibel Edmonds is for those who don't know. She was a former FBI translator. She was a 9/11 whistleblower. She was someone who was retaliated against. Someone who had two gag orders placed on her. And she's actually someone the families snuck in to the 9/11 Commission because they weren't responding to her calls to come testify. They snuck her into one of the family 9/11 Commission meetings so they would be forced to hear what she had to say. And she testified in front of the 9/11 Commission inside of a SCIF, in what's called a SCIF, for three and a half hours. Now, there are things called Memorandums for the Record that were released by the 9/11 Commission, and essentially what they are is summaries of interviews of different witnesses. And Sibel Edmonds' MFR, or Memorandum for the Record, is completely redacted. Absolutely, from top to bottom, it's completely redacted. Now, just so people know, Sibel has testified under oath with regard to some of these allegations and early on there were people like Chuck Grassley and Senator Leahy who said there was something—that she was credible.

So, this never made it into the 9/11 Report. She testified for three and a half hours before the 9/11 Commission and was given a footnote in the back of the book. So, over the years, she broke her gag order and started to tell us the whole story, at personal risk.

Now, my next question is 9/11 related. In one of your books you harp at David Schippers, and for those who don't know, he was the Chief Investigative Council for the U. S. Judiciary Committee that was investigating the Clinton/Lewinsky affair. Can you please tell us about your interactions with David Schippers?

NAFEEZ

Well, I spoke to David Schippers for my first book *The War on Truth*. And, I mean basically, he was one of the first people that confirmed that there were FBI special agents who had been investigating a plot inside the United States, that we now know was the 9/11 operation that was being pursued by a number of Al-Qaeda-affiliated guys and that they had names. They had identities. They had been tracking these people. And they, something like three months before 9/11, came to David Schippers and said to him that:

"Look, we're investigating these guys. We believe that there's going to be an imminent attack on the financial district of lower Manhattan. And our investigations are being shut down from Washington D.C. There's a political bureaucracy—there's a political decision here, but these are very real investigations and something is going to happen. Can you use your influence to do something about this problem, because something needs to be done."

Now, I know—I interviewed Schippers about this and he spoke to me and he told me, he said he contacted a number of different agencies that he had spoken to, some people in Congress. He had even spoken to the chair of the Intelligence Committee and I think he said he'd spoken to the Speaker of the House as well. But no one did anything. No one, basically, did very much about this. And so, now some of these people they came and spoke on the record—Coleen Rowley, Robert Wright—a number of other senior FBI guys. We now know their names. And we now can piece together the information they had. And in all of those cases—now that this stuff has actually come to light, a little bit more available for public scrutiny, we can see how systematically the bureaucracy in Washington inexplicably shut down these completely legitimate investigations. (Right) And heads have not rolled.

JON

Nobody was held accountable. And you mentioned Robert Wright, who was an FBI agent, who was a whistleblower, who David Schippers happened to represent a long time ago. And he was essentially investigating Saudi ties to terrorism, and he did this through a program he called Vulgar Betrayal. And this took place long before 9/11 and it seemed every time he would get close to something, he would get shut down from above. So the Saudis and their connections to terrorism were essentially protected. And then after 9/11, again, the Saudis and their relationship to terrorism has been protected. The Bush Administration made sure that the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry were never released. Apparently, Obama promised two family members that he would release them and he hasn't. The United States Government has gone to great length to protect the Saudis against the 9/11 Family Members with regard to law suits and so forth, but now the families finally have a chance to sue and they're trying to get the 28 redacted pages released so they can use that as evidence.

And one of the interesting thoughts I had the other day, Philip Zelikow, who was the executive director of the 9/11 Commission, he was greatly responsible for the 9/11 Report not mentioning the information that was in

the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry. He recently wrote it off in an article that was written by Lawrence Wright. He basically said it wasn't credible.

So if the families bring forward this information from the 28 redacted pages as evidence, the Saudis can bring up the 9/11 Report, which [laughs] has nothing, it essentially got them off the hook (Yeah) as a defense. So I wonder if Philip Zelikow would ever be called in to testify? Or Dietrich Snell, who also was responsible for none of the allegations regarding the Saudi Government going into the 9/11 Report. It would be very interesting to see and I hope that made sense to people.

Now, there's a question going around right now—oh, by the way, Saudi Arabia, there are allegations that the Government was involved in the 9/11 attacks—the Bandar family, which was friendly with the Bush family—there are allegations that money connected to them made its way to two of the hijackers and so on and so forth, and all that has been protected. That information has been protected or concealed from the public over the years. But there's a question going around that I think is interesting, and that question is: Why doesn't Al-Qaeda attack Israel?

NAFEEZ Well, I mean, that's the kind of—I think this is an interesting question, but I think we need to basically think about it a little bit critically. There are, I mean, there are some people who think that Al-Qaeda is not attacking Israel therefore it proves that Israel is somehow sponsoring Al-Qaeda. And, I think on the one hand I think we need to kind of look at the internal ideology of Al-Qaeda.

But before we do that, I think it's important just to break down the logic of this. Just because a group doesn't necessarily attack, you can't basically, you can't conclude very much by looking at what a group attacks. For example, Al-Qaeda have actually attacked Saudi Arabia. Or have been attacked in Saudi Arabia. But they're funded by Saudi Arabia, not something which is very well known. So this kind of simplistic logic of if a group attacks somebody then it means they are not supported by them. If they don't attack them then it means they are supported by them.

You can't prove it. There's no kind of real basis for that kind of logic. It kind of ignores the fact that the real world is actually quite complex.

[Laughs] It's not as simple as these kind of artificial, theoretical constructs that we [AUDIOBAD].

JON Well, first of all, you know, I mean—

NAFEEZ Just to kind of emphasize that point, Greg Palast has documented and investigated this whole issue of the Saudi connection as well, and it just points out that effectively the Saudis are running a giant protection racket in that one of the reasons that they fund Al-Qaeda is so that they don't carry out their ideological objective, which is they believe the Saudi state is an illegitimate state and therefore they should be overthrown.

So, one of the reasons they fund them is basically so they can do what you like outside, but don't attack us inside Saudi Arabia. And, it's something which is not always—there are elements of Al-Qaeda which have operated in Saudi Arabia despite that. So I think just to apply that issue to Israel, I mean, there's a lot of interesting kind of permutations in relation to how Israel has basically dealt with Islamist groups generally. In relation to Al-Qaeda, specifically, I think this really is part of the way we understand Al-Qaeda's internal ideology. For the most part, they have a range of different priorities. And while Israel has certainly played a very important role, when we look at the way in which they have been financed and the way in which they've kind of been geographically active, they—we begin to see that they don't really have a foothold, or only until recently, but they didn't have a foothold in that part of the world. Most of their activities have been centered around Afghanistan, this kind of Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, but not in the area specifically around Israel were they active until recently.

Now, in the context of the Syria conflict, we've actually seen that Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups have become much more active in the region and much more active in that region surrounding Israel, and interestingly, this has coincided with all of the sponsorship that has come in from U.S. allies, and so on and so forth, and we've had this emergence of this new group ISIS, this break-away group, which is even more crazy than Al-Qaeda. And now we've had the emergence of these very disturbing reports that Israel has actually to some extent allowed some of the groups to actually become active in the context of their support for the rebels in Syria. And one of the sources that have described it was Jerusalem-based private intelligence DEBKAF, which certainly is not an anti-Israeli organization. And even though some people have questioned their reporting and their reporting isn't

always solid, but it's worth remembering that the people who run DEBKAFiles used to work for the Economist, for something like nearly two decades reporting on Middle Eastern issues.

So it's not that DEBKAFile are a bunch of crazies. They do have their ear to the ground. And they have been consistently reporting in the last year or so that Israel has, and the United States has actually tacitly and directly been supporting some of these Al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist groups in the region. It raises a lot of interesting questions about ISIS, the relationship of ISIS to, you know, the wider geopolitics of the region, because of course, ISIS has now become to dominate—ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front are very active in the Golan Heights. And there has been some evidence that Netanyahu has actually been courting some of these groups, that there are Israeli military hospitals, which have actually been providing support to ISIS and Al-Qaeda groups in the Golan Heights. There's been some other reports of Israeli NGOs, which have been supplying so-called humanitarian aid to elements of the rebels. And, again, this has gone to some of the extremist groups.

So there are a lot of question marks, I would say recently, as of what Israel's relationship is to some of these groups.

JON Well, Israel was responsible, essentially responsible for the creation of Hamas back in 1986, I believe, as a counter to the PLO, and that's something that a lot of people don't know about. But during the recent "war" between Israel and Gaza, Israel was promoting so much propaganda about who was in the Gaza Strip. It was just so ridiculous that so many children were killed. It was a Hamas-run region even though they had just recently formed a unity Government, which Netanyahu told the world to disregard.

Anyway, so Israel helped to create Hamas, so that's an instance of the Mossad or whoever using terrorists or whatever you want to call it.

NAFEEZ Well, I think that's an important point. I mean, I think, I mean just for the listeners in case they're unaware, I mean, this is actually very well-documented. I mean, one of the guys who reported it was Richard Sale who was a—I'm not sure what he's doing now, but at the time he was a security correspondent for UPI, the wire service—the United Press International. And he basically interviewed a number of U.S. intelligence officials, active and former officials, who basically confirmed. That actually was earlier—late 70s, that Israel had actually very directly created the Hamas

organization. And that they had them counter the PLO because they felt that the PLO was—had too much international legitimacy. And so they wanted to really find a way of delegitimizing the Palestine self-determination. By creating this kind of extremist Islamist network was a way of doing that. And that's a theme which has remained present since then, and it speaks to the same thing that we spoke about earlier, this idea of the strategy of tension, where you have Government covertly empowering or manipulating or facilitating terrorist networks in order to influence population. Whether it's public opinion, whether it's local population, whether it's even on the international theme, whether it's manipulating the decisions that are made internationally. But either way, it's a way of kind of trying to make civil society move in a certain direction as a reactionary response to deal with terrorists and then get them to do what you like.

So this is a very, very kind of typical kind of case study of that type of activities.

JON Well, Nafeez, we've already been talking for well over an hour and a half, so I'm just going to ask you my last question. But before I do, I just want to thank you very much for taking the time today. So many important things have been said during this interview. I hope people soak in all the knowledge that you've provided. You're really just an amazing person. So—

NAFEEZ Thanks, Jon, that's really kind of you. And likewise, I mean, I've known you kind of virtually for so many years, and I've seen you grow. I've seen you kind of deal with so many different struggles. So it's really a great thing to be able to kind of speak to you in person and to see you kind of always doing something exciting and new.

And one thing I have to say, Jon, that I totally, really respect so much about you is that despite being like a—people might look at you and be like: "Who the hell is Jon Gold?" But what I think is inspiring and what I would love people to be able to take from the kind of, the stuff that you've done is to say that you don't have to be, there is no such thing as basically, a special kind of academic type of person, or an activist type of person, they can be an ordinary guy. But all you have to do is really stand up and take a stand and decide to do something and make a change. And I think the stuff that you've been doing with your book and with your new radio show is really an inspiring example of how anybody can really kind of, if they're really committed, to kind of trying to do something and make a change, all they need to do is do something different.

So, it's a privilege to be able to speak to you now.

JON Well, I thank you very much Dr. Nafeez Ahmed.

My last question is: You recently released a fictional new book entitled *Zero Point*. Can you tell us the premise of the book? Where people can find it. And how much of the book is based on real information?

NAFEEZ Well, you could probably have a whole show about some of the stuff that comes off this book. I mean, there's a lot of interesting—

JON [Laughs] We just did that, so—

NAFEEZ Yeah, I know. But, I mean, it goes into a lot of things. But the general premise of the book, I mean, the book was—I wrote the book because, I felt that we need to—you can't change things just by doing politics, because there's only a small constituency of people that are really engaged in those kinds of debates. And we need to—there's a need to kind of engage in cultural change, cultural transformation. So I wanted to kind of, I wanted to use the medium of storytelling as a way of getting out some of these ideas. Kind of looking at some of the interesting things—the kind of stuff that we've been talking about, but a lot of other different things.

So the story is basically set in a near-future world where we've actually had a 4th Iraq war and the U.S. and the UK have reinvaded Iraq. They've re-occupied Iraq and they've been actually in Iraq for many years and, in fact, societies have become quite jaded and quite used to this permanent state of war normalization in that part of the world.

And so, obviously, the story goes into trying to explore what that kind of means to your society when you're in that kind of state of war. And it tries to look at issues like blowback. At home, issues like mass-surveillance and civil liberties. But it also explores a lot of other more arcane issues that people probably aren't aware of, such as some of these covert operations that have been going on, some of these kind of disturbing relationships with terrorist groups, kind of corruption in the political and intelligence system. And also, generally tries to kind of set out a scenario to where we could go, where our societies could go, if these kinds of business as usual policies continue. So, it's all kind of, very kind of, a lot of stuff about espionage and kind of political shenanigans. But ultimately it's a story. When I wrote it, I

wrote it to be something people could be engaged in, could enjoy. It's supposed to be a fun and entertaining read. But the idea is that you really can enjoy it, but you'll also be empowered with a kind of new vision and a new kind of sense of where we are and where things could be.

In terms of—the book is out now. People can get a hold of it from Amazon, is probably one of the most easiest places to get it. But you can get it in e-book format. You can get it in paperback. You can easily order it from your local bookshops and I encourage people to do that.

So, yeah, that pretty much sums up what I tried to do with *Zero Point*.

JON Wonderful. I recommend that everybody pick it up and give it a read. Again, Nafeez, thank you for your time today. I wish you luck in all of your future endeavors. I look forward to reading everything you have to write. And, be well.

NAFEEZ Thanks a lot, Jon. Take care.

JON All right, have a good day.

NAFEEZ You too.

A blood-soaked race against time to stop quantum apocalypse. When the British Prime Minister is assassinated on the streets of a capitol city, the siege by rioting, recession and power blackouts, the ex-soldier and whistleblower who failed to save him Cop David Ariel is first in frame of a corrupt investigation. Determined to hunt down the PMs killers and clear his name, Ariel uncovers more than he bargained for. An ancient war to control horrifying technologies which could rip apart the fabric of space time itself. As the world he thought he knew unravels, Ariel faces off against bent coppers, double-crossing agents, psychic killers, and super soldiers to complete a black-ops mission like no other. Stop Quantum Apocalypse. This new book, *Zero Point*, from Dr. Nafeez Mossaddeq Ahmed is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other book sites.



Chapter/Episode 8 – Cindy Sheehan – October 7, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Cindy Sheehan (CINDY)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

The premise of this show will revolve around something 9/11 Family Member Patty Casazza said in the documentary *9/11: Press for Truth*. "Yes, they lied. They all lied. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it happened. Now we need to look into why they lied and what were the results of those lies."

This show will revolve around the results of those lies with regard to American soldiers and others that have died in this seemingly endless war on terror.

Okay, this is Jon and I'm here with Cindy. Hi, Cindy.

CINDY Hello, Jon.

JON How are you?

CINDY I'm doing okay.

JON All right, good. I'm going to read your bio.

Cindy Lee Miller Sheehan was born on July 10, 1957. She married Patrick Sheehan and the couple had four children—Casey, Carly, Andy, and Janey. Casey was the oldest. The whole family was active in the church; Cindy was a Youth Minister. They were a tightly knit family that, in Cindy's words, "Did everything together."

Cindy's world changed forever when, on an April 4, 2004, a mission in Sadr City, Iraq, Army Specialist Casey Sheehan was killed. Cindy and other military families met with President George W. Bush in June of 2004. By October, Cindy's grief had led her to action. She wrote, "I was ashamed that I hadn't tried to stop the war before Casey died Well, I now felt that if I couldn't make a difference, I would at least try."

Sheehan became one of the strongest, most personal and persistent voices in the movement against the war in Iraq. Her quest to end the war, bring soldiers home, and hold politicians accountable for the decisions that sent the troops to Iraq in the first place, has been unwavering.

In early August of 2005, Cindy, or "Peace Mom" as she came to be called, camped in a ditch near President Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. She requested a second personal meeting with the President, who had declared that the fallen soldiers had died for a "noble cause." Cindy wanted to know exactly what that cause was, and to demand an immediate end to what she viewed as an unjust and immoral war.

So many people stopped by to show their support or join her camp that became known as "Camp Casey." A few days later, one of Bush's neighbors offered the Camp Casey participants some land to use as their base. Camp Casey became a regular protest event, popping up when President Bush was in Crawford for holidays and vacations.

Between Camp Casey operations, Sheehan traveled extensively to join anti-war rallies and to meet with activists and leaders from around the world. She has been credited with being the face for the peace and justice movement. Her published works include an account of her first year of activism called *Not One More Mother's Child*, a collection of her writing

and speeches, *Dear President Bush*; *Peace Mom: A Mother's Journey through Heartache to Activism*; *Myth America: 20 Greatest Myths of the Robber Class and the Case for (non-violent) Revolution*; *Revolution, a Love Story*; and *I Left My Marbles in San Francisco: The Scandal of Federal Electoral Politricks*.

JON Okay, that's your regular bio. I wrote a little personal bio for you.

CINDY You're going to take up all our interview time.

JON No, it's okay.

CINDY [Laughs] Okay.

JON Well, what can I say to you that you don't already know? You're one of my heroes. You're one of my inspirations. You're one of my best friends. I am grateful for every experience I've had with you. I love you very much, and I believe that you are the equivalent of today's Martin Luther King. So, that's for you.

CINDY Awwww.

JON All right, so, my first question: What was the day of 9/11—

CINDY Can I make one slight correction to your bio? (Sure) The title of *Myth America* is *Myth America: The 20 Greatest Myths of the Robber Class and the Case for Revolution*. Non-violence isn't in there.

JON Oh, well—anyway, it was in the—

CINDY Wherever you found that, send that to me so I can—

JON You've got to correct it, yeah. [Laughs] I actually—the book that it ended on, I think was *Mother's Journey* or *Peace Mom*? I actually added the rest of the books to get it up-to-date.

CINDY Oh, okay.

JON Anyway—

CINDY It's a revolution and non-violence isn't—it's an important distinction. Not that I'm for violence, but I'm for self-defense.

JON Right, you believe in self-defense. You believe in non-violence, but you do believe in self-defense. And I think Gandhi felt that way as well, if I'm not mistaken.

CINDY Well, I think that the violence of the revolution comes from the counter-revolutions and then the revolution has like no other option but to defend itself.

JON Right, exactly.

All right, so my first question to you is: What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

CINDY Well, I think that I had the same reaction that most people had. It was shocking and awful. The first days it was confusing and everything was mixed up about what happened and people were still looking for their loved ones and they were putting up big pictures like "have you seen this person?" I guess people who worked or were at the Twin Towers the day that it happened.

But, one of my first thoughts after 9/11, on that same day, was—I mean, I woke up and I walked out into the living room and my daughter, Carly, said, "Hey, Mom, a plane just flew into one of the Twin Towers in New York City." So, I still hadn't even had one cup of coffee yet, before I had to start processing this. But one of my first thoughts was, oh my God, this is going to end up killing Casey. And, my horrible thought turned out to be true.

JON Sadly. Now, how did Casey's death affect your family early on? And the reason that I ask that question is because I want people to get an idea of what a soldier's family goes through after their death.

CINDY Well, I'm supporting, right now, two mothers whose children have recently passed away and they were both from illness, and the children were a lot older than Casey when they passed away. But, the only difference, I think, besides losing a child to illness or accident and war is the absolute certainty that having a child killed in war is 100 percent unnecessary and avoidable. And, I mean, if your child is a soldier or a member of the U.S. military

forces—though losing—having to bury a child in the first place is deeply unnatural. It's demented. It's not in the order of things. Children are meant to bury parents. I buried both of my parents, so I know how hard that is also. But it affected our family in predictable ways and unpredictable ways, also. In many ways it brought us together and made us treasure each other more. In some ways it tore us apart. Like it tore my marriage apart.

And, just little things that you—as a mother you think, Oh my God, I don't know how I would ever survive having one of my children die before me. It's just not a possible thing to survive. But, then every day, day-by-day, you survive it. And you wake up in the morning, the first thought is of your child who died. And your last thought before you fall asleep is of your child who died. For me, I dreamt of about him so much also. So, you're surprised that you're actually surviving, but then there's little things that you don't think of. Like, every time the phone rings, for a while, you think oh, I hope that's Casey. And then you get really super disappointed. And, I was so involved in my own grief, but I was also able to see how my children were affected by it. I just came to the realization that Casey was the oldest, so the other three had never known a life without Casey. Casey was always there. For them. And, Pat and I, his Dad, had, of course had a longer life without Casey than we had with Casey, so it's just a horrible thing that families have to go through.

It angered us. It angered all of us. We were all together in our anger against the Bush regime and against the U.S. wars of aggression—unnecessary, immoral, illegal wars of aggression—so, at least we were all united along those lines.

So, I just want to say that all parents and families who lose a child go through similar things, but it's not—as I'm supporting the mothers of the other young people who've died, I'm able to, ten years later, these are for them and just tell them about what I went through without having any expectations that they're going to go through the same thing. But they can look at me and say, Well, Cindy buried her son ten years ago, but she's still here. She can still smile. She can still laugh. She can still take joy in her grandchildren and other children. So, it's also, I think, a symbol of hope that they'll be able to survive it too.

JON

Well, I feel horrible—I've gotten to know your family over the years and they just—I know it's hard for them. They're so strong though. Your family is a very strong family.

And I just wanted to get into the numbers a little bit. The soldier deaths in Afghanistan is at 2,175. Soldier deaths in Iraq were 4,489. Soldiers wounded in Afghanistan is 19,890. Soldiers wounded in Iraq is 32,021. That's—I think that's based on official numbers. I got them from antiwar.com.

In this show, we're focusing on how families deal with the loss of the soldier. I do want to acknowledge the thousands that have been killed, wounded, and displaced in Afghanistan, and the upwards of 1.25 million killed in Iraq, and millions more wounded or displaced. We're focusing on soldiers, but I want people to know that we have not forgotten about the people that we've killed.

Now, my next question is: When you began to realize that Casey died for lies, what kind of anger did you feel? And you kind of talked about that already. So, it was a collective anger through the family.

CINDY Right, well, we already agreed that, even before he left, that if something happened to him, it would be for lies. It would be for just total and complete B.S. and for profit. And so, but anger—the anger, I'm still angry about that. I think we all are still angry (Yep) about that. And I think we're even more angry because we haven't had any accountability for Casey's death. And we're angry because the wars are still continuing and, not just continuing, but Obama's been able to expand the wars. He's been able to make the troops deaths lower, but of course the civilian deaths in the countries are keeping the pace.

And so, the anger, I think we've been able—well, I'm going to speak for myself, but I also want to, as close a family as we are I want to speak for what I observe about the rest of my family is the anger has been able to motivate us and not turn us into bitter people. And so, I mean, I've become politically cynical, but I'm not bitter. And I think politically cynical just mostly means I'm a realist about our system.

So, yeah, just crazy angry about what's happened. Crazy angry that nobody's been held accountable for those lies and I know—

JON Well, we have a—go, ahead—

CINDY Go ahead.

JON We have a two-tiered justice system in this country where, we are—the laws apply to us and sometimes they don't apply to the other people, the elite. But, go ahead.

CINDY Yes, absolutely, that's true. And at least a two-tiered justice system (Right). But, I'm also angry at myself. Because 9/11, you always say we were lied to about 9/11 and what's my response? We were lied to about everything, and 9/11 wasn't the first or the worst time we've been lied to about war or false flags.

JON The one thing about 9/11 is that it's seemingly acceptable—and you've made this point several times—it's seemingly acceptable to people that Bush lied about everything else but 9/11. (Right) That's a lot of what people think. A lot of what progressives think, or at least portray. That they have no questions about 9/11 and so forth.

CINDY Right. Well, of course, and most of our country is deeply in denial about our history. We have a history of war and false flags or real events that happened like 9/11 that they misuse and abuse for their agenda. And their agenda is global hegemony and profit. So, I'm angry at myself for not trying harder to keep Casey out of that situation. And I'm angry at the other people in our country that are so easily propagandized.

Look at what's happening in Syria, and Iraq again, and Ukraine, and China, and people in like mostly—

JON Somalia, Africa—

CINDY Right, and mostly liberals, they are buying the propaganda because Obama's saying it. But if Bush was saying it, they wouldn't be buying it. And then, of course, the conservatives think that Bush should just bomb these people harder. So, it's just—I'm just—it's just like a constant, motivating anger, I think, that keeps me going to try and—(Well, I—) I think accountability would go a long way to stopping the crimes. And I work to expose the lies.

JON The whole point of accountability is to show people that if you do something wrong, you're going to be held accountable and, therefore, it's incentive for other people not to do, not to repeat the crimes of others and so forth.

I want to read a little quote.

"President Bush and his top aides publicly made 935 false statements about the security risk posed by Iraq in the two years following September 11, 2001, according to a study released Tuesday by two non-profit journalism groups. The study says Bush made 232 false statements about Iraq and former leader Saddam Hussein's possessing weapons of mass destruction, and 28 false statements about Iraq's link to Al-Qaeda."

And that's from CNN from January 24, 2009. You're talking about people falling for the propaganda, and it's not only the statements that they make, it's the corporate media that parrot what they say over and over and over again. And it eventually, it just begins to brainwash people.

Now, Casey died on April 4, 2004, this is the same day that Dr. Martin Luther King died. How much of an influence has Dr. King been to you, and does it anger you that on Martin Luther King Day the corporate media seemingly forgets about his anti-war activism in their pieces about him?

CINDY Right, well, Martin Luther King, Jr. didn't just die. He was assassinated. (Right, exactly) And, of course, there's much evidence that there was a big conspiracy with our CIA involved, or FBI, or whatever the dark shadowy forces are, that assassinated him. So, I think that, of course, Casey was also born on John F. Kennedy's birthday.

JON I didn't know that.

CINDY And that's another person who was assassinated. Huh?

JON I did not know that.

CINDY Right. So, another person that was assassinated for whatever reason he was assassinated.

So, the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., especially his speech beyond Vietnam, the beloved building, the beloved community, that he gave on April 4, 1967, exactly a year before he was assassinated, have been very influential to my activism. Martin Luther King, Jr. on that speech gave the three biggest obstacles to peace and that's militarism, racism, and poverty.

And, so, those are still the three evils that we're fighting with today, and we're not just fighting with them, they're expanding. And things have only gotten worse since his assassination.

And the way that people portray him as a great civil rights leader is appropriate, but I've seen some incidences on parades on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day where there's military hardware on display and the military's out there trying to recruit the children (Jeez, right). Of course, those who come to those parades are usually minorities and poor people who are easy prey for the military, and so it's very frustrating. And he did get the Nobel Peace Prize. It would be the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965, I believe. But I think that was mostly for his civil rights work. And then in his beyond Vietnam speech he says, as recipient of this great honor, I can't be silenced any longer. (Right)

And I remember right after Camp Casey in 2005, you know who David Geffen is, right? (Yes) Yeah, I had met him at a dinner party that Arianna Huffington gave for me—here I am name-dropping. (Laughs) And, so I met David Geffen who was there, and shortly after that I wrote a piece called "What Kind of Extremist Will You Be?" Because that's what Martin Luther King, Jr. said. He said it's not—In this day and age, it's not IF you will be an extremist, it's what kind of extremist will you be? And so I said I'm going to be an extremist for peace and justice. (Right) And so I got an email from Jodie Evans, one of the co-founders of Code Pink, and she told me: "Oh, by the way, David Geffen read your piece about extremism and he won't support extremists." (Laughs)

So, I mean, it's been influential (Laughs) Martin Luther King, Jr. has been influential to my work, and especially recognizing that poverty and militarism and racism are intricately linked, and he was seriously thinking of running for President on a socialist ticket in 1968, before he was assassinated. So, I am—and then, of course, he started to be more reconciled with Malcolm X and Malcolm X's world view. So, I'm impressed with that Martin Luther King, Jr. and what he had evolved into. And, of course, over the last ten years since Casey was killed, I believe that my world view has greatly expanded.

JON

Well, what—as I said earlier, that you are today's equivalent of Dr. Martin Luther King, and I often ask people this question. Could we actually have a Dr. Martin Luther King in today's world with a corporate media that refuses to give attention to those that are really trying to make a change? You know,

the Tour de Peace—so many things that you've done, have essentially been ignored. (Right) They haven't let you get to that point where you're as influential as he was. And I think the media was a little different back then.

And with regard to his assassination, there was a civil suit in 1998, where they found there was a conspiracy (Right) to kill Dr. Martin Luther King.

CINDY Yeah, I think that was Dr. William Pepper. (Yeah) And I had him on the Soapbox a couple years ago.

JON Yeah, Dr. William Pepper was the one who represented the King family at the civil suit, and he won. And they found that—

CINDY I just like to say Dr. Pepper.

JON (Laughs) Yeah, Dr. Pepper. That's also something that's also left out of those pieces about Dr. Martin Luther King, for some reason.

Tell us about some of the lies that led us into war.

CINDY Well, I mean, of course that Saddam and Osama were working together. That Iraq had anything to do with 9/11. That Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. And when I was in front of the Downing Street Memo hearing in Washington D.C. on June 16, 2005, the one that John Conyers gave, I talked about how in 1999, an author Mickey Herskowitz was writing a book about George Bush that was going to be a biography. And he was interviewing George Bush in 1999, and George Bush said: "If I ever become President, I'm going to go get Saddam Hussein. I'm not going to stop at the border like my Dad did. I'm not going to make that mistake." So I'm paraphrasing because I don't remember the exact wording about that. But—so this was—and I think it was—was it the first cabinet meeting George Bush had (Yes), I think, Ron Epstein reported on this. He said so how do we get Saddam?

JON Basically, what Paul O'Neill said, the Secretary of Treasury back then, on the first principals meeting, ten days after his inauguration, the topic was Iraq and he said that topic A was Iraq and it was essentially about the President asking them to "go find me a way to do this." (Right) So, go ahead.

CINDY So, anyway, I mean, those are basically the mushroom cloud line that the next probable Democratic nominee for President, Hillary Clinton, was in on that scandal.

And then there was the Iraq White House group that actually was convened to figure out how to sell the war (Exactly), to the gullible American public.

JON That included Judith Miller. She was among the White House Iraq Group. And remember, she was the one to write those articles for the *Times*.

CINDY Right, right. They could all be tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity. They should all be in prison.

JON Yeah, they should all be in prison.

And with regard to the lie that Iraq had something to do with 9/11, I have a few bits of information that I'm going to read. And this is a quote from Helen Thomas. She said, "You couldn't sit in that press room day-after-day every time it was mentioned by Ari Fleischer or Scott, they would say in one breath, 9/11 Saddam Hussein, 9/11 Saddam Hussein. I don't blame the American people for thinking there was a tie." And that's from Helen Thomas.

And I have some polls. Nearly 7 in 10 Americans believe it is likely that ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was personally involved in September 11 attacks, says a poll out almost two years after the terrorists strike against this country. That's from *USA Today*, September 6, 2003.

Forty-one percent of Americans answered yes to the question: Do you think Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was directly involved in planning, financing, or carrying out the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. That is 41 percent of Americans and that was in June 24, 2007.

There was a poll conducted in April, 2003, that asked whether or not Saddam was personally involved in 9/11. Fifty-three percent said yes.

And the last poll that I want to bring attention to is a LaMoine College Zogby Poll from February 2006. Taken of soldiers serving in Iraq said that "85 percent said the U.S. mission is to 'retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9/11 attack.'" That's 85 percent of the soldiers serving in Iraq. Seventy-

seven percent said that they also believe the main or major reason for the war was to "stop Saddam from protecting Al-Qaeda in Iraq."

Can you imagine what the soldiers were being told?

CINDY Yeah, exactly. He didn't want to go. (Huh?) Casey never believed it. He didn't want to go.

JON Right, yeah, that's a lie though a lot of people say is that Casey volunteered and he was so patriotic and it was nothing of the sort. He did not agree with this war at all. (Right)

Now, when you were at Camp Casey you wanted to ask the President for what noble cause did my son die? And here's some quotes for you.

"President Bush answered growing anti-war protests yesterday with a fresh reason for U.S. troops to continue fighting in Iraq. Protection of the country's vast oil supplies, which he said would otherwise fall under the control of terrorist extremists." And that's the *Associated Press*, 8/31/2005.

"Of course it's about oil. It's very much about oil, and we can't really deny that." That was General John Abizaid, March, 2007.

"People say we're not fighting for oil. Of course we are. They talk about America's national interest. What the hell do you think they're talking about? We're not there for figs." And that was Chuck Hagel, 2007.

And the last one is:

"I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone knows. The Iraq war is largely about oil." And that was Alan Greenspan in 2007.

There were other reasons for war in Iraq and Ray McGovern had an acronym once. OIL—O for oil; I for the protection of Israel; and L for the logistical placement of bases in that region for future use. Those were the three main reasons that Ray thought we were doing this. And, it's about money, obviously. It's about protecting America's hegemony and so forth. It was really horrible. And, I'm going to get into something with you that was sold to the American people, and that was that Obama ended the Iraq war. (Right) What do you have to say about that?

CINDY (Laughs) Well, at the very beginning when he—it was in 2008, as a matter of fact, when Bush was on his way out and Obama was on his way in. And then the U.S. negotiated a Status of Forces Agreement with the Maliki Iraq Government. So that was to remove the troops, I believe, by the end of 2011. But, Obama, when he came in—so, actually, even if the Iraq war ended, it wasn't Obama. It was under the Bush Administration that that Status of Forces or SOFA was negotiated. And, Obama's Administration did everything it could to overturn a provision that—most Status of Forces Agreements between our country and other countries have a little codicil that U.S. troops can't be prosecuted for any crimes that they commit while they are there. And, especially places like Okinawa the citizenry has risen up and uprising over U.S. troops raping and murdering while they're stationed there. And so the Iraqi parliament said no way, we're not going to give them immunity from these crimes. And so, Obama tried really, really hard to keep more troops there.

So, they never totally left. There were always troops in Iraq. (Right) There's an enormous embassy that has thousands of employees. It's the biggest embassy the U.S. has in Baghdad. Then there's a big consulate in Basra I believe. And so, of course, the U.S. never really leaves a country that is bombed to pieces except Vietnam because we were forced out. (Right)

And so, now of course, we're back in actively bombing and there's—

JON How lucky for Obama.

CINDY Yeah, I know.

JON How lucky for him that it's something he wanted in the first place and we're now going back into Iraq. And they actually, I think, they overturned that whole immunity issue that doesn't apply anymore—from what I read.

CINDY Well, not only that, but last year Obama was really jones-ing to bomb Syria and he didn't get do that (Yep) because Putin kind of pulled the plug on that (Yep), and now we're bombing Syria. (Exactly)

And I really think the end game is Iran because now Netanyahu and other Zionists here in the United States are saying that ISIS is now in Iran. Isn't that convenient?

JON Well, the whole point—I'm sorry—

CINDY You know I think that Iran has been on the table since the Bush Administration. But there was actually active opposition against Bush and Bush wasn't able to complete his mission to go into Iran.

JON Right, he wanted to bomb Syria and now we're, amazingly, we're bombing Syria. (Right) What a coincidence. And, the whole point has been to take out Assad, to isolate Iran (Right), to take out Russian influence in the region. That's essentially what it's about is isolating Iran.

And, you know, Wesley Clark, agree with him or not, like him or not, he made that statement, that list of countries that we're supposed to be taking out and it seems as if, all of that is true.

CINDY Project for a New American Century, so people know—people in the Middle East know what this is all about, for sure. (Absolutely) So, we don't—we're running out of time and we don't even have time to talk about Obama's program in South America and Africa. We didn't even talk about Libya. And now Hong Kong. There's supposed to be some huge revolution in Hong Kong that's fomented—there's evidence it's being fomented by the National Democratic Institute, which is just the CIA to isolate China. So, China and Russia are really the two biggest stumbling blocks to the U.S. total hegemony and Obama, clever Obama, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, is figuring out how to slowly isolate and undermine those countries. (Right)

So, did you have another question for me?

JON I have, well, there's two questions. Casey was not buried in Arlington Cemetery. Instead, he was buried closer to you. How often do you go see him?

CINDY We go as a family on the special days—his birthday, his death day, Christmas. He loved Halloween, so we go and we put Halloween decorations on his grave or tombstone—or gravestone, whatever. And so, I just live probably three quarters of a mile from him, so I do go and I visit often. I make sure that he has appropriate flowers. And when I go—the last time I went there, somebody had put a symbol of—a First Calvary symbol on his stone. It had—it was the First Calvary, which is yellow with a black horse on it. I mean, I'm sorry—yeah, it's yellow with a black horse. It

usually has a "one" on it for First Calvary, because Casey was in the First Calvary. This one said 04/04/04 on it because eight soldiers from the First Calvary died the same day Casey died. So Casey and seven other Calvary members—

When he first died, I would go every day and I would take my journal and I would write letters to him and that's what I advised mothers or fathers to do when their children die is to write them a letter every day telling them how you feel and how much you miss that person, what that person's life meant to you. And just other things. Like I used to write what I did. Like Janey and I went to lunch, or whatever, just like I was writing to Casey if he was alive.

So, now, probably, I would say it's every four to six weeks that I go. I go up there now—because I recognize that that's not where Casey is. Casey is in his nieces and nephews. He's in us. He's in all of our memories and our love. That's where Casey is.

JON Well, I told you before that Cohen looks strikingly like Casey, in my opinion. And, I'm a little older than—

CINDY Cohen is my son Andy's son and Andy, the older he gets the more he looks like Casey, the more he sounds like Casey, and Andy has really taken Casey's life and tried to really make that a model for the way he lives his life. And, so, I'm just really proud of all my kids in the way that they have handled this, and the way that they move forward without losing touch with Casey and what an enormous part of our family he was. And still is. He still is.

JON Well, I'm a little older than Casey, but when I look at—right, he's still a part of your family. I'm a little older than Casey, but when I went to look at Casey's grave, it looks like that we could have been friends.

CINDY Superman—

JON He likes Superman, Van Halen. I used to watch the WWF when I was a kid. (Yeah) And, I want to end on this.

I've made this mistake a couple of times. I used to say, "Imagine how many more Cindys there are out there" as a reference to the mothers who've lost a

child in these wars. And the truth of the matter is, there's only one Cindy Sheehan.

And I want to thank you very much for coming on my show today. And I want everybody to be sure to watch what comes after the interview. So, again, Cindy, thank you very much for taking the time to come on today. And I love you very much.

CINDY You're welcome, Jon. I love you. And I just want to say that the Soapbox People's Network is very excited and honored that you do this show for us and we just want to, I and—I say we, but it's just really Dede and I and our future bloggers. We're getting over a hundred thousand hits a month, so we think that's really good for a brand-new website. But we just wish you all the success and we're hoping that we just build this alternative media that is truly principled. Whether it's left-wing or right-wing or whatever, it's just principled. And so I just want to thank you for doing this show and for being on the Soapbox People's Network.

JON Thank you very much, Cindy, and you have a great day.

CINDY Okay, you too, Jon.

JON Bye, bye, Cindy. (Bye)

This show is dedicated to Casey Sheehan.



Chapter/Episode 9 – J. Michael Springmann – October 16, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

J. Michael Springmann (MICHAEL)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show is going to focus on how none of the hijackers should have been given visas to enter this country. It's going to focus on how the United States used the Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the same place many of the hijackers got their visas, to bring "terrorists" or "rebels" to this country to train for the Afghanistan-Russia war in the 1980s.

It's going to focus on how people who should have been held accountable were not and instead were rewarded and promoted, as has been the case too often with regard to 9/11.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with Michael Springmann. How are you doing today, Michael?

MICHAEL Oh, pretty good. Working on finishing touches on my book, Time for Terror and earning a little money for the company by doing some work for clients.

JON Excellent! So, what I'm going to do is I'm going to read your bio.

J. Michael Springmann was a civil servant at the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, as well as a diplomat in the State Department's Foreign Service, with postings to Germany, India, Saudi Arabia, and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in Washington D.C. The published author of several articles on national security themes, he is now an attorney in private practice in the Washington, D.C. area. In addition to a J.D. from American University in Washington, D.C., he holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in International Affairs from Georgetown University and Catholic University, both in the Nation's Capital.

Magazines which have published his articles include *Covert Action Quarterly*, *Unclassified*, (the journal of the Association of National Security Alumni, essentially CIA and FBI veterans plus outsiders with expert knowledge of intelligence and foreign affairs), *Global Research*, *Global Outlook*, *OpEdNews*, *The Public Record*, and *Foreign Policy Journal*. In June 2004, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee granted him its Pro Bono Attorney of the Year award.

Congratulations!

MICHAEL Oh, thank you.

JON All right, so what I'm going to do is I'm just going to get right into the questions. (Sure) And, the very first question is: What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

MICHAEL Well, it was a long and sort of stressful day. I had been on my way to an appointment at the Arlington County Courthouse with a potential client and as I was going down Scottsville Road towards the river and towards the bridge that crosses the Potomac, I could see all the smoke somewhere over Alexandria. I had no idea what was going on and finally I got a good look at the smoke and there were huge clouds of white smoke that pretty much obscured the southern skyline, and I wondered if a plane had crashed. And, once I got to the courthouse, the place was surrounded by police and one of them had told me that the Trade Towers in New York were gone. My response to him was, well, this is America's state-sponsored terrorism and it's come home to roost like turkeys.

Following that I said well, I 'm obviously not going to get into the courthouse. I tried reaching my client. I couldn't do it with my cell phone. And had to struggle back into the city trying several different ways because of a tremendous amount of traffic that was going in both directions. I tried it again when I got to the pharmacy to pick up some medicines, and still couldn't get through on the telephones, and the owner of the pharmacy was crying and as he—the set was on, and he was watching the buildings come down again and again and again.

So it was remarkably frustrating and a non-productive day.

JON So, you're saying—I'm sorry, go ahead, continue.

MICHAEL But, basically it was—my thoughts throughout the day was that Americans are finally paying for what they've done to other countries.

JON Wow, so your first thought was what's considered to be blow-back (Yeah) for the 9/11 attacks. That was not my first thought.

MICHAEL Yeah, this was the Americans that destroyed Iraq in 1993, and this is a couple years before they destroyed it again in 2003. But, in the meantime, the Americans were rampaging through the Balkans destroying Yugoslavia, supporting the Israelis in their attack on Palestine and their neighbors, so I decided that this is finally the Americans getting a bit of their own back.

JON So you were obviously someone that was paying closer to attention to what's going on in the world than I was. Because I was—

MICHAEL Well, I try to. I mean, I guess, I've got the degrees; I've been overseas with the State Department; I have a number of friends from various countries; and I have a different idea and outlook on things than a lot of other people do.

JON Well, I'm sure you do.

All right, my next question. Can you please describe your role with the U.S. State Department in the late 1980s?

MICHAEL Sure. Prior to my going to Jeddah in 1986, in September, I tried to get into the Foreign Services a number of times and was always turned down for one reason or another. I got in the State Commerce Exchange Program,

which provided a time at the Washington State Department officers and a time abroad for people in the International Trade Administration. They were Foreign Service Reserve Officers and treated as a diplomat. I'd also gone to New Delhi as a—one of the first people sent abroad to the new Foreign commercial service. I was commercial attaché there for a couple of years.

But in the late 80s I was in Jeddah or on the way to Jeddah and I was going to go out as the officer in charge of the visa section. Consulates typically have any kind of a political section, a commercial section and a Consular section, and an administrative section. And what happens is the commercial section was taken away from state and given to the commerce department. But, by and large, politically the economic officer is a consort for the President and kings, people who do consulate work tend to be seen as social workers and the administrative section gets the spoken toilet. (Laughs)

JON Okay.

MICHAEL And in Jeddah, I was running the visa section and I had heard some strange stories about the place before I got out there, and it was things like the American Ambassador was in town for consultations at the department, and I was told by the desk that I could go and have a quick meet and greet session. I said sure. I went in about five minutes saying I'm part of the new official family, happy to go to Jeddah, etc. And, the next thing I knew he spent 45 minutes bending my ear on all the problems that the Jeddah Consulate was creating for the embassy in Riyadh. The women who were wives of rich Saudis were going to the states with an entourage of hairdressers and seamstresses and things like this. And some were getting visas and their visas were getting turned down.

He kept on and on about this and I couldn't quite figure out what he was telling me. I knew he was telling me something, but for the life of me I couldn't figure it out. And later on I heard from Ellen Goff at the administrative office of the Bureau of South Asia, that yeah, she'd heard about problems in Jeddah with visas, but she didn't know what they were, really. Because I'd been told by an experienced consulate officer that the first sign of trouble in the consulate section is that things are not what they seem, and there's some really strange stuff going on. Oh, boy. Then I got to Jeddah. I was welcomed with open arms, and they treat you like royalty almost and they offered and said that your predecessor had created such problems that we're glad you're here. This woman is going to give me tenure, she's going to make me collect a million dollars.

So, after a bit it wasn't Mike, will you please take a look at this visa application. We want to make sure this guy gets a visa to go to the states. It was: "Why did you turn that visa down? We want this guy to go to the states. We want him to get a visa. What's going on?" And, basically, the law and the regulations state that the visa applicant is an intended immigrant unless and until he can prove otherwise. And the consular office is to refuse this, etc. unless he is certain of the guy that's going to be there, and he's going to go to America, look at the Grand Canyon, visit his relatives, or sign a contract and then come back to his country of origin or place of application.

And this went on for a year and a half and it got nastier and nastier, and I was repeatedly threatened. I was told I would be out of the Foreign Services if I didn't do what was wanted. And the driving force behind this, for the most part, was Jay Freres. He was the Consul General. And I couldn't quite figure out how the Consul General got involved in this because what I was doing was way below his pay grade. And it got to the point where at one time there was a guy bringing a pile of visa applications over with passports and he said you can issue the visas now or you can do it after I call Jay Freres. And I complained to Justice Stephens—Justice is his given name—who's head of Consulate section. I complained to Stephanie Smith in Riyadh who was the Council for Consular affairs, and she told me this is a very bad situation. You need to go back to Washington and talk with your Consulate Affairs and meantime you're NBC.

JON Let's—I'm sorry, let's back up one second. So, basically, your role at the Consular's office was to issue visas for individuals who wanted to go to the United States.

MICHAEL That's right.

JON And, while you were there, you found many applicants should have been turned down. You were turning them down and people above you were telling you to let the visas go as opposed to being turned down. Correct?

MICHAEL Yeah. Exactly. For example, I'll give you Paul Arvid Tveit. He's listed in namebase.org as an official of the Central Intelligence Agency. He was in the commercial section in the Jeddah office, and I had turned down two guys, I think, from Pakistan who were going to the American Automotive Parts Trade Show in Chicago. And when I asked these people what trade

show they were going to, they didn't know. They were just going with a commerce department trade mission. And I said well where is this being held? And they said well, oh, it's going to be in Detroit. And that was the wrong city. Every year the show is held in Chicago. I knew that from working at the commerce department and being in their automotive parts and accessories section. I turned them down. And, within an hour Tveit was on the phone with me arguing about how they had to have visas because the commerce department wanted them. I said look, if they can't name the trade show and don't know what city it's being held in, I'm not going to give them a visa. And I cited the Section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act and the State Department's own regulations.

And they called Justice Stephens and got my refusal reversed and these guys got their visas.

JON So, who and when did you notify people of what was going on in Jeddah? Like who did you complain to in other words?

MICHAEL I complained to Justice Stephens and he told me to shut-up and issue the visas. If Freres wanted the visas, Freres should get it and don't ask questions. (Okay--) And I complained to Stephanie Smith and Riyadh who turns out according to Namebase also works for the CIA. And it went like this for about a year and a half. I used that in Washington on my way to my next assignment in Stuttgart, I called the U. S. Consular Affairs and they could care less.

JON Right. So, what happened as the end result of all of this.

MICHAEL Well, I eventually got tossed out of the Foreign Service. They refused to give me tenure, like tenure at a University, and I was out on the street. I complained to the Inspector General's office at State. I complained to the what was then the Government Accounting Office and now it's called the Government Accountability Office. I eventually complained to the Inspector General's State Department. All I got out of it was that I had a personality conflict with affairs. There's no real issue there.

JON So, you weren't, or were you given whistleblower status? Or protection?

MICHAEL No, no, I talked to a couple of attorneys, one woman never got back to me. She wouldn't talk to me about my situation. And another firm Neal, Shaw Mullenholz and Seeger, the people who got me into the State Department

when they refused to let me in because I had bad feet. They told me well, you're just going to have to argue to the Judge that you know how to manage the State Department better than the State Department does. Well, I got no help from anybody.

JON Did you try suing them or anything? To get your job back?

MICHAEL Well, what I did was I complained after that to the FBI and to the Justice Department and, basically, I was ignored. Then I filed a Freedom of Information request to find out what was going on and to figure out why I wasn't—I didn't have a job anymore. And State gave me useless information, things like pay stubs and travel orders and things like this which I already had.

And I got to the point where I said well I'll file a Freedom of Information Act. I'll do it on my own since I can't afford a lawyer. I had basically nothing coming in except measly unemployment insurance. That wasn't a whole lot of money and it was taxable besides, thanks to Ronald Reagan. So, I got nowhere with a lawsuit. It was eventually appealed as it affected national security. And to this day, I don't have any idea why. Trying to know why I was fired from how it's affected the national security.

JON Well, that's interesting.

MICHAEL After that, a year or two later, I was researching the articles that were unclassified and had been given Joe Trento's name. He is a journalist that does national security things in the Washington area. He's trying to be public—the public education—can't think of it at the moment.

I was talking to Joe and about what I was researching and then he was kind of abrupt with me and talked and then asked me who I was and what I was doing. And I mentioned I'd been to Jeddah and handled the visas, and he says, well, you know Osama bin Laden? I said, well, no, but I went to a bin Laden wedding and I don't remember the guy's name, but it wasn't Osama bin Laden getting married that night.

So, I went over to his office and he told me that essentially what had happened was the CIA and the State Department were working together saying junior Consular officers issue visas in Jeddah, and if they weren't smart enough to ask what was going on, they would get tenure and have a career in the Foreign Service. If they asked questions like I did, and they

weren't with the program, they would be booted out. And Joe told me that what they were doing was recruiting people for the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. And the guys they were recruiting were being sent to Washington, or other parts of the United States, for training. I found out later a lot of this was done in Virginia at one of the CIA facilities. And also at Seal another military facility in North Carolina.

And I was amazed at this and talked to a couple other people, one of them was with Voice of America and another guy connected with George Washington University, and they told me yeah, that's pretty much it. These guys were being recruited and the Saudis wanted them back into the kingdom, once they had gotten out of Afghanistan and the war with the Soviets was over. They didn't want them home, using what they had learned in Afghanistan to affect regime change in their own country.

JON Well—in an Associated Press article from July 2002, entitled "Did U.S. train Arabs to help Afghans oust Soviets?" It says the following, "The State Department had no comment on Springmann's allegations except to say final authority over visa decisions rests with the consular officer in charge, not with Springmann, a junior officer." What is your response to that? That essentially is your argument, isn't it? That the people above you (Yeah) were essentially telling you what to do?

MICHAEL Yeah, the issue was—well, the article came about because George Getta had read the covert action quote on the article and that article got a great play in Canada. I'd been interviewed by the Canadian Broadcasting Company in the National Press Building. And this fellow was going viral and Getta had me in to meet with him, and a woman who he said was from Saudi Arabia and he went through the points of what I have just told you. And the article seemed to die. I don't know many places it was printed, except I saw the one in the *Deseret News* and, oh, some fellow from the *Larouche Executive Intelligence Review* sent me a copy from some place in the Middle East.

But, by and large, the way things go with visas and visa referrals and visa refusals and so forth, is that if a Consular officer, and I was in charge of the visa section, refuses a visa, the only way the refusal can be overwritten was by a senior Foreign Services officer in the Consular section. Plus, having more information that was not available to the denying officer saying that he actually did the interview. You have to write a written report. This is written up in Volume 9, Foreign Affairs Manual, Section 41.121. (Okay--)

So, I would refuse and then Freres and company would say reverse your refusal or else. And I had finally got to the point where I was like no changes on the visa form saying this is refused per order of Jay P. Freres. I issued the visa.

JON Right. Okay, well, with regard to the CIA sending recruits through Jeddah to the United States to train, there is information that supports that, and apparently in 1980—and this information is from HistoryCommons.org—it says:

Some fighters opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan begin training in the U.S. According to journalist John Cooley (an ABC Correspondent), the training is done by Navy Seals and Green Beret officers who have taken draconian secrecy oaths. Key Pakistani officers are trained, as well as some senior Afghan Mujahideen. Much of the training takes place in Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, Virginia, which is said to be the CIA's main location for training spies and assets. Other training takes place at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Harvey Point, North Carolina, and Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia. Subjects are trained in how to detect explosives, surveillance, how to recruit new agents, how to run paramilitary operations, and more. They are taught to use many different weapons as well, including remote-controlled mines and bombs, and sophisticated timers and explosives.

Now, this is not the last time that the United States has brought, whatever you want to call them, rebels, terrorists (Mm-hmm), to the United States to train (Mm-hmm), in 2012 Seymour Hersh from *The New Yorker* reported that the U. S. Joint Special Operations Command, the JSOC, trained operatives from the Mujahideen-e Khalq or MEK at a secret site in Nevada beginning in 2005.

Now, according to Hersh, MEK members were trained in intercepting communications, cryptography, weaponry and small tactics at the Nevada site and they were supposed to be used in Iran, I believe.

Now, what's interesting about that story is the MEK was considered to be a terrorist organization—

MICHAEL Oh, yeah.

JON And, you know there was a—

MICHAEL A number of these people that—organizations the Americans have condemned publicly—they work with privately under cover.

JON Exactly, and the MEK is considered to be—or was considered to be—a terrorist organization and they were on the State Department's terrorism list, and there was a big campaign to get them off of that list, and a lot of people who took part in that were people like Rudy Giuliani who was supposedly America's Mayor from 9/11 (Mm-hmmm, yeah), and arguing on behalf of the terrorist group, and eventually Hillary Clinton made sure that they were taken off of the State Department's terrorism list.

So, Joe Trento told you, essentially, why you were being made to allow visas that you didn't think should go through, correct? It was Joe?

MICHAEL Yeah, mm-hmm.

JON Okay, just so people know, Joe Trento, as he said, is a journalist in D.C. Paul Thompson who is the creator of the Complete 9/11 Timeline swears by Joe Trento. Joe Trento was mentioned in the book *Eleventh Day*, and Michael Springmann is also mentioned in the book *Eleventh Day*. I forget the author. I think it was Robbyn Swan or somebody like that. Some people question what Joe has to say, but you know, he's broken a lot of stories over the years, so just wanted to—

MICHAEL Well, I even told people that don't like Joe Trento that whatever you say about him, he has excellent sources and good contacts.

JON Right. Now—

MICHAEL And he gave me some ink in his book *Prelude to Terror*.

JON He gave you some ink in his book *Prelude to Terror*?

MICHAEL Yeah, it was a couple of pages talking about my situation in Jeddah.

JON Right. Okay, now, you were talking about, or you mentioned the State Department and the CIA working hand-in-hand (Mm-hmm) and I've heard such things before from 9/11 whistleblower Sibel Edmonds and it seems to make sense to me that the CIA would be working with the State

Department. A position at an embassy in another country just make sense for a spy. If you understand what I'm saying, so—

MICHAEL Oh, yeah. They love it because they have diplomatic immunity. They pretend to be consular officers, administrative officers, or political officers, and they've got the diplomatic passport, so the worst the host country could do is treat them as persona-non-grata and send them home. Or put them in a secret prison.

JON I found an article from *Techdirt* from July, 2014, about some of the torture that the CIA was doing and it says:

"...officials at the State Department were well aware of the ongoing CIA torture efforts, but were instructed not to tell their superiors, such that it's likely that the top officials, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, may have been kept in the dark, while others at the State Department knew of the (highly questionable) CIA actions."

So, that's an example of them working together, but—

MICHAEL Oh, yeah. For example, we had out of some 20 Americans there were only three people—myself, Mike Springmann, Lonnie Washington, the only State Department communicator, and Jim Page an Administrative officer. We were the only people I knew for a certainty to have no ties, professional or familial, with any of the American intelligence services. Considerably, there may be a couple more that I was wrong about, but by and large it was basically a CIA operation.

I talked to a former Station Chief, who asked not to be named, and this individual, along with a real Foreign Services officer, Jay Hawley who's now retired, both told me that the average for people who don't work for the State Department but say they do is about one in three at Foreign Service posts.

At Jeddah it was obviously more. There was a retired American ambassador who figured it was about half. And if you looked at this book that was produced in Canada, which I never got my hands on, it's called the *Anti-CIA Club of Diplomats: Spooks in the U.S. Foreign Services*. It's a 1983 Canadian publication. It says the average people who work for the intelligence services at a foreign service post is 60 percent.

JON Wow. Well, that's certainly interesting. And I want to bring—I want to make sure people understand why we're talking about Jeddah. Why it was so important to have you on the show today.

12 of the 19 hijackers got their visas from the U.S. Consular's office in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Now, my next question: We have learned that the United States did not end its relationship with groups like the Mujahideen after the Afghanistan/Russia War and, instead, continued to work with them throughout the 90s. Is it a reasonable assumption to make that since that relationship with the Mujahideen never ended, the situation at the Consulate in Jeddah never ended either?

MICHAEL I would think so. I haven't been back for a while, but from what I originally thought, my complaints, my freedom of information act requests, my freedom of information act lawsuits, might have forced them to dance things down, but from what I've seen so far from what we've done in Iraq, what we've done in the Balkans, in Libya and in Syria, obviously, they've been recruiting and keeping what I call the Arab Afghans going. This was what they were called in Afghanistan because they weren't Afghan but they were Arabs and other nationalities and ethnicities fighting on the same side as the Afghans.

JON Well, my question was, essentially, do you think that situation was still going on at the time of 9/11.

MICHAEL Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Even during the war in Afghanistan, when the Soviets withdrew in when was it? 1990, 1991—the Americans kept recruiting and kept bringing these people in to fight. It went on for another three years to 1995.

JON Okay.

Now, many of the hijackers, in fact, some people say all of the hijackers for a number of reasons should not have been given visas. Are you aware of some of the reasons why?

MICHAEL Well, I've seen some things online that looked to be photocopies of the visa applications. And they, basically, look like a lot of visa applications I saw in

Jeddah, and what I heard about in Germany from the people I knew in the Consular Section. People just don't fill out the application, or they do it sloppily. They leave blanks or they put dated information in the blanks that they're required to fill in. So, one of the things I would do when I was at the visa window, at the time we required personal appearances for everybody except Saudis and if I had a question, I would bring the Saudi in for an interview.

But, by and large, I would go through the application form and I would say well, you got a blank here. Where are you going to stay in the United States? Do you have a hotel? Are you going to visit relatives? You left out a time of arrival, which month is it, for example. Do you have any kind of a specific day? Do you have a month? Give me some more information. By and large, in the space of two minutes they would talk themselves out of a visa. Because they couldn't answer or wouldn't answer a lot of my questions.

JON Right. I have some information about why they should not have been given visas. This is all from—well this part is from HistoryCommons.

Between April 3-7, 2001, three hijackers are given visas to the United States through the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. They are Nawaf Alhazmi, Salem Alhazmi, and Khalid Almihdar. It says:

"Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi are already 'al-Qaeda veterans' and battle-hardened killers." "All three men have indicators in their passports marking them as Islamic radicals. These indicators are used to track them by the Saudi authorities, but are apparently not noticed by U.S. officials."

So, these are individuals that actually had a stamp that said they were terrorists, and they still managed to get visas.

And from another report. This is from ABC News:

"The political journal *National Review* obtained the visa applications for 15 of the 19 hijackers — and evidence that all of them should have been denied entry to the country. Almost all of the hijacker's visas were issued in Saudi Arabia, at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh or the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah. Terrorist ties aside, the applications themselves should have

raised red flags, say experts. The forms are incomplete and often incomprehensible — yet that didn't stop any of the 15 terrorists from whom the visa applications were obtained from coming to the United States."

And then it goes on to say:

"They were handing these things out gift-wrapped with ribbons on top," said Joel Mowbray, contributing editor of the *National Review*. Mowbray, who obtained the visas, said he was shocked by what he saw. "I mean, I really was expecting al Qaeda to have trained their operatives well, to beat the system," he said. "They didn't have to beat the system, the system was rigged in their favor from the get-go."

Now, in response to these revelations, the State Department says:

"The fact is that with 20/20 hindsight, I'm sure one can always find a reason that you might have turned down a visa."

Now, on October 21, 2002, the General Accounting Office, the nonpartisan investigative arm of Congress, releases a report asserting that at least 13 of the 19 9/11 hijackers were never interviewed by U.S. consular officials before being granted visas to enter the U.S. This contradicts previous assurances from the State Department that 12 of the hijackers had been interviewed.

Now, in December 2002, Senators Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) state in a chapter of the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry that:

"If State Department personnel had merely followed the law and not granted non-immigrant visas to 15 of the 19 hijackers in Saudi Arabia . . . 9/11 would not have happened."

<https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20140730/17360528061/cia-torture-report-reveals-that-state-department-officials-knew-about-torture-were-told-not-to-tell-their-bosses.shtml>

So, that's some of what they said about the visas of these hijackers. Now, 12 of the hijackers, as I said, were issued visas at the consulate in Jeddah, where you worked, and they were issued by a woman named Shayna Steinger. Are you familiar with her?

MICHAEL To an extent, yeah, I had looked her up after we had talked a couple of days ago and found out that her background is a little bit odd. She was commissioned as SFO4 in 1999. And at that time her name was Shayna Steinger Singh—S-I-N-G-H. And I thought this was really odd because generally someone who is brought in at the junior officer on their first tour is like an SFO6 or SFO7. In my case I was a 5 because I had a master's degree and worked for a number of years. In her case, she came directly out of Columbia University to the State Department and I've not been able to find out whether she had a doctorate's degree that might have gotten her in at a 4, but it's an awfully high rank for someone to sit on the visa line for their first tour.

JON Well, just so people know, Shayna Steinger is the woman who issued the 12 visas to the 9/11 hijackers at the Consulate in Jeddah. She gave "incorrect testimony" to the House Committee on Government Reform and also makes "incorrect statements" to the 9/11 Commission. She is not mentioned in the 9/11 Report, at all. And, after 9/11, she was continuously promoted throughout the State Department.

And, before 9/11 this is what she said: She was "never aware of the level of disaffected extremism in Saudi society," she says.

Now, apparently, before she got there they were a lot more strict in issuing visas (Mm-hmm), but she apparently issued visas to a lot of people, and her opposite, the guy who worked with her who I don't remember his name, was the exact opposite. He turned down a lot of people.

So, it's just amazing to me that the woman who issued 12 of the visas, literally, is not even mentioned in the 9/11 Report.

MICHAEL Well, that pretty much indicates she's one of the agency staff there. My predecessor who supposedly made all the problems for the Ambassador in Riyadh is now Ambassador to Oman.

JON Wow.

MICHAEL And, she would do things like call the Internal Revenue Service about people she suspected of living abroad and not paying American taxes.

JON Interesting.

MICHAEL So, the women I met at the State Department, generally were of a hard case of matter. They do things literally. They have no imagination and they're trouble makers. And what I could see, both Greta and this Shayna Steinger Singh were not exactly your typical Consular officer.

JON Wow. It certainly—she was never held accountable. That's something we saw a lot of after 9/11 are that people in Government who should have been held accountable were not (of course) and in many cases, as in her case, they were instead rewarded and promoted.

MICHAEL Yeah, exactly. The same—go ahead.

JON Well—No, you go ahead.

MICHAEL Well, I was going to say as far as the people who got the visas that had the clear indications of being terrorists or whatever, every visa application at the time was sent to Washington to run through their automated look-up system to see if they were ax murders, terrorists, or what have you. And, obviously, which was not done or if it was done they monkeyed with the data in Washington, or maybe the CIA never put these people into the database. I don't know. (Well—) That's a possibility, because they don't seem to talk to one another sometimes.

JON Three of the hijackers obtained their visas through the Visa Express Program. Are you familiar with it? I have a definition of what the Visa Express is. I'll read it real fast. (Sure) This is from Wiki:

"The U.S. introduced the Visa Express program in May 2001. This program allowed Saudi Arabian residents, including non-citizens, to get valid visas through a travel agency using a much less restrictive standard than would have otherwise been required. They did not have to submit a proof of identity, but only had to provide a photograph and fill out a short form. A senior State Department official described the program as "an open-door policy for terrorists." No other country had this system to facilitate easy entry into the country."

So, are you familiar with the Visa Express program? What's your opinion about it? I think it's—

MICHAEL Well, it's a—I'm sorry, go ahead.

JON I just think it's very interesting that, you know, a few months before 9/11 they decide to implement this program (Yeah) that only applies to Saudi Arabia, and makes it easier as they said for terrorists to get into the country.

MICHAEL Yeah, well, when I was there, the Saudi's were seen as good visa prospects and they didn't have to appear personally for a visa interview. So they simply sent a passport over with photographs and a visa application form filled out. And, the Visa Express systems sounds very much like what I was told by Celerino Castillo, the drug enforcement agency officer who operated in Latin America, he once told me by phone that typically what the CIA would do in South America would be to send the guys they wanted to get visas to come to the states for trainings or debriefings or whatever, to a legitimate travel agent and they would be bundled up with a bunch of other applicants for visas who were simple ordinary travelers and would be shipped over to the American Foreign Service post. And because they came from a legitimate travel agency, in a bundle, they wouldn't get scrutiny that maybe an individual would get if you had kind of a sketchy background on paper. So, yeah—(Right). That's a good way of getting people through if you want.

JON Well, the 9/11 Report says and this is how it addresses the Visa Express program. It says:

"In June, the State Department initiated the Visa Express program in Saudi Arabia as a security measure, in order to keep long lines of foreigners away from vulnerable embassy spaces. The program permitted visa applications to be made through travel agencies, instead of directly at the embassy or consulate."

Now that's all it says. It doesn't say anything about how this program was a bad thing.

Now, one thing I want to bring up is an individual by the name of Mary Ryan.

MICHAEL She was the Secretary for Consular Affairs, right?

JON She was the head of the State Department's Consular Service, correct. (Mm-hmm) and that was—she was the one essentially responsible for letting most of the hijackers into the U.S. – Oh, I'm sorry, it says:

"Mary Ryan, the head of the State Department's consular service that was responsible for letting most of the hijackers into the U.S., is also forced to retire."

Now, we've said before, oftentimes, that nobody was ever held accountable. This is actually one case where somebody was held accountable. She was forced to retire. However, and the reason was:

"It has been pointed out that Ryan deceived Congress by testifying that "there was nothing State could have done to prevent the terrorists from obtaining visas."

However, after she makes this false statement and she has to retire, after all this Ryan and the other authors of the Visa Express program are given "outstanding performance" awards of \$15,000 each. The reporter who wrote most of the stories critical of the Visa Express is briefly detained and pressured by the State Department.

So that's very interesting.

MICHAEL [Laughs] That's really amazing.

JON Yeah, it's very amazing. Are you familiar with the story of Abdullah Noman?

MICHAEL Yeah, he had been a Foreign Service national, a local hire, working in the commercial section across the street from the Consular. And, he apparently, was selling visas and was caught in an FBI sting operation in Nevada.

JON Right. What HistoryCommons says—this is somebody who worked at the Jeddah office, I thought. Correct?

MICHAEL Well, he wasn't in the Consular section. He was in the commercial section.

JON Okay. It says that he took money and gifts to provide fraudulent visas to foreigners. He pleads guilty and is convicted—this is on May 21, 2002—

about 50 to 100 visas were improperly issued by Noman from September 1996, until November of 2001, when he was arrested. (Mm-hmm)
So, there's all kinds of problems with the Consular office in Jeddah.

MICHAEL Well, when I was there I had a guy Martin tell me that the price for a visa at the Consular was \$2500. And I called the regional security officer about this and then I'd been told that I should look at who needs the money and the only person I know who needs the money is Jay Freres whose house burned down while he was away from the Consulate for a couple of months on home leave. And nothing, nothing ever came of it.

JON Right. Now, did you ever try to contact any of the investigations into 9/11 so you could speak to them, or did any of them ever try to contact you?

MICHAEL Well, none of them tried to contact me and I wondered whether it was worthwhile doing it because I eventually decided I wouldn't waste my breath. At Joe Trento's suggestion, I called the FBI after September 11, 2001, and wanted to talk to them about the issues in Jeddah and the visas for terrorists program, and was passed from office to office and their main office on Pennsylvania Avenue, and then they kind of threw me to the Washington field office. And when I got put through there, they said, well, somebody will call you back. Well, it's been, what is it, 13 years? I'm still waiting for them to call me back.

JON Wow, that's a shame. See, somebody like you should have been brought in to testify before the 9/11 Commission.

And now, my last question to you, and before I ask this question, I just want to thank you for your time today. It's an extremely interesting story. It brings about many questions that need to be answered with regard to how these hijackers managed to get these visas and why no one was held accountable, and all kinds of things. (Mm-hmm)

So, I just want to thank you very much for your time today.

MICHAEL Oh, you're quite welcome. I enjoyed the opportunity to talk out once more on this.

JON Yep.

You're currently working on a book. What is the premise of the book and when will it be available?

MICHAEL Well, I'm in my final draft of what I've titled *Time for Terror: The Arab Afghans* and it basically covers a lot of what we talked about tonight. My issues with visas in Jeddah and what I found out later on. And then I move on to the fact that in my opinion and based on my research in talking with people, a couple of interviews, that this group was never disbanded. It was turned into a cadre, maybe not terribly well organized, to destabilize Governments the American Government didn't like, like Yugoslavia, that was destroyed. These people, you had Osama bin Laden there. You had Veterans of the Afghan War there. They worked with the American Government. They worked with NATO to bomb and shoot and kill. And then they were sent to Iraq after the American invasion in 2003, and they were recruited—people were hooked up into death squads with Henry Encher the alleged political officer from Jeddah, as deputy to the Consular for political affairs, Robert Ford, to recruit these people.

Then, the same crowd was sent to Libya with the NATO bombing campaign to destroy the country and then their weapons and the men were shipped into Syria where they'd been hard at work since the last couple of years, and from what I've seen in the papers, they're back in Iraq again, only they've been rebranded as ISIS or ISIL or IS, depending on which day of the week you're talking about.

JON Well, the point is—

MICHAEL And you try to tie all this together.

JON Right. Okay. Now, the point of this is—and I don't know that it's all the same group that they use. I'm sure (mm-hmm), there are different groups that they use. But, you know, Governments, our Government especially loves to use terrorists or rebels or freedom fighters, whatever you want to call them, as a proxy to destabilize Governments and so forth.

And we saw that throughout the 90s. We were told that program ended, but it did not, as you were mentioning in the Balkans and Yugoslavia (Mm-hmm), and, you know, Dr. Nafeez Ahmed, who I've already interviewed, who has written a lot on this subject (Yeah--) and after 9/11—

MICHAEL Yeah, he mentioned me in a couple of his books.

JON He mentioned you in a couple of his books (Yeah, yeah). That's good. And after 9/11 we used, you know, Jundallah in Iran. We used groups, as you mentioned in Libya with the NATO bombing campaign. Well, Bandar, Prince Bandar from Saudi Arabia had an operation to send rebels into Syria in an effort to take out Assad (Mm-hmm) and that was helped by, I believe, it was Kuwait and Qatar, and it had to be done with the U.S. consent. (Yeah) And the U.S. has been operating in Syria covertly for years. And they've been wanting (Yeah, oh yeah) to take out Assad for years.

So, to think they were doing this without U.S. consent would be probably foolish to think. (Yeah) And then, eventually, the U.S. started sending them intelligence, then they started sending them arms, then the U.S. started training rebels in Jordan (Mm-hmm) in order to send in to Syria and then, you know, what happened was all of these rebels in Syria, they worked there, they started to go into Iraq and they actually, they took advantage of the individuals in Iraq who were angry—at least, this is my opinion—they were angry about a decade's worth of sanctions (Mm-hmm). That killed a million people. They were angry about our occupation that killed upwards of 1.25 million, that wounded and displaced millions more.

MICHAEL Yeah, you're well informed.

JON Well, they destroyed the infrastructure, Blackwater was hunting Iraqis for sport (Mm-hmm). They were torturing people in Abu Ghraib. And a lot of people in Iraq—these kinds of things, there's no statute of limitations on the anger that these kinds of things create (mm-hmm, sure), so, essentially, you know, all the rebels that we sent into Syria mix their way into the people in Iraq, now we have this situation called ISIS (Mm-hmm), which is essentially a problem of our making. Ours (Yeah) and our allies' making. (Exactly)

So, that's what your book's about?

MICHAEL Pretty much. It goes back also to the beginnings of all of these in the 40's and 50's where Mohammad Mossadegh and Iran was the first victim of the first CIA coup, and Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala was the second victim of the second CIA coup. (Right) And I mentioned U.S. involvement in Syria and Egypt in the past in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and their efforts came to naught, I think in large part, because they weren't really organized. Now that they've got this Arab Afghan legion, as I call it in the book. They've got

something they can work with. They've been well put together. They've been trained. They know how to handle things. And it's—they've done more uproar and more destruction and more devastation and totally collapsed societies and Governments all through the region. To Libya and to Syria and to Iraq. I mean, they're desperate to split Iraq into 3 pieces with the Kurdish north, the Sunni center, and then the Shiite south. So far they haven't been able to do it. It's like 11 years of war. (Right) Will it begin now with the attacks on the country again, I don't know. That's up in the air.

JON Well, the whole situation is extremely F-D up. (Laughter) I try not to curse on this show. But it's all our doing. If anybody thinks that bombing a region for 13 years would not create enemies (Laughs), they're really foolish to think that.

So, it essentially creates a perpetual war which the military industrial complex loves, and so forth.

MICHAEL Yeah, and they need us. We need to have the wars because we can restore order with our war and if we leave, things will get much worse. And I just throw up my hands and when I hear that and that's not possible.

JON (Laughs) I want to bring all the troops home from everywhere (mm-hmm), cut our military budget by 90 percent and make them only for defensive purposes. If somebody wants to invade our country, that's what our military's for, to defend against something like that. (Yeah) They shouldn't be used to make rich people richer, essentially. (Yeah)

What is the name of your book?

MICHAEL Time for Terror: The Arab Afghans.

JON Okay, and when will it be released?

MICHAEL I look to have it out by the end of the year. I've got my final draft. I've got people working at it, and I'll send it off for a final edit and then we'll get it marching. I hoped to have it open for the elections, but I think it going to be the end of the year before it's actually printed.

JON Well, good luck with the release of the book. And, again, thank you for your time today.

MICHAEL Thank you. I enjoyed the opportunity to speak, and it's an honor to be on your show.

JON Well, thanks a lot, Michael, and I hope to speak with you again.

MICHAEL Inshallah.

JON All right, have a good one.

MICHAEL Okay, bye, bye. Thank you.



Chapter/Episode 10 – Paul Church – October 27, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Paul Church (PAUL)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show is going to focus on the possible involvement of foreign countries in the 9/11 attacks. It's going to focus on how far the U.S. Government has gone to cover-up the supposed involvement of our allies. If our allies were involved in the murder of 2,976 people, and if elements within our Government helped to cover-up that involvement, then that, in itself, is a crime, and people need to be held accountable for it – period. It also raises many questions about those relationships with regard to 9/11 that need to be answered in a credible fashion.

Okay, this is Jon and I'm here with Paul. Hi, Paul, how are you tonight?

PAUL I'm okay. I'm very well, thank you. How are you, Jon?

JON I'm doing well myself. I'm actually in a little bit of pain, nerve pain, but I'm going to bear through it and get through this interview which I'm very much looking forward to.

PAUL Okay, let's do it.

JON I'm going to read your bio.

Paul Church is an independent journalist reporting mainly on geopolitics, warfare and counter-terrorism. He has written for *Asia Times Online*, and collaborated with documentary filmmaker Ray Nowosielski for the latest in a series of articles resulting from Ray's *Who Is Richard Blee?* podcast investigation. That piece was published at *Truthout*.

Paul's work for *Asia Times Online* has been cited in the peer-reviewed *Japan Focus*. He is currently researching a book on the political exploitation of mass casualty events from the Cold War to the present.

In 2012, he wrote an article for *Asia Times Online* called "Was Saudi Arabia Involved?"

Now, this discussion is going to talk about a few countries, but Paul's specialty is Saudi Arabia, so that will probably be the main focus.

My first question to you, Paul: What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

PAUL Well, surreal, I guess is the short answer. In all honesty, I don't think I really—I didn't really feel real on the day. It was I guess, for many people, a bad dream or something. I was working at the time for a company which administered sale orders for materials for large—these were commercial construction projects—so we were in touch with suppliers all over Europe, I think, four or five different countries. And you can probably imagine these are factories or warehouses, the radios are switched on all day. Our friends are always busy, so we pretty much got the blow-by-blow, minute-by-minute account of what was unfolding in America. People would just phone up saying, "Hey, have you heard what's happened now?" And, so it was surreal.

It wasn't really until the next day, I was on a bus at work and someone had left a newspaper on the seat and the cover was a photo of the New York skyline, completely filled with smoke and the headline was

"Apocalypse." (Right) And I was staring at the image, I think, when I realized that something, not just tragic, not just a huge tragedy, but something world changing had happened and things weren't really going to be the same. Because they weren't.

JON No, they were not. When was the first time you questioned what we were told about 9/11? And what exactly did you question?

PAUL To be honest, Jon, for many years I didn't really deeply question anything we were told about 9/11, and like many, I'd seen Michael Moore's documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and so I knew there were some lingering questions about the Bush administration's relationship with the Saudis. And that was coming on as anyone paying attention knew about that. So for many years that seemed, to me, to be a peripheral issue not something central to understanding what happened in 2001, which is a now a thing.

I don't think I really started to look deeply into that connection until about maybe 2007. I stumbled over an article and the article was quoting an interview with a gentleman called Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who we'll talk more about. He was the Saudi Ambassador based in Washington. A very powerful man with some very powerful connections. And he gave an interview to an Arabic news network and in that interview Prince Bandar says that Saudi intelligence had been following the 9/11 hijackers "with precision" and therefore if authorities in the U.S. had, perhaps, engaged more with their Saudi counterparts (laughs) that that attack, perhaps, could have been avoided. (Right)

Now, all of that could have been bluster. It could have just been hyperbole, but it struck me at the time, if just for the sake of argument, we would take Bandar's claim seriously. This failure to properly look into the Saudi connection, investigate Saudi's role after 9/11 would be kind of shocking, because it would seem unlikely, really, that Prince Bandar could somehow fail to mention such a looming threat, national security threat, to his very good friend the President of the United States.

JON Well, if that—

PAUL So—

JON I'm sorry, if that was your first foray into 9/11 and to questioning 9/11, then the first thing you should ask yourself is well, why didn't Bandar share this information with us? Is that pretty much the response you got? Or—

PAUL Yeah, and that was when I started to research that Saudi angle, I guess, and look into it in more depth. Like I say, we don't know if Prince Bandar is telling the truth. It could just have been bluster, hyperbole, whatever you want to call it. But, certainly strange if he did have this information and was following it as closely as he says that he was. Then it would seem odd, wouldn't it, that he hadn't told someone about this, especially given his connections inside the Bush administration. And very good friends with President Bush (Well--) and his wife, Bandar's wife Princess Haifa, once called the Bush family, she said they were like her mother and father. So, we're not talking about—we're talking about deep, personal relationships here.

JON Right, and another question would be well, did he in fact share information with the Bush administration if he had –

PAUL Which, of course, we don't know.

JON We don't know, and it's just speculative.

Now, before we continue, I want to say for the record that I do not want to start anymore wars with any countries. I'm fairly sure Paul agrees with me that individuals and systems needs to held accountable and changed and not entire religions, nationalities, ideologies and so on and so forth. I just wanted to make that clear as we continue.

PAUL I mean, I'd have to agree with that, Jon.

JON Now, the 9/11 report says: "We have found no evidence that the Saudi Government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded the organization." And the organization they were talking about is Al-Qaeda. What is your response to that?

PAUL I think we have to go back quite a long way, and perhaps get some context, and we don't really have time to go into the geo-politics here, and (No, as a--) it's a lot of ground to cover, but (Before you--) Saudi Arabia's role in acting as sort of proxy for U.S. interests in the Middle East goes back a long way. It goes back at least to the Soviet war in Afghanistan. It's no

secret anymore that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and other countries, were instrumental in funneling U.S. arms to the so-called, the freedom fighters, as I recall then. Who helped defeat Russia in that war very effectively and structurally so far as it went. The Soviet Union collapsed, largely because of the cost of that war.

But the United States via these client regimes was sponsoring training, providing operational support, to the Mujahideen in Afghanistan using funds supplied by CIA, and it's no secret anymore that those policies to some degree are still debated. And it's got to have enabled and contributed to the rise of al-Qaeda and whatever you view on that topic what seems clear at this point is without that set of alliances, geo-political alliances, Cold War alliances, led by the United States, al-Qaeda would almost certainly never have had, or never developed the capability to pose any serious threat to the west, and Saudi Arabia's continued to play that proxy role up to the present day. Of course, insurgents in Iraq. Rebels in Syria. Sundry and various groups who today seemed to have merged to form the Islamic State, or ISIS.

JON (Laughs) well, there you're getting into another topic, but—

PAUL True, but—

JON Let me just be clear for people, the system that he is referring to that supported the Mujahideen during the Afghanistan/Russia war was the Saudis provided funding, they gave it to the ISI, the CIA worked with both —

PAUL The ISI, by the way, is Pakistani intelligence agency (Right), for those who don't know.

JON The Pakistani intelligence agency is the Pakistani ISI. The Saudi intelligence agency is the GID, and of course, America's is the CIA. But, there's an entry at HistoryCommons.org and it's called "1973 to 2002 Saudi Billions Lay Groundwork for Radical Militancy." So, if you want to really look at the history of how Saudi Arabia, or elements within Saudi Arabia, essentially, helped to create groups like Al-Qaeda, I recommend to go read that entry.

Now, the 9/11 Report said that, as I said, there was no evidence that the Saudi Government or institutions or senior Saudi officials individually

funded the organization or al-Qaeda, there was something in 2010, there was a Wikileaks leak that said that Saudi Arabia was still the chief financiers of Al-Qaeda. And, I think that was something that had to do with Hillary Clinton, actually, where she's the one who said that.

So, there's so much information out there that shows that people in Saudi Arabia helped to fund Al-Qaeda.

Now, from a recent article written by Lawrence Wright (Right). He writes:

"According to Philip Zelikow, what they found does not substantiate the arguments made by the Joint Inquiry and by the 9/11 families in the lawsuit against the Saudis. He characterized the twenty-eight pages as 'an agglomeration of preliminary, unvetted reports' concerning Saudi involvement. 'They were wild accusations that needed to be checked out,' he said."

That was Philip Zelikow, the executive director of the 9/11 Commission. Now, basically, what's going on is there are two different investigations. (Right) There was the Joint Congressional Inquiry, which was the first inquiry into 9/11 and there were 28 redacted pages—actually, they were completely removed from the report because of the Bush administration, and the families have been trying to get those 28 redacted pages released. So, Lawrence Wright wrote an article and Philip Zelikow said what he did. What is your response to him?

PAUL Well, yeah, there are two, I mean, just to clarify with your readers that they are two, maybe there are three investigations of note into 9/11, this and the 9/11 Commission Report, which is the most widely known and it's the one that got most of the press attention. There was also a CIA Inspector General report, which came out, I think, in 2005. We won't go into that today, but most importantly for this discussion is that 2002 Joint Congressional Inquiry, the full title of which is The Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, which rolls off the tongue nicely.

And this was a major investigation. The co-chair—one of the co-chairs was a gentleman called Bob Graham. Bob Graham has been campaigning for years to have this portion of the report released.

Now, you talk about the 9/11 Commission Report—this was material that was discussed, and you mentioned Philip Zelikow as well. We've got reason to believe that Zelikow, in particular, was hardly an impartial, an objective investigator. Indeed, he was very close friends with the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, who you would think would be one of the people that he should be investigating.

JON Well, there were many problems with Philip Zelikow, and as we talked—

PAUL He even wrote a book with Condoleezza Rice—

JON Well, he also belonged to an organization called the Aspen Strategy Group (Right), which Prince Bandar actually belonged to. So, talk about a conflict of interest.

Now, with regard to Philip Zelikow, as I said, there were two investigations. You said there were three. There were more than that, actually. (Yeah). There were two investigations, the 9/11 Report was sold to the world as the definitive account of 9/11, and they are the ones who let Saudi Arabia off the hook. So, they say what's in the 28 redacted pages is not correct.

And do you want to tell us some of the things that Philip Zelikow did to hinder investigations into Saudi Arabia's role?

PAUL Sure. There were commissioners who wanted these, shall we say, leads investigated, and they compiled a list of questions for the investigating team of Mike Jacobson and Dana Lesemann, and they compiled a list of interviews that they thought should be done to fully investigate leads that related to two of the 9/11 hijackers. This was Khalid Almihdar and Nawaf Alhazmi and how they may have been linked to elements of the Saudi Government. And that list of interviews was submitted to Zelikow, the executive director of the 9/11 Commission for approval and he didn't want to do the interviews. (Well, he--) And, ultimately, what material did find its way—what treatment did find its way into the 9/11 Report and draft versions of that report, it was Zelikow who removed that material, so—

(Well--) It really doesn't seem credible to suggest that that's an objective treatment of that material, especially in light of what's now a growing movement to have those 28 pages declassified, and especially in light of comments made as well by people who've read it. For example, Congressman Thomas Massie has described the experiences as disturbing,

He said he had to stop every two or three pages to "rearrange my perception of history." It's not fundamental.

So, it seems that people who have actually seen this material disagree with Zelikow and with the 9/11 Commission's treatment of that material.

JON Well, you talked about the interview requests and he, essentially, he stopped half of the interview requests. Dana Lesemann, who you mentioned, was one of the Saudi investigators. She wanted access to the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry (Right) and Zelikow was giving her a hard time with it, so she went through a back channel to get access to those 28 redacted pages, because Zelikow was not giving her access to them. And, as a result, Zelikow fired her.

PAUL Fired her, correct.

JON Now, also—

PAUL For mishandling classified information, I believe. Is that correct?

JON Right, and I believe Dana Lesemann, and the other individual who was a Saudi investigator—I don't remember his name—were actually from the Joint Congressional Inquiry. I think they actually helped to author these (That's correct) 28 redacted pages.

Now, one of the things that Zelikow did with Dietrich Snell was take part in a "late night" editing session to remove from the 9/11 Report anything having to do with Saudi Arabia support for the hijackers. And what they did was move the information to the back of the book in a footnote.

Now, some of the people involved in the Saudi 9/11 plot—or Saudi 9/11 connection—people like Omar al-Bayoumi. They were interviewed by Philip Zelikow and Dietrich Snell. These are two individuals that, you know, I do not trust at all. And, so, any of their reporting on the subject is in doubt, as far as I'm concerned.

PAUL I know, I'd have to agree. It's very clear that the 9/11 Commission was politically compromised. The Commissioners themselves are on record with some doubts about Zelikow's conflicts of interest and wondering even—I know the word "mole" was even used to describe his relationships with the Bush administration and that people felt that he was, I say, a mole on the inside reporting back. There are records of various phone calls that went

back and forth between Zelikow and Karl Rove (Right) that we know about, which is suspect. And it really doesn't seem as though there was any intentions to fully investigate these sorts of leads and connections and relationships. The aim was to suppress and minimize them.

JON Well, let's go through the history a little bit of the Bush administration, you know, doing its best to block, or to keep those 28 pages redacted. During the Joint Congressional Inquiry someone by the name of Abdussattar Shaikh who was the landlord of two of the hijackers, who also happened to be an FBI informant, was not allowed to testify before the Joint Congressional Inquiry. Now, I understand that he did speak with the 9/11 Commission. His memorandum for the record, I think, is available somewhere online.

Now, also the, as I said, the families have been fighting for years to get those 28 redacted pages released. And the reason they want them released is so that they can be used in a court room—in a court of law—against Saudi Arabia.

Now, at the end of—I'm sorry, are you typing?

PAUL I was just looking up—you talked about Abdussattar Shaikh—

JON Okay (laughs)

PAUL --the FBI agent who—I want to spell his name.

JON I'm sorry, I could hear the typing as you were going. That's okay. I forget what I was—

PAUL Yeah, Steven Butler—

JON Yeah, Steven Butler. He said that if he had been given the information from the CIA, which is another topic entirely, he could have done something to prevent the attacks. (Correct)

Now, another thing that Bush did was make it difficult for the 9/11 families to sue Saudi Arabia for their connection to Al-Qaeda and/or 9/11 and that practice lasted all the way through to the Obama administration. This is an interesting story.

When Obama first came into office, one of the first things he did was he actually set up a meeting with 9/11 Family Members, and the topic of the meeting was to discuss closing GITMO. And one of the 9/11 Family Members that was at this meeting, Kristen Breitweiser, who is one of the Jersey Girls, the four widows responsible for the creation of the 9/11 Commission—she asked Obama to his face to release the 28 redacted pages (Right), and he said he would and never got back to her.

PAUL And he's never done it.

JON But after that meeting with the 9/11 Family Members, he used that meeting as a great reminder as to why—he used it for the justification of sending troops into Afghanistan. (Right) He used that meeting.

And then, six months later, I think he had Elena Kagan who was Solicitor General at the time, argue to block the families trying to get to the Supreme Court to get them to hear their case to make a decision because the lower courts were saying you can't sue Saudi Arabia. And Obama's administration sided with the Saudis over the 9/11 Family Members.

PAUL All correct, yeah.

JON And, now, finally, in December of 2013, a lower court decided that the families can sue some of the Saudis. They can't sue specific Saudis, I believe, like the Bin Laden family, if I remember correctly. And, at the time, the *New York Post* actually released an article from Paul Sperry called "Inside the Saudi 9/11 Cover-up."

And I'm going to quote from this article specifically, and people have to understand that this stuff has been known about for years, and has been heavily promoted by people like Paul Thompson, Larisa Alexandrovna, James Dorman, myself and many others over the years.

PAUL Don't forget Bob Graham.

JON And Bob Graham.

PAUL And surely someone in the best position to know.

JON Right, exactly.

PAUL He's been banging on about that issue for—

JON He wrote a book about it—*Intelligence Matters*—and he also wrote a fictional novel to try and tell—

PAUL And significantly, yes, because he, in his own words, is still bound by the strictures of classifications. He's very limited in what he can say. (Right, but--) The fictional book is significant because in that book it's not just individual Saudis. This is something orchestrated from the top. There's a terrorist attack and it's directed from the top from the highest levels of the Saudi Government. You can't help but wonder if maybe he's trying to tell us something.

JON (Laughs) Well, the following from the article will mention an act of war, but in my mind, you can't point fingers at Saudi Arabia without having five fingers pointing back to the U.S. We protected the knowledge of Saudi Arabia being connected to terrorism for years. (It's true) Long before 9/11 and long after 9/11. If you look at what Robert Wright, FBI agent Robert Wright, had to say about what was called Vulgar Betrayal, you'll see that before 9/11 we protected Saudi Arabia. We recently sold them \$63 billion dollars in weapons. I could go on and on.

So, with that being said, I'd like to read the following from that article.

PAUL Okay. I should really be interviewing you, Jon. (Laughter)

JON I'm sorry, Paul.

PAUL No, you carry on. This is good stuff.

JON I just wanted to get what might be the best information out there about this subject. (Yeah, go ahead) So, I got some quotes.

"The Saudis deny any role in 9/11, but the CIA in one memo reportedly found 'incontrovertible evidence' that Saudi Government officials — not just wealthy Saudi hardliners, but high-level diplomats and intelligence officers employed by the kingdom — helped the hijackers both financially and logistically. The intelligence files cited in the report directly implicate the Saudi embassy in Washington and consulate in

Los Angeles in the attacks, making 9/11 not just an act of terrorism, but an act of war."

And I already commented on that.

"The findings, if confirmed, would back up open-source reporting showing the hijackers had, at a minimum, ties to several Saudi officials and agents while they were preparing for their attacks inside the United States. (Correct) In fact, they get help from Saudi VIPs from coast to coast."

Now, for Los Angeles it says:

"The Saudi consulate official Fahad al-Thumairy allegedly arranged for an advance team to receive two of the Saudi hijackers — Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi — as they arrived at LAX in 2000. One of the advance men, Omar al-Bayoumi, a suspected Saudi intelligence agent, left the LA consulate and met the hijackers at a local restaurant. (Bayoumi left the United States two months before the attacks, while Thumairy was deported back to Saudi Arabia after 9/11)

It says in San Diego:

"Bayoumi and another suspected Saudi agent, Osama Bassnan, set up essentially a forward operating base in San Diego for the hijackers after leaving LA. They were provided rooms, rent and phones, as well as private meetings with an American al Qaeda cleric who would later become notorious as the Anwar al-Awlaki—

Who we just found out I think recently was an informant (For the FBI), for the FBI.

PAUL Well, they kept channels open to them. Despite his terrorist designation.

JON Exactly. He had lunch at the Pentagon, or something to that effect.

PAUL Yeah, this is something—I think Anthony Shaffer mentioned something about that somewhere. Certainly, some strange connections there. Again, it all needs looking into. It doesn't seem tying together.

JON The last part ties into the next question. It says:

"WASHINGTON: Then-Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar and his wife sent checks totaling some \$130,000 to Bassnan while he was handling the hijackers. Though the Bandars claim the checks were 'welfare' for Bassnan's supposedly ill wife, the money nonetheless made its way into the hijackers' hands.

Other al Qaeda funding was traced back to Bandar and his embassy — so much so that by 2004 Riggs Bank of Washington had dropped the Saudis as a client.

The next year, as a number of embassy employees popped up in terror probes, Riyadh recalled Bandar.

'Our investigations contributed to the ambassador's departure,' an investigator who worked with the Joint Terrorism Task Force in Washington told me, though Bandar says he left for 'personal reasons.' "

So, that's from the *New York Post* and that basically explains most of the connections that we're aware of.

PAUL It does seem that that's the material. (You know, now--) The indications are that is what's covered in the 28 pages. I mean, you mentioned the two suspected Saudi Government operatives, and these were men who were receiving money. Actually, the money went between Bandar's wife, Haifa, it came from her account. And the wife of Osama Bassnan who's believed to be a Saudi Government operative by various people drawing this conclusion—investigators into those events, and she signed the checks over again to the wife of Omar al-Bayoumi who himself was alleged to be covertly working for the Kingdom.

So, these were particularly disturbing connections. The money doesn't just go to the Saudi Embassy or Consulate. It goes right up to Bandar and his wife. (Right) And, of course, they publicly denied that they have any links

to terrorism and there is this cover story about a sick wife that doesn't really hold up. That there was a large payment, one of the first payments, I think, which goes back to 1998, that was supposedly in response to a letter.

That's fine. That's all very well, but that doesn't explain the monthly stipend of \$2,000, \$3,500 every month. And that's a wage. That's not welfare. (Laughs) And—that's a lot of money.

JON Well, let's talk a little bit more about Bandar, because he's an important figure in this whole story.

As many people know, Bandar was very friendly with the Bush administration, with the Bush family. As he already mentioned, Princess Haifa referred to them as mother and father, the Bush seniors. And he also had connections to George Tenet.

Now, the report that I had just read from the *New York Post* cites a CIA memo, but let's get it on the record that the CIA seemingly protected two of those hijackers, the two that were associated with Saudi Arabia. So they have a lot to answer for themselves. (Right)

Now, George Tenet, this is from James Risen. It says that:

"George Tenet, appointed as CIA director in 1997, develops close personal relationships with top Saudi officials, especially Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. Tenet develops a habit of meeting with Bandar at his home near Washington about once a month. But CIA officers handling Saudi issues complain that Tenet doesn't tell them what he discusses with Bandar. Often they are only able to learn about Tenet's deals with the Saudis later and through Saudi contacts, not from their own boss. Tenet also makes one of his closest aides the chief of the CIA station in Saudi Arabia. This aide often communicates directly with Tenet, avoiding the usual chain of command. Apparently as a favor to the Saudis, CIA analysts are discouraged from writing reports raising questions about the Saudi relationship to Islamic extremists."

That's from James Risen.

Now, do you remember when Bush and Cheney testified behind closed doors, not under oath, with each other, with no transcripts allowed?

PAUL And this was raised with Bush, I believe, and he dodged the question, correct?

JON Well, I'm going to read directly from Phil Shenon. (Okay) It's just so much better than us saying it.

"(John) Lehman was struck by the determination of the Bush White House to try to hide any evidence of the relationship between the Saudis and Al-Qaeda." Lehman will say: "They were refusing to declassify anything having to do with Saudi Arabia. Anything having to do with the Saudis, for some reason, it had this very special sensitivity."

Now, as I said, when Bush and Cheney testified, it says:

"Some of the toughest questions are asked by Republican John Lehman, who focuses on money allegedly passed by an acquaintance of the Saudi ambassador's wife to two of the hijackers. Lehman will say that Bush "dodged the questions."

Now (laughs), I don't know what world everybody lives in, but to me, this individual, Bush, should be brought forward to testify publicly and under oath about this and about a number of other things. This is the President of the United States who has a special relationship with somebody who is connected to money of two of the hijackers. That just—

PAUL Oh, yeah, also with long-standing work for the CIA by his own admission. (Yeah) The accounts that some of this money was moving through, you've mentioned Rigg's Bank already. There's a long-standing relationship there with the Central Intelligence Agency, in particular with covert operations, and Bandar himself has admitted this. During the 80's for example, he helped fund the anti-communist Nicaragua and Contra. And this was run out of the White House, and this was part of the Iran/Contra affair as you already know. And also, again, we mentioned earlier, the Afghan rebel's fighting the Soviet Union.

This is all—all of these connections are worrying, because you know, you've got this guy with very close links to the Bush administration, to the

intelligence community, a long-standing role as being a sort of hidden hand, and running black operations and dirty operations in more than one country, and here he is handing money to the wives of many who associate with 2 of the 9/11 hijackers.

JON Mmm-hmm, and as you already mentioned with this whole thing in Syria, it was Bandar who started this operation of sending in—arming, training, funding rebels to send into Syria to help take out Assad. (Correct) And, so there's proof right there that Bandar, as you said, is very well acquainted with how the terrorist system works.

So, one of the things that the Bush administration did was try to bring in Henry Kissinger to be the commissioner (laughs) of the 9/11 Commission. And, can you tell me the story of what happened?

PAUL Yeah, well, it was fairly quickly picked up on and I know that you've, you're—well, I think it would be fair to say, friends with many of the 9/11 families and the Jersey Girls, and essentially campaigned for the 9/11 Commission in the first place and what was quickly noted was that Kissinger himself had some quite unusual business connections. And, I guess you could tell me who it was who actually addressed that directly?

JON Well, basically what happened, the families asked Henry Kissinger to have a meeting and he agreed and they did it in New York City, and I believe, Kristen Breitweiser did some research on Henry Kissinger and during the meeting Lorie Van Auken asked him some very poignant questions: "Do you have any clients by the name of Bin Laden?" And so forth. And he about fell out of his chair, according to them, and the next day resigned as 9/11 Commissioner.

Now, when Bush first came into office, one of the very first things that he did was tell agencies to "back off" of the Saudis and the Bin Ladens. This was pretty much standing policy. (Yeah) Under Clinton it was supposedly slow-go, but under Bush it was apparently no-go, at all. (Mm-hmm)

(Snickers) Could that be seen as help? For what happened?

PAUL Well, Jon, I don't—I think we've had this discussion in the past and I, personally, don't believe it's wise to stray too far into the realms of speculation. What the bottom line is we don't know what the Bush administration knew, what it didn't, and we never will. Unless we have a

fully independent investigation into those events, then we're not going to get to the bottom of that. It's certainly clear that an awful lot of intelligence, more than we knew when any of these investigations were ongoing, that—for example, 9/11 Commissioners were barred from seeing the Presidential daily briefs. (Exactly) Yeah, and we now know because reporters from *The New York Times*, for example, have seen some of those PDBs, the ones we haven't seen and everyone's heard of the most famous one when Bin Laden is determined to strike the U.S. the August 6th PDB, but there are far worse, apparently, that came before that and were also completely ignored. It does all seem worthy of further investigation.

JON Well, one of the things Paul Thompson used to point out is that the two countries who seemingly knew the most about the 9/11 attacks, Saudi Arabia—

PAUL Our closest allies.

JON Yeah, well, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were the two countries that didn't bother to send us any warnings. Now, it wasn't until very recently, you know, within the last couple of years, I think—Anthony Summers wrote an article about Saudi Arabia and it talked about a warning that was sent from Saudi Arabia to the United States, and that was the first time I'd ever heard of a warning from Saudi Arabia to the United States.

PAUL I never heard of that one.

JON Yeah, now I don't know how true that is. And I just heard another time. I forget where, but Turki bin al-Faisal, who was the intelligence director (Right), supposedly sent the Bush White House a warning in the weeks before 9/11, and I forget where I just saw that. It was in a news report. But this is the first I'm hearing of warnings coming from Saudi Arabia.

PAUL Right, and as it's now well documented, the warnings were flooding in from all around the world.

JON Oh, absolutely, and you know—

PAUL From Germany, from Israel, from you know, multiple different countries were sounding the alarm and nobody listened.

JON Well, from what we understand, nobody listened and nobody did anything, except there were people within the Bush administration, the Neocons, who were telling Bush that all of the warnings they were getting about Bin Laden was, in fact, disinformation (Right) and that the real threat was Iraq.

Now, with regard to covering up for Saudi Arabia, that in and of itself is a crime—as far as I'm concerned. I think they would call it obstruction of justice or accessory after the fact. These are real crimes that need to be investigated, that need to be looked into.

PAUL I agree, Jon. And the protection of Saudi Arabia is baffling. I mean, you can look at it as merely preserving diplomatic relations, but the fact remains that, as you said yourself, our closest allies seemed to be the ones who were most deeply involved in funding al-Qaida and funding extremist groups around the world. If we're really having a war on terror, it's these countries we should be reigning in and taking a look at. (Right) How can they be our allies in a war when they're supporting the enemy?

JON Well, the 9/11 Report said that the source of the funding for the attacks was "of little practical significance."

PAUL Hmmmmmm.

[Snearing laughter]

JON You know, any investigation, the first thing you do is follow the money supposedly. I'm not a cop, but that's what I hear.

Now, are you aware of the allegations concerning the Pakistani ISI's, alleged connection to 9/11?

PAUL Yeah, I mean, this focus on a wire transfer, which supposedly was to one of the lead hijackers, Mohamed Atta, correct?

JON Yes.

PAUL Yeah, and I think the 9/11 families did raise this question to the 9/11 Commission and the FBI's counter-terrorist division, a guy called John S. Pistole—I'm not sure how to pronounce that. He's on record saying that the agency traced the origin of funding of 9/11 back to financial accounts in Pakistan, I'm quoting here, high-ranking and well known Al-Qaeda

operatives played a major role in moving money forward eventually into the hands of the hijackers located in the U.S.

So, yeah, those connections are there as well. I've mainly looked at the Saudi Arabia role. That's what's interested me the most. There's a very good article, actually, which people might want to read called the—it's by Paul Thompson, actually. You mentioned him. It's called "The Many Faces of Saeed Sheikh." (Right) And, I think, that's up on HistoryCommons? Is it still there?

JON Yeah, I think it's still there. (Yeah)

I have a quote, from HistoryCommons, about Pakistan, and it's:

"An unnamed senior staff member" on the 9/11 Commission tells the *Los Angeles Times* that, before 9/11, Pakistani officials were 'up to their eyeballs' in collaboration with the Taliban and al-Qaeda. As an example, this source says of bin Laden moving to Afghanistan in 1996, 'He wouldn't go back there without Pakistan's approval and support, and had to comply with their rules and regulations.' From 'day one,' the ISI helped al-Qaeda set up an infrastructure, and jointly operated training camps. The article further notes that what the commission will publicly say on this is just the 'tip of the iceberg' of the material they've been given on the matter. In fact, the commission's final report released a month later will barely mention the [Pakistani] ISI at all."

Now, I am intimately familiar with this subject (laughs). It's something I spent a lot of time—

PAUL That's very clear Jon, yes.

JON It's something I spent a lot of time looking into. And, basically, what happened, the *Times of India* broke a story that said the then head of the ISI, Pakistani Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed ordered Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire transfer \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta. That story was corroborated. Everybody always points to the *Times of India* as being the only source on that, but *Agence France-Presse* also verified this report. And a little bit after this reporting happened, apparently Musharraf forced Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed to step down.

Now, there are reports that say that came from U.S. pressure, and there are reports that say it's just something Musharraf felt like doing, essentially (Mmm-hmm), is what it says. But, Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed was greatly responsible for the coup that got Musharraf into power. So I don't think it was an easy decision for Musharraf to get rid of Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed. And, there's information that suggests Mahmud Ahmed and Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh took part in a different terrorist attack together. That's on HistoryCommons. There was a report that said Pakistan paid lobbyists to lobby the 9/11 Commission to make—to make the 9/11 Report more favorable of Pakistan—which it was. The 9/11 Report was certainly favorable of Pakistan.

Then, basically, the FBI first reported Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh as being the paymaster of 9/11. There were two reports from CNN talking about FBI sources, and so forth. And then, his name started to go away. He was involved in the murder supposedly of Daniel Pearl and then his name got back into the news. Director Mueller flew to India to talk with investigators. And they told him about Saeed Sheikh's role in 9/11. And, apparently, the FBI did speak with Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and he was afraid for his safety and his family's safety to talk about his connections to the ISI.

Now, there were the families—you said the families put forward a question having to do with the wire transfer? I believe you said that?

PAUL Yes.

JON They—that was one time the 9/11 Commission was given a question concerning this matter.

Another time Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed's name came up for the 9/11 Commission was when Sibel Edmonds testified. If you look at the *Sunday Times* article that was written about Sibel, the one article that was supposed to be four but because of pressure the series was cancelled? They talk about Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed's connections to the nuclear black market. So, if Sibel testified about Mahmud Ahmed and the families put forward a question about Mahmud Ahmed, that's two times the 9/11 Commission was told about Mahmud Ahmed and we don't hear a word about it in the 9/11 Report.

It's amazing to me. I haven't heard from a single individual in Government explain to us why those allegations are incorrect. George Tenet supposedly met with Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed in the months before 9/11. Mahmud Ahmed met with Porter Goss, Bob Graham, Jon Kyl in the weeks before 9/11. He met with them on the day of 9/11. He was in Washington D.C. during the week of 9/11 meeting with different Pentagon officials, White House officials, and so on and so forth. And, Pakistan's involvement, I can tell you, is not in the 28 redacted pages. And I know this because someone—I'm not really friends with anymore—but Jeffrey Hill spoke with Bob Graham and he asked him about the allegations—

PAUL Jeff Hill's the guy who interviews everybody, right? And puts it on the internet and things like that.

JON Yeah, he interviewed Bob Graham, and Bob Graham said that those claims were unsubstantiated. He said that's what he heard. And the 9/11 Commission released an MFR—a memorandum for the record—that said that the Pakistani ISI did not wire transfer \$100,000—or did not wire transfer money—to Mohamed Atta. But before and after, it's incredibly redacted. Just like many of the MFR's that came from the 9/11 Commission.

So, again, we have no explanation as to why these allegations are untrue. And there's more reason to believe that they are true than not. There was a guy, I believe, sadly, was tortured once, and he actually mentioned Omar Sheikh as wire transferring \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta during this time that he was tortured. And I don't remember his name. It's on HistoryCommons.org.

So, there's Saudi involvement—or evidence of Saudi involvement. There's evidence or indications of Pakistani ISI involvement. The two things that were essential during the Afghanistan-Russia War, and that were used throughout the 90s, I think. You know—

PAUL Yeah, it's almost as if—almost as if you could write a whole other report just focusing on the allegations and the connections, financial relationships that we've talked about in this interview—well, mostly you talked about, as it happens. And, that would probably be a fuller account of what happened in the lead up to 9/11—what went wrong and how those events were allowed to take place than the entire rest of the report put together, I think.

And, these seem to be where the investigation should have been looking, and for whatever reasons—political, geo-political, diplomatic—these issues were just buried.

JON Well, I thought of an interesting scenario—

PAUL Relegated to footnotes, you know? Or removed completely.

JON Or removed completely, exactly.

An interesting scenario that I thought of is, imagine the families finally get this into the court rooms against Saudi Arabia. They finally manage to get the 28 redacted pages released and they try to use that as evidence against Saudi Arabia. And then Saudi Arabia, as a counter to that, could bring the 9/11 Report and say, look, the 9/11 Report said that we were cleared. And then can you imagine them bringing in Philip Zelikow, the person responsible for making sure the 9/11 Report didn't mention Saudi involvement?

PAUL Sure, and of course Bandar himself is to capitalize on the 9/11 Report and then issue press statements to the effect that Saudi Arabia, claims against Saudi Arabia had been debunked and that had been vindicated by that report and his treatment of (Exactly) And dismissed these allegations.

JON Exactly. When the 9/11 Report came out, they practically celebrated. Now, are you aware of the questions, some of the questions concerning Israel and 9/11?

PAUL Yeah, vaguely. I mean, this is something that hasn't really interested me. I'm aware that there's been various claims that have surfaced about Israeli art students that were operating in America and the possibility that they might have been part of the spy ring, and it's never really convinced me. We've had a discussion about this before. I think I pointed you to 9/11 Myths, the website.

I'm not convinced that Israel—I'm not certain I've seen myself any credible evidence that Israel was involved in any way. (Right) And, it's suffered really that there's so much out there that points that way on the conspiracy theory websites, shall we say. Israel does enough that's awful, and does enough that's terrible without us having to invent stuff, you know? And, I

think, there's a lot of that going around. Mossad is behind everything. I don't think...

JON Oh, absolutely there's definitely the mentality in the world that Israel is responsible for all of the world's ails, or you know, if you want to go to the extreme, the Jews are responsible for owning the media, owning Hollywood, owning all of Congress—it's ridiculous because there are defense—

PAUL It's crazy, is what it is.

JON There are defense contractors out there. There's oil contractors out there, who all might have a say as to who has the most control in Congress, but— (laughs).

PAUL Yeah—

JON Anyway, I did want to bring up a question that the 9/11 Family Members put forward to the 9/11 Commission about these five Israelis who are arrested on the day of 9/11, and the question that they put forward says:

"Please describe exactly what was recorded on the video of the World Trade Center that was filmed by the Israelis in New Jersey who were later picked up for questioning? Where is the video now?"

And that was their question. And if you read the police reports, or the FBI reports, no video camera was actually recovered. There were only cameras that were recovered. And the photos that they had showed pictures of the burning World Trade Center. It actually showed one of them smiling, I believe.

And, basically, what happened was there were individuals who were documenting the event of 9/11 with their cameras and they worked for a company called Urban Moving Systems. And this woman, Maria, called in because they were apparently celebrating and she thought that it was odd. So, she called it in and later in the day they were arrested (Yeah). And they were held for a couple of months by the United States and then they were eventually let go.

And one of the things that they said was that they were there to "document the event" and a lot of people—you know, and I think I might have done this myself—have taken that statement that they were there to document the event as if Israel knew exactly what was going to happen; knew exactly when it was going to happen; where it was going to happen and they sent these guys to go document the event. But, I think, what it might mean is, like a lot of other people there that day—

PAUL They had camera phones—(laughs)

JON Yeah, you know, they were there to "document the event." And those four or five individuals actually tried to bring a lawsuit against the United States for the way that they were treated, but nothing ever came of that.

Now, also Israel—you mentioned the art students. And, supposedly, Israel sent us a couple of warnings—about four warnings. And some of—

PAUL That's significant that some of the starkest warnings came from Israel.

JON Well, but the thing is, they're denied on each occasion. Israel denies sending the warning or the U.S. denies receiving the warning. And, apparently, one of those warnings was based on information obtained from the Israeli art students indicating that there were spies in this country. But, again, they denied it. So, a lot of those warnings—I think one of them was not denied. But if you look at them, they were either denied by one side or the other.

Now, you mentioned to read 9/11Myths.com with regard to the Israeli art students. There was a report in 2010 on ABC 4 News called "Door-to-Door Spies in Utah County?" And as reported by Brent Hunsaker it says:

"Sales people working neighborhoods in northern Utah County had been asking some odd questions that have nothing to do with making the sale. Folks are reporting that they're asking about the new national security agency's data center that is being built at Camp Williams."

So, that's an indication that the Israeli art thing or the spying thing is still maybe going on in this country.

My question is why is it allowed to continue? Did it—were they around in the vicinity of any of the hijackers? Did they know about any of the

hijackers? Like Saudi Arabia said, they were following them with precision. I think there are some questions about that.

My biggest question about Israel actually has to do with the owner of Urban Moving Systems. The owner of the moving company that those five Israelis worked for that were arrested. He fled to Israel in the days following 9/11 and I think that's very suspect. I think he's somebody who should have been brought in for questioning.

[Pause]

Anyway—

PAUL Quite possibly, yeah.

JON I mean, there are some questions about Israel and 9/11 but in my opinion, I don't think Israel needed to be involved really, because if you think that elements within the Bush administration or other elements within the Government were involved, there's plenty of pro-Israel people in the Government that you really don't need Israel to do anything. [Snickers/laughs]

PAUL Yeah.

JON Do you know what I mean?

PAUL That's certainly true, Jon. I think we all should be with cautious pointing fingers at Israel.

JON Well, but not—

PAUL Because the evidence is really tenuous, and when you mentioned the art students, the timelines don't really work, and there's not really any evidence that they had any contact with the hijackers. It's all—

JON Speculation.

PAUL Inferential dot-connecting. It doesn't really convince me.

JON Right, I know there are a lot of people who take this information and say Israel did 9/11 and it just—as far as I could see, it's not there. There was

actually a court here in America that ruled Iran was responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Did you hear about that?

PAUL Yeah, I heard about that.

JON [Laughs] How ridiculous is that?

PAUL Hmmm—well, it goes to show, actually that if you really want to, you can find evidence to support more or less any fairy that you want.

JON Well, that's essentially—

PAUL It's important to keep that in mind when you're investigating these things.

JON That's essentially something that the U.S. Government did is they made up enemies or people that were involved with 9/11. It was the Taliban who were harboring Al-Qaeda. They were supposedly the enemy and we went in to take them out, and years later the Taliban is almost fully back in power as they almost were. (Yeah) We said Iraq had something to do with 9/11.

PAUL Zelikow, in fact, said that. [Laughter]

JON Yeah, Zelikow tried—in the 9/11 Report he had two individuals come in to testify. Somebody by the name of Abraham Sofer, who was supposedly the first public expert witness to testify and he just put forward pro-war points. And there was another individual by the name of Laurie Milroy who was brought in to testify who is essentially discredited in many people's eyes. And, Lorie Van Auken, one of the Jersey Girls, was furious with Philip Zelikow for bringing her in. She confronted him about this and said this is an investigation. This isn't an opportunity to sell the war. And she said a sly smile went across his face. I really would like Philip Zelikow—I mean, if you want to tug on a thread, Philip Zelikow is the thread that should be tugged on. Arrest the man. Put him on the stand. Let's ask him some questions. Because he was certainly a big participant in the cover-up of 9/11.

PAUL Sure. I have to agree. I do think Zelikow has got a lot to answer for. It's very clear from evidence and public record and opinions of commissioners and 9/11 Commission staffers. You mentioned Shenon's book earlier. There's a lot of information there about the conflicts of interest that Philip Zelikow had. We really didn't get the investigation which was hopeful. It

was very much politically compromised. As you mentioned, Zelikow was using it—or trying to use it—as a platform to propagandize for the Bush administration's war in Iraq. (Right) Of course it was long planned. This is not an objective investigation.

JON Which was a good indication as to who he was working for, essentially.

PAUL Exactly, yeah. Yeah. And these views of Zelikow don't come—it's important to understand that—they don't come from fringe publications or conspiracy theorists or kooks. They come from the people inside the investigation.

JON Right.

Now, there's an entry on—this is the last thing I want to talk about, and—there's an entry on HistoryCommons called "After September 11, 2001, High-Ranking State Department Official allegedly Arranges Release of Four 9/11 Suspects." It says:

"An unnamed high-ranking official at the State Department arranges the release of four foreign operatives that have been taken in for questioning by the FBI on suspicion that they knew about or somehow aided the 9/11 attacks, according to FBI translator Sibel Edmonds. Edmonds will later leave the FBI, becoming a whistleblower, and say she knows this based on telephone conversations she translated. Edmonds will say that the target of an FBI investigation into a nuclear smuggling ring calls the official, indicates names of people who have been taken into custody since 9/11, and says, 'We need to get them out of the US because we can't afford for them to spill the beans.' The official says he will 'take care of it,' and the four suspects on the list are released from interrogation and extradited. [*Sunday Times* (London), 1/6/2008]

The names of the four suspects are not known, but one of the lead 9/11 hijackers, Marwan Alshehhi, and the sister of an FBI investigation connected to nuclear sciences, so this could possibly be a reference to this person (see July 1999). The high-ranking State Department official who is not named in the *Sunday Times* article is said to be Marc Grossman by both Larisa Alexandrovna formerly of *Raw Story* and former CIA

officer Philip Giraldi, writing in the *American Conservative*.
[*Raw Story*, 1/20/2008; *American Conservative*, 1/28/2008]"

So, there's a country that we don't know about that may have had something to do with 9/11. I mean, we have to look in to the allegations. I don't even know what country it is.

PAUL Mmmmm—maybe it's my country [laughs].

JON Maybe. Maybe we're going to be invading you soon.

PAUL No one would expect that, would they?

[Laughter]

JON Well, actually, Musharraf, President Musharraf, wrote that Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh may have been MI6. (Correct) So there you go. We're going to invade your country.

PAUL Ummmmmm—

[Laughs]

JON Is there anything that you would like to promote?

PAUL I don't think so, Jon. What I would like to promote, actually, is a website. It's called 28pages.org I would urge anyone interested in some of the issues we discussed, to visit that web page and follow it on Facebook. They've got a Facebook page, as well. This is the bipartisan effort movement to declassify the 28 pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry that we mentioned earlier on. There's lots of material on there, which you know, if you want to explore the issues in more depth you can take a look. And I think everyone should get on board. It's long overdue. It's been promised by the President that these pages will be made public so that there can be some sort of debate about them and some sort of—

JON Accountability.

PAUL That's the word I'm looking for, yeah. So, I think everyone should definitely support that.

JON Yeah, the guy is a nice guy who runs that site. I forget his name. He's also—28pages.org is available on Facebook. He updates it regularly.

Well, Paul, I want to thank you very much for being on today. I hope you enjoyed the conversation.

PAUL Yeah, well, thank you for having me on, Jon. I think you managed to include in your questions most of the information which [laughs]—I think you covered more material than I have. But, thank you very much.

JON I apologize for that. It's just this is such an important issue. It's something that's been neglected by the "9/11 Truth Movement" a lot. And so, it's something that people need to know about.

So, I want to thank you very much for coming on today, and maybe we'll have you on again sometime.

PAUL Thank you, Jon. Thank you very much.

JON All right, thank you, Paul.

PAUL Take care.

JON Bye, bye.



Chapter/Episode 11 – Thomas Drake – November 12, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Thomas Drake (THOMAS)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network.

This week's show is going to focus on the NSA and 9/11. The 9/11 Commission barely investigated the NSA, even though its mandate was to give a "full and complete accounting" of 9/11. There is so much that we don't know regarding the NSA and 9/11 that we need to know.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with Mr. Thomas Drake. Mr. Drake, how are you doing tonight?

THOMAS Doing all right.

JON Excellent. All right, I'm going to read his bio.

Thomas Drake is a former senior executive with the National Security Agency, a United States Air Force and Navy veteran, CIA intelligence analyst, computer software expert and whistleblower. While at NSA, he

blew the whistle on a multi-billion-dollar programmatic fraud, waste, and abuse; the critical loss and coverup of 9/11 intelligence; Government wrongdoing; and a dragnet electronic mass surveillance and data mining program conducted on a vast scale by the NSA (with the approval of the White House) after 9/11. Mr. Drake argued that this program violated and subverted the Constitution as well as individual sovereignty and privacy, while weakening national security and fundamentally eroding our civil liberties. In April, 2010, he was charged by the U.S. Department of Justice with a 10-felony count Espionage Act indictment facing 35 years in prison and declared an enemy of the state. All 10 original charges were dropped in July, 2011, after Mr. Drake pled to a single misdemeanor count of exceeding the authorized use of a Government computer with no fine or prison time. He is the 2011 recipient of the Ridenhour Truth Telling Prize, and with Jesselyn Radack the co-recipient of the 2011 Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence Award, and the 2012 Hugh M. Hefner 1st Amendment Award.

He was also a visiting professor of strategic leadership and information strategies at the National Defense University with the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Previous to NSA, he was a principal in a couple of dot coms. He has 12 years of industry experience in change leadership, senior management, organizational leadership and development, quality assurance, software and systems engineering (having analyzed over 150 million lines of code), learning strategies, acquisition and program management, operations and technology life-cycle integration as a contractor and consultant with both Government and commercial clients including Fortune 500 and Fortune 50 companies. He was at Booz | Allen | Hamilton as a management, strategy, and technology consultant and software quality engineer from 1991 to 1998.

He served in the military for some 14 years as an active duty U.S. Air Force aircrew member performing cryptologic linguist duties on the RC-135 airborne reconnaissance platform and as a Mission Crew Supervisor on the EC-130H electronic warfare mission during the latter years of the Cold War. He also served in the U.S. Navy as a reserve commissioned all-source intelligence officer assigned to the National Military Joint Intelligence Center at the Pentagon serving on the ELINT, Terrorism, and Middle East/ North Africa desks in the 1990s. He also had a short stint as an imagery intelligence analyst at the CIA in the late 80s.

Mr. Drake is the founder and senior leader of Knowpari Systems LLC, a boutique leadership development and executive consulting firm formed in 2008 and focuses on business intelligence, IT-corporate governance, risk management, operations analysis, systems thinking, strategic advising and deep learning through people, process, and technology – expanding capacity, increasing performance, and enhancing social and relational well-being for individuals, teams, and organizations.

His outreach and speaking expertise center on delivering dynamic, interactive and compelling content in the areas of strategic leadership, international relations, contemporary international problems, professional ethics, executive management, business intelligence and decision support systems, resource strategy, complex systems (social and technical), human relations, dynamics of the information and knowledge age, information management, organizational sustainability, executive leadership, 21st Century issues, governance, and decision-making, the Constitution and civil liberties, as well as whistleblowing.

His particular area of expertise is the strategic and global perspective while placing events, people, trends, and movements in the larger context and finding the meaning and the connections and making sense of them such that one can take the practical action necessary to execute the mission and the business in challenging times, under adverse conditions and with constant uncertainty. He has also focused on a key "emergent" strategically competitive best practice of relationship leadership involving dynamically evolving social ecology and social network systems. This highly innovative approach involves real-time learning and feedback creating the very conditions for both individual and organizational well-being and accomplishment while also achieving sustainable results in the marketplace and for social activism and change.

He now writes, speaks, and teaches around the world on whistleblowing, Constitutional rights, civil liberties, secrecy, surveillance, and abusive corporate and Government power. He has dedicated himself to defending life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Well . . . that was a rather extensive bio, but you deserve the full treatment, sir, so I have no problems with that. And after listening to it, I can say that if I had some place of employment, you would most certainly be hired.

THOMAS [Laughs] I'm still challenged to find any work other than where I've been for the past number of years, so—

JON Right, I'm sorry to hear that.

Well, let's get started. (Sure) I'm going to read the first question to you, and that is: What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

THOMAS Wow, yeah, I've been asked that a number of times over the last number of years. It was my first day on the job. I had been hired into a special outside hiring program by General Michael B. Hayden, and I was reporting to the number three person at NSA, who at the time was Maureen Baginski, the Director of Signals Intelligence, the largest single organization at NSA. It's the operational side of the agency.

And the agreement was that I would show up, which I did, at oh-dark-thirty and I would meet her at her office and I would shadow her. Her calendar would become my calendar. Or, I should say, my calendar was now hers. And I would wander around with her, go to different meetings for about 30 days or so, just to get a sense and a feel for all of the myriad of responsibilities and challenges she had. I was hired in as a change leader. In fact, my actual title was Senior Change Leader, and that was my function. And I was looking at process; I was looking at management; I was looking at technology.

The reason I was even hired was because about a dozen of us had been brought in under huge pressure from Congress, in particular, the NSA was falling behind the times. It wasn't keeping up. It was becoming less relevant and was having great difficulty meeting the digital age. It's one of the ironic realities of NSA back there in those years, especially post-Cold War. 1) It had an identity crisis; 2) is trying to find a new mission. But, too, the Internet had gone right by it. NSA had pretty much decided Internet was not worth—there's no secrets worth knowing on Internet because it was all open.

So, here I was on the morning of September 11, 2001, and the first meeting that I attended she was speaking to a technical advisory group that had come up from the Senate, the Senate Intelligence Committee and they were wanting to hear from her. She was what some would refer to as a talking head—some use that term pejoratively; others actually with great admiration. She was one of the few at NSA, given that management wasn't

a core competency, neither was a speaking member—NSA listened, they didn't speak, most of the time (Right)—so, she was giving a talk, I would say maybe more of an explanation or attempted explanation in the form of a story as to what all these billions—what do we get for all of these billions that are being spent on this huge program called Trail Blazer. And, its stakeholders—Congress and others—were having great difficulty getting their arms around what would the nation and national security accurately receive from the largesse of all these billions, this is what I remember.

I remember I was sitting in a chair up against the inner wall, it was an inner hallway, and her executive assistant opened up the corner door of the inner office and said some freak accident—one of the World Trade Center towers had been hit, no one really thought much about it. What I remember about the bomber that flew in to the Empire State Building (Right) because of weather and fog back in the 30s. Not long after that, the same executive assistant opens the same door and says that the second World Trade Center tower has been hit by an airplane. And I remember, I stood up and said, "America's under attack." I actually exclaimed that. (Right)

And then the next four months were a blur. It was clearly—pretty much the entire NSA emptied, both contractors and civilians. We did not know at that time, mid to late morning, if there were any other targets. There were suspicions that there might be. We knew that there were other planes in the air that had been hijacked—one in particular. A couple apparently had been aborted. And for precaution's sake, other than those that were assigned to crisis response teams, everybody was asked or directed to go home, including myself. And I remember spending the rest of the day parked in front of the television and, even to this day, just the replay of the towers coming down over and over and over again. (Right)

I drifted off; took a very fitful nap. It was late that evening; very early the next morning, I remember waking up not too long after midnight calling in to work. I had a special number to call and they said: Hey, you need to get in here, Tom. And so, I—

JON This was at midnight?

THOMAS This was a little after midnight. It was probably around one thirty, two o'clock in the morning. And then the next four months—we're talking 18-hour days (Right), as the Government ramped up in its response.

What I didn't know, of course, on that day—it's a day frozen for those of us that were there. It's interesting that it's receding in the history, I meet—there's people I work with now that, they're 20-somethings that only briefly know about a 9/11 or seeing some image on a magazine or on television. They don't actually know (Yeah) or have the experience. I mean, it's 13 years on now and yet, for me, it seems just like yesterday.

JON It's very weird to talk to (yeah) somebody who's in their 20s and, almost 10 years old on the day of (Yep. Yeah) And I actually have spoken with students and I've asked them specifically what they've been taught in school about 9/11. And they say they're basically just told, or taught, about the day-of. There's no context given or anything like that. So, it—you're right, it's very weird.

So, go ahead.

THOMAS Not just weird, but for me, almost 3,000 people were murdered. (Yep) And, during the course of the day, as I was home, before I went back to work very early the next morning, all I could remember was really bad flashbacks. And I'm just going to give you context—speaking of context.

You mentioned in my bio that I used to be Intel officer for the Navy, and I was assigned to the Joint Intelligence Center—it's for national military Joint Intelligence Center at the Pentagon, the head—it reports to the J2. It's the lead military intelligence officer reports up to the joint chiefs of staff and the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. During my time there, from '92 to '97, I was assigned to several desks. And for a period of about 18 months, I was actually on the terrorism desk. That's what it was called. It was in the alert center. And I was there during the period in which they tried to drop the World Trade Center towers the first time with truck bombs. (Right) And we were sending out reports that—and this was where I first got to know about Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda—we were in the loop. There were linguists; we had the translations when the tapes were going around; the fatwabs he was issuing—and it was clear that this guy and his movement, which was clearly transnational, was serious. And they had huge—let's just say, they had a lot they didn't like about the West and even their own culture, in terms of the forms of Government that had taken place, or the intervening decades and centuries.

And they had a huge bone to pick. It was clear from all their talks and, yet, we were sending out these reports and they were essentially going into the circular file. No one really seemed to care.

I remember, after the World Trade Center towers, the attempt to drop them with truck bombs—they were damaged and there were injuries. That we were issuing reports that this is just an opening shot. That they're going to be coming back and they looked at the World Trade Center towers and other Western symbols as something to attack, as something to harm, and recognizing that it would cause a lot of publicity.

And we were issuing these reports (Right), and I still, even to this day—I'm going to relate to you just, this is history just ringing in my ears, but the ringing is not drowning out the truth of what I'm about to share. I remember the J2—he's a general a 2-star general—he comes down to our center. He actually comes down to the center—

JON To the terrorism desk.

THOMAS To the alert center and there's all these different desks and he looks at us, and he looks at me, and he says: "Yeah, I've seen all the reports you're sending out." And he says: "Who cares? Who cares about a raghead spouting about fatwahs in the desert underneath a fig tree. Who cares?"

JON Right, horrible.

THOMAS And I was just flabbergasted, because it was clear that the intelligence complex—remember, this is '93. This is not even a year after, barely a year, after the Soviet Union had collapsed in 1992, they were still struggling with who's the next enemy? What's our identity? Now that the Cold War is over, what does this mean? And it was just dismissed, this asymmetric threat. And although terrorism had been in full flower, so to speak, as hijackings as we know from previous history, they were just dismissing all this—that it was inconsequential in terms of any threats or potential threats.

And, we continued the reports. We said that we were predicting—this was intelligence. Classic intelligence is about indications and warnings and we warned in our reports that this group is serious and that they were going to return and associated movements. We actually said that. And I'm not—I don't take solace in saying this because we failed to convince command

authorities and others to take action. And eight years later—a little over eight years later, guess what?

JON I wonder if one of the reasons why this individual didn't care, whatever—I mean, at the time I think, we were still working with the Mujahideen. And Osama bin Laden—I think in the caucuses and elsewhere.

So, your position at the NSA was a change leader, you said?

THOMAS Yeah, I was hired in as a senior executive, so that's the top tier. It's about 7500 senior execs across the Government. (Right) I was in a management leadership position, and I was hired straight in. I was literally dropped in at a very senior level, reporting to the number 3 person, so—a wide purview and a whole lot of stuff began to happen. It would take quite a while to unfold the full history. It has many, many threads, many, many back-stories, and the historical context is critical to understand it. But I give you the example of where I was in '93 to help at least provide some context for 2001 (Okay—), because it was clearly not considered a real threat. And, although, by the time we get to '98, George Tenet himself as director of the CIA is saying the system is blinking red. He actually said that. I remember seeing the reports in '98. He was ignored, as well. No one was really on this. No one was—there were a few little offices here and there. There's probably about 20 people, max, if you looked on 9/10 to see the number of people that were actually working the counter-terrorism target, or as space as we've said, we would say, it was about 20 people.

JON In the NSA, you're saying.

THOMAS In all of NSA. About 20 people that were even focused on the problem.

JON Now, your story as a whistleblower is very extensive, so rather than ask you individual questions about this or that, I'm just going to let you tell your story. For my own curiosity, I would like to hear about the Espionage Act, and the FBI raids against you, staffer Diane Roark, and NSA Whistleblowers William Binney and Kirk Wiebe.

THOMAS Yeah, that all happened a number of years later, so—(Okay) and primarily for sheer retaliation, reprisal and retribution, but that's part of the deeper story.

What happened after 9/11 is, I mean, I'll just give you the quick thumbnail. I can't give you all in the time we have, because it's an extraordinarily disturbing story, and obviously, I lived it and I was there and have intimate knowledge of what happened and what the response was, both publicly, as well—and then the dirty knowledge of what happened in the deepest of secrecy, and using 9/11 as an excuse.

So, right after 9/11 the workforce—which is the people that did the real work were called the workforce, interestingly enough the NSA. Or some would call them the rank and file, to use Industrial Age language (Right)—took it really hard. It's important to note for your listeners, and I've said this in the past in other venues and other forums, the people that do the real work at NSA knew that NSA and the intelligence community, the whole national defense effort had failed the nation. Because our primary responsibility as an intelligence agency was to provide indications and warning, and we failed the nation. We had not done our duty under the Preamble of the Constitution, which is one of the two primary functions of the Government. One is to provide for the general welfare and the other one is provide for the common defense. We had failed to provide for the common defense; we had not kept people out of harm's way; and not just Americans, but innocent foreign nationals were murdered on 9/11.

The workforce took it really hard. That's a whole story in itself.

JON I've heard about that in parts of the CIA and in the FBI, as well.

THOMAS Yep, and because of my role and other functions, I had brought outreach to others in the rest of Government, particularly the intelligence arena, and it was clear that their own people and other people that do the real work in other agencies related intelligence were taking it really hard, and psychologically it was extraordinarily difficult.

And, so, what do you tell your neighbors? What do you tell your friends? What do you say, right? Here at the Homeland—I don't like that word, but domestic U.S. territory—had actually been attacked and it's an extraordinary loss. And, of course, the images weren't helping, for those of us that were there that know.

So, as we went around—and I was with Maureen Baginski, which is Signals Intelligence Director—we were having these sessions with people in different offices, and attempting to console them, attempting to help

provide explanation, but I remember a phrase that she used, and I know in part she regretted it later—a very conflicted person, by the way, just given her history and the fact that she had been there as a career. Here she is in a very powerful position at NSA saying: "Oh, no, 9/11 is a gift to NSA. We'll get all the money we want and then some." (Oh, geez) And I knew in her saying that, that we were already heading in the wrong direction, that NSA leadership was going in reverse, and knew that Congress would basically open up the pocket books, representing the American taxpayer, of course, and just write really big checks. And that's precisely what started happening. And that's a whole story itself. (Mm-hmm) I have many, many anecdotes, very disturbing anecdotes, about how that played out over the next several years.

So, you have that as an explanation, right? Which is not an explanation. It was simply going to be used as an excuse to recover all the losses from the peace dividend, post-Cold War. (Right)

Right. So, what else is happening? Well, this was obviously not just a minor crisis. This was an historical crisis that had really altered the equation in terms of NSA, and I just, I know that NSA's response as a classic organizational response is: "Oh, we need a lot more bodies on the problem." So, the 20 I mentioned that were focused on counter-terrorism (Mm-hmm) jumped to over 400 within the space of just a couple of months. (Wow) Whole new offices were formed; all new crisis centers; response teams; you name it. That's a whole story in itself.

We were asked, I was asked to lead an effort, enterprise level, to put anything we had into the fight. This came out—this was a directive from Tenet. Any across the intelligence "community"—and I put community in quotes—put anything you have in the fight. It doesn't matter what it is. If it's in the labs—prototype, test-bed—just put it out there. I ran across a number of solutions. Some that were near complete; some that were finished; some that were ready for operational employment; others that were still being worked on as prototypes. But NSA, again management level, became incredibly resistant to employing any of this, because anything that could be used to help pursue the real threat—obviously, there were threats that needed to be pursued in light of what had happened; that was crystal clear—would make them look bad.

So, they have this whole weird psychology going on that because we had failed, don't do anything that would actually make us look like we failed.

Go inside the institution. And institutional prerogative began to quickly return within the space of just a month or two. We had efforts to stand up as I was in charge of putting together a centralized web server, a distributive web server, where it was a centralized location where people could just type in a web address and then make it one of their favorites, so when they came in for their shift, for the day, they would get the very latest news to inform them regarding what was going on, what was happening, updates they needed to know about. All this is ongoing.

Then there's this whole other parallel thing going on in NSA, and I'm just going to summarize it because, again, I could talk for hours on this. (Mm-hmm) But, I found out very disturbing information, both directly and indirectly, that equipment that was normally outward-facing. Equipment that would normally be used for traditional foreign intelligence was now being turned on U.S. networks directly. (Right) I heard about a program called Stellar Wind. It was just being whispered by people. There was an effort that I was involved with—again, I'm jumping around here, but I'm just—to give you a sense of this. Where I and a colleague of mine that worked directly with me, we were actually assisting the FBI to facilitate the affidavit process for the secret court—the foreign intelligence surveillance court where the problem caused affidavit ratio was brought before the court so they could issue a warrant to go after a U.S. person, resident, legal alien, or a U.S. corporation if they're suspected of engaging in harm against the United States or the national security.

They were—we were suddenly taken off that effort. I remember confronting my supervisor, Maureen Baginski, who said that they'd gone with a different solution. I confronted the lead attorney at NSA after I just said: "What are we doing to my supervisor. We have to have a warrant. It's a prime directive of NSA. You cannot spy on an American—surveil an American electronically without a warrant." Although there were conditions for hot pursuit in the equivalent of war time, but you still have to go back for a warrant. (Right)

I confronted the lead attorney the first week of October regarding what NSA was doing. And it was an extraordinarily chilling conversation. He said: "You don't understand, Mr. Drake. The White House has approved the program." As soon as he said The White House, the hairs went up on the back of my neck because I'm remembering what Nixon said back in the 70s. You know, "If the President says it's okay, then it's legal."

JON Well, Dick Cheney started to say that after a few years.

THOMAS Well, five days—I remember five days after 9/11—I mean, I'm there. All this is like a blur. I can pick out all the distinctive ends. Five days after 9/11. In fact, I just listened to his—for the first time in a number of years, I actually watched the tape again on broadcast television where he says: "We're going to go to the dark side." (Right) Sources and methods. And I knew that that was very troubling and knowing Cheney's history, that this would be a golden opportunity to do other things. Because already getting very early wind, even as early as five days after, that other authorities were being authorized for NSA. Of course, General Hayden was making frequent trips down to the White House situation room and other locations.

What I didn't know when I confronted the lead attorney and he said: "No, NSA is the executive agent—they always called it "the program"—it's all legal. All the lawyers have looked at it."

All legal, right? White House has approved it. Don't ask any more questions. Although I pursued that with him for a bit, he simply would not—he shut me down. And clearly, I recognized when I put the phone down that I was now staring into the abyss. I was staring into the very abyss that Frank Church warned the nation about in 1975. (Right) That under the excuse, and under the failure, a systemic failure to protect the nation, they were going to use 9/11 as an excuse—and I will use really, really strong language now—but in the deepest of secrecy, in fact, it was being protected as an extraordinarily deep state secret, the United States Government was willfully, as an act of commission—not omission—violate the Fourth Amendment and subvert the Constitution—on an extraordinarily mass scale. (Wow--)

And I recognized the paranoia and the fear. I recognize that in compensating for the failure, right, and others have had other interpretations, but remember, I'm speaking as someone who was there, who confronted the senior leadership on this, okay, and became aware of some really, really dirty knowledge about this, about all that took place in those early days, weeks, and months after 9/11, that was rapidly expanded that the United States was now being turned in to the equivalent of a foreign nation, for dragnet, blanket, electronic surveillance on a scale that not only we had never seen before, but on a scale that no other nation in the world had ever seen before. And, in terms of sheer scope and scale, and with direct cooperation of a number of leading Telcos, Internet service

providers, and later on, Internet providers, data brokers, financial institutions, etc. (Right)

What do you do? My moment of truth was that first week in October. Because if I had remained silent, I would be an accessory to a crime. If I remained silent, then I would be denying that I was eyewitness to the subversion of the Constitution. And, remember, what was so important about the Constitution? (Laughs) It was supposed to make us different. It was the grand experiment. And, although it had many faults and foibles, it was an extraordinary document based on the uneven progress of liberty and freedom over the millennia. But I was certainly not going to stand by and simply rape the oath that I had taken four times in my Government career—twice in the military, once at CIA, and the fourth time as an NSA senior executive—to support and defend the Constitution.

And what I was confronted by was I am now having to defend the Constitution against my own Government. (Right)

And, I decided I would do my best, with all I had, knowing that the odds were long and the chances were slim that I would defend the Constitution against my own Government from within. And I did that until I couldn't do it anymore. And I say that with some emotion because I failed, I actually failed on behalf of America and Americans, I failed to do—I did, I failed, and I've had to accept that because it was clear. Who was going—the order was given—and I have to say it this way—the order was given by the White House in league with General Hayden, and others, to affect turning the extraordinary, the incredible power of NSA on to the United States. And, obviously, it could not do that without the cooperation by hook or by crook, some cases coerced with certain companies. It also involved other parts of Government, which some people don't fully appreciate, including the FBI.

So, here I am and, of course, I grew up in the 70s—context for you. I grew up in the 70s a very young teenager. I was there. I remember the Pentagon Papers and Watergate and a President resigning his office. I remember Daniel Ellsberg talking about what was at stake (Right)—the bright and shining light of Vietnam. I remember seniors burning their draft cards in 1971, in the back parking lot when I was a freshman in high school. Here I am, and I remember the Frank Church Committee Hearing and the Rockefeller Commission and all those reports. You go back and read those. It's just like wow—and a lot of that was—then two intel committees were

formed—standing committees to provide oversight of a secret side of Government because it had gotten out of hand—the intervening decades. Then this Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which is a compromise in itself, right? Again, the Government had unchained itself from the Constitution.

That's what had happened after 9/11. No one knew it, except for very, very few, especially in those first few years. And I went through every channel that existed. I was a witness before, a material witness, a whistleblower, before two 9/11 Congressional investigations. I gave them everything I knew—and the worst part of it, for me, was discovering, as I found out right after 9/11—I even confronted Maureen Baginski with a report that had been finished by NSA, finished report, many, many months before 9/11 basically breaking out the full scope of Al-Qaeda associated movements. And it was never shared with the rest of the intelligence agencies, nor was it ever given to the national command authority to take action. That was just one report amongst many of them.

JON What did that report state, specifically?

THOMAS It exposed the full network. It showed how the network was operating; how it metastasized; who was associated with it. It was the best of NSA. This is the kicker. The very best that Americans would expect, that those in secret had a special obligation to their own citizenry to protect the nation, and here was the finest, the finest that I worked with—and I'd been in the system for a long time. Remember, I listened in on East Germany and Warsaw Pact countries back during the latter years of the Cold War and did electronic warfare. Yeah, I—and yet here I was, my own country, and I was taking on activities that not only did I object to, but were in violation of the law, but the law no longer seemed to matter.

The phrase that I kept hearing in those weeks and months after 9/11: "You don't understand, Tom"—and it was all summarized by the lead attorney. The lead attorney said: "You don't understand. We just need the data. We live in extraordinary times and exigent conditions apply." Exigent. It's a really interesting word in the English language. Exigent. Meaning, all means necessary to confront the threat. Yeah, all means necessary meant that the Constitution was in the way.

And I can tell you right here. I can tell your listeners right here, none of this was necessary. We never had to go to the dark side like Cheney said. The

very best of American ingenuity and innovation had already solved this problem years earlier, knew—how do you make sense of and find meaning and large amounts of data, already solved that problem. It didn't take billions to do it. It had been solved for \$3 million dollars, \$3.2 million on a program called Thin Thread that was rejected by NSA out of hand.

And, by the way, during this period Congress actually passed legislation, signed into law by President Bush in early 2002, directing NSA to employ Thin Thread to the 18 most critical counter-terrorism sites across the world. They never did so. They actually defied the law. No penalties.

JON The Thin Thread program was a \$3.2 million program versus the other—

THOMAS A \$4B plus—

JON Four billion plus—

THOMAS It solved that problem, which was the program, referred to as the corporate solution, that was launched with great fanfare by Hayden back in the Spring of 2000, about a year after he got there, after he commissioned some studies. And it was a \$4B plus program before 9/11, okay? And nothing was going to stand in its way. So this little pip squeak of a program for \$3.2 million, that had basically solved—met all the core requirements of Trailblazer, didn't stand a chance. Not only did it solve the core challenges that Trailblazer was supposed to solve, it also provided superior intelligence, and as I found out much to my horror, the program itself is capable of finding data that was not connected—I mean you could take it and bring unassociated—we call it unassociated data—unassociated information, electronically or whatever form you could get it electronically and make connections on a level and a scale that had just not ever been done before.

All of this was rejected because it made the corporate solution look bad; it was such a small program; it didn't cost much money. I mean this was just one of a number of programs that were soundly rejected, or pushed aside by NSA. And, of course, what is happening after 9/11? Congress is coming to NSA effectively saying: "How big a check do you want us to write? And what number do you want to put on the left?"

JON Which goes back to what that individual said on the day of 9/11.

THOMAS Yeah, we're going to get all the money we want and then some. I remember a little over a year after 9/11 there was a gala celebration, the 50th Anniversary of NSA's creation. And here's context for your listeners. People had this idea that somehow NSA was brought in to existence by Congress or a Congressional legislation. It was not. It was literally created by the stroke of a secret pen held by President Truman in 1952, as a military intelligence agency. It was not part of the National Security Act of 1947, which actually created the CIA and brought the Department of Defense into existence and the Air Force. It was a wholly, secret military quote-unquote "foreign intelligence agency." All right? (Right)

People need to know that because what happened after 9/11, when I say that the Government unchained itself from the very Constitution it was bound to uphold, support, and defend is that it was increasingly militarizing all this under the what became known as the Unitary Execution Theory (Yuck) that in Article 2, that the Commander-in-Chief power of the President trumped everything (Right) and unilateral power—of course, we never declared war. The last time we declared war, actually, was in 19—well, you go back to '41, early '42 was the last time Congress actually declared war. We've never declared war since World War II, formally. All that power is reserved to the Congress. And even under the War Powers Act there's supposed to be, you know, these notifications. (Mm-hmm)

The AUMF, Authorization to Use Military Force was a justifying document for a whole host of things. But, ultimately, in secret it was Article 2. It was the Commander-in-Chief, you know, the head of the military and this is what I find extraordinarily chilling is that much of what took place in secret—again, going to the dark side as Cheney said in no uncertain terms—was all done under the Article 2 Commander-in-Chief powers. And that meant that everything else stood aside. That meant that everything else took a back seat and whatever orders were given—I have to say it this way—whatever orders were issued or given by the Commander in Chief through his various executive branch minions and leaders you would obey, and if you chose not to obey, then guess what? You were disobeying a direct order. And if you disobeyed a direct order, then you would be severely punished.

Now, of course, as a civilian—I'm still having been a former officer in the Navy, Commission, I was well aware of orders. But under Article 2 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, you're only obligated to follow lawful orders. It cannot be un-Constitutional. It cannot violate [AUDIOBAD]

statute. Cannot violate Uniformed Code of Military Justice, and you actually have an obligation to question any order that may or may not be lawful. Even if it is, you still have the right to question it. (Right) But here you weren't to question any of this, because the decision has already been made.

So, you can imagine the space that I and a few others are in. What do you do when you're now confronting—The reality that under the very definition of high crimes and misdemeanors, although this is "post-9/11," the White House is engaged in subversion, okay? (Right) But it doesn't matter, because the threat to the homeland is so severe and because almost 3,000 people were murdered, we can get away with anything. Whatever we need to do, we're going to do it. And that's precisely what happened.

And so, I knew in October, that first week in October—that was before the Patriot Act, before any of this other stuff, right? I knew that the decision—it was made in the deepest of secrecy that had enormous downstream consequences. It would all eventually come out in some manner. But I also knew that I had an obligation to support and defend the Constitution, because if I didn't, I'd be breaking my oath, and that oath took primacy over everything else. (Right)

So, I went to two 9/11 Congressional investigations. I gave them everything I knew about—well, we can get into that. I think you're probably going to ask me some questions about that. What NSA actually did know, but chose to cover up.

JON Well—

THOMAS To keep from a number of investigators, including the 9/11 Commission.

JON Well, with regard to the two investigations. There was the Joint Congressional Inquiry and another one.

You're aware of the story of the NSA leaks made supposedly by Republican Richard Shelby (even though he denies it) during the Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11?

THOMAS Yes, I am.

JON What do you have to say about that? Anything?

THOMAS Well [laughs], they're pretty close to the truth, he was sort of taken out back and told to shut-up, okay? (Right) You know, it's interesting—I'll just parenthetically insert this. There's a speech and debate clause, which is an extraordinary part of the Constitution, whereas Mike Gravel did with the Pentagon Papers, which I remember him reading them in, right, to the Congressional record, all 4,000 pages worth. (Mm-hmm) A Senator can go into the well, and actually under the speech and debate clause and without censure or sanction say just about, short of asking for insurrection, right, can say anything. And no one did, okay? (Right)

Now he, you could argue, without doing the well thing, right, did release certain information that was considered kind of sensitive (Right), all right? And did get in part censored in the intelligence establishment because he was clearly saying things about fault and blame, and that was the last thing that they wanted to do. There was this agreement—by the way, I say this unspoken (in terms of unwritten agreement, but certainly spoken in secret), this unwritten agreement that we are not going to accept any failure and we'll protect our institutional equities.

JON Wow—well, the leaks, just so people know, there were two communications intercepted a day or two before 9/11. One of them was: "Tomorrow is zero hour." Another one I think is: "The match begins tomorrow." Or something to that effect. (Right)

Richard Shelby leaked it to the media and the thing that happened is that Dick Cheney threatened to pull the plug on all of the cooperation, or the little bit of cooperation the White House was giving the Joint Congressional Inquiry.

Now, it's interesting, Bob Graham has said:

"Looking back at it, I think we were clearly set up by Dick Cheney and the White House. They wanted to shut us down. And they wanted to shut down a legitimate Congressional inquiry that might raise questions in part about whether their own people had aggressively pursued al-Qaeda in the days prior to the September 11 attacks. The vice President attempted to manipulate the situation, and he attempted to manipulate us.... But if his goal was to get us to back off, he was unsuccessful."

THOMAS Yeah, but it says—it certainly was—it sent a chilly message. I mean, it really put them on notice. If anybody was going to say anything, even if it was not actually classified—remember, the whole thing about that if it's knowingly compromising—and there's no indication—I mean, the fact is those messages do exist, but that was right at the very end. I mean, there'd been many, many warnings prior to that that were all—well, I'd have to get to a whole other story, but—

JON Right, well, that's—I'm going to get—

THOMAS That is true. They were not translated until the day after 9/11.

JON Okay, now, you said—

THOMAS It was too late.

JON You spoke to the Joint Congressional Inquiry and before we get into the 9/11 Commission, I wrote a little statement down to put this into context. Just so everybody knows with regard to 9/11 and the NSA, the 9/11 Commission barely looked at them. The following is from HistoryCommons.org and I think it's from Phil Shenon's book *The Commission*.

"[For executive director Philip] Zelikow and other staff on the commission, it was just more interesting—sexier—to concentrate on the CIA."

In late 2003, the NSA will allow the 9/11 Commission access to its archives on Al-Qaeda. "[P]erversely, the more eager [NSA director] General Hayden was to cooperate, the less interested [9/11 Commission executive director Philip] Zelikow and others at the commission seemed to be in what was buried in the NSA files."

Now, towards the end of the 9/11 Commission, "Zelikow would later admit he too was worried that important classified information had never been reviewed at the NSA and elsewhere in the Government before the 9/11 Commission shut its doors, that critical evidence about bin Laden's terrorist

network sat buried in Government files, unread to this day. By July 2004, it was just too late to keep digging."

Now, I think it's interesting, since he and others seem to be the main reason the 9/11 Commission stayed away from the NSA. Some of the information that they did come across tried to tie Iran to Al-Qaeda and 9/11.

You know, so, now let's get to the next question, which is a really good one.

THOMAS Sure.

JON You once said, "I can't say fully, because it's classified, but I showed that NSA knew a great deal about the 9/11 threats and Al-Qaeda, electronically tracking various people and organizations for years—since its role is to collect intelligence. The problem is, it wasn't sharing all of the data. If it had, other parts of Government could have acted on it, and more than likely, NSA could have stopped, I say stopped 9/11."

Now, did you speak to the 9/11 Commission, and did you make them aware of this information that could have stopped 9/11?

THOMAS I never spoke to the 9/11 Commission. I was never asked to speak. It's one of the interesting mysteries. I think I know why. I did speak extensively with the Joint Inquiry, which was a much broader examination by both House and Senate Intelligence Committees. It was triggered in part by an earlier investigation. It was the Saxby Chambliss Subcommittee on Homeland Security in the [AUDIOBAD] who had an earlier investigation, which really was the basis for the Joint Inquiry. The Joint Inquiry was the one, much more public, and I gave them extraordinary amounts of internal information, both written as well as oral testimony, regarding what NSA knew prior to 9/11, as well as what we discovered after 9/11, including information—an effort, when I was the executive program manager for Thin Thread, where we had an opportunity with some monies that had been actually approved at NSA to point Thin Thread at the largest set of databases, the intelligence databases, that existed, we're talking about multiple, hundreds of terabytes of data and then some. And we discovered information that had never even been found that was true indications of warning, both pre- and post- 9/11.

That entire effort was shut down. There's a whole story behind that, by the way. It was completely shut down and I remember our program manager

coming to me where he was ordered to take all of the program information for Thin Thread and give it to this other organization effectively. You know the end of Raiders of the Lost Ark (laughs) where you see the box going down and then turning left (Right, I remember) That's what happened at Thin Thread. It was put in to the NSA Indiana Jones digital warehouse.

JON Well, now, with regard to Thin Thread, just so everybody understands, one of the crucial differences between this \$3.2 million program (Yeah) and the \$4 billion program was that it would have protected civil liberties. Am I correct?

THOMAS It was built in. It was all probable cause. It was all based on targeting. It was not—and this has been a myth, that somehow the NSA didn't want it because it was a mass surveillance program, which is the great irony. It's sort of a reverse projection. It's like blame—project on to the very program that actually protected civil liberties and U.S. persons. In fact, it was all about real targeting, targeting real threats. It was not about just sucking it all in. NSA, after 9/11, just simply said: "We need the data. I don't care where we get it from. We just need it." They became obsessed with collecting the data, and that's one thing NSA is really good at is collecting data. Making sense of it? That's a different story.

JON Well, now—

THOMAS So, this program built, by design—I can speak very directly on this because not only did I analyze the code, the core code to Thin Thread, but I also analyzed (because I was a systems software engineer), at the time analyzed the engineering design documents. And the design and—it was built in the code—was to protect U.S. persons. It was never thought, in our wildest imaginations, that this program would be stripped of its protections and turned on the United States. (Right) That was just the last thing that we even considered.

JON Now it concerns me that the 9/11 Commission did not really look at the NSA, and one of the reasons, obviously, is because the 9/11 Commission was mandated to give a quote "full and complete accounting" of the 9/11 attacks. And they were sold to the world as the definitive account of 9/11 and they weren't. They simply were not. (No) And so, this is reason one million two thousand, whatever (Yep) as to why the 9/11 Commission was a complete farce and why there needs to be a complete investigation with accountability and everything like that.

THOMAS Well, I'll give you an indication as to what they are indeed. I can speak directly to my own situation. I can't speak to others. I'm well aware of other efforts. I'm well aware of programs like Able Danger, a whole other effort on the Army side that was looking at this, but another one that got shut down as well and got into all kinds of quote unquote "hot water." I can tell you this: To this day, the only record that exists that I had any connection to the Joint Inquiry investigation on 9/11 was the fact that I was interviewed (Right). All attempts to date, we're talking now 12 years later, okay? Over 12 years ago when all this—over a period of several months—but over 12 years ago, no one can find any record, any notes, or any material evidence that I gave investigators from the Joint Inquiry.

JON Well that's awfully convenient.

THOMAS All inquiries to date, all attempts to find it, end up in boxed canyons. That should tell you something.

At NSA, I can tell you because I was in executive session a number of times—I remember one with General Hayden, during the 9/11 Commission, right? So the 9/11 Commission is this quote unquote "independent commission" that's going to be the be all and end all. (Right) There was clearly agreements because of what had been—and I know this from my own material evidence—that we aren't going to go in certain areas. We're going to avoid. And it was clear Hayden had direct access to the White House, okay? And it was clear—I remember him chortling, he was chortling during executive session. As you might recall, during that period where the FBI and CIA were taking a whole lot of heat from the 9/11 Commission in public hearings. (Right) And I remember him saying in executive session how nice it was to hide behind their coattails while the FBI and CIA took the heat and NSA got to remain in the shadows. (What?) He knew NSA was culpable. He knew NSA was exposed. But he was a political general and he had all kinds of top cover. And, so, they just conveniently chose not to REALLY investigate NSA. And, so, I find it disingenuous—I'll be polite—on the part of the 9/11 Commissioners and the executive director when they opine about: "We didn't get a whole lot of cooperation from NSA." That's because that was part of the agreement. (Right) Okay?

And that's another one of the deep secrets because it was—see, NSA, if there's any one issue—there was a systemic failure in terms of 9/11 and

there's historical context; there's the systemic context in terms of the intelligence and the way intelligence, the establishment and the institutions—the need to know, even though we don't know that if I give you information, I'm giving away my power, what are you going to do with it? You know, all that crap, right?

But here, here we have—NSA had prima facia evidence, right? Electronic evidence. Extraordinary. And then finding out later, as I did directly, right, through the analysis that was done. People coming to me with additional information, as well as the analysis that Thin Thread did. Finding out that there was more than just passing information about Al-Qaeda associate of movements, and yet, NSA directed at the highest levels to insure that none of that information would ever get close to an investigator. They actually said that, which meant they were actually obstructing an official Congressional investigation.

JON Well—

THOMAS And then obstructed the 9/11 Commission.

JON Then I'm going to skip ahead to a question. Was anybody at the NSA held accountable for 9/11 for their supposed "failures" and if there, was there—and James Bamford actually answered this, he said there was not one. But was there an NSA Inspector General report on the NSA's "failures?" And can you tell me the name of the NSA IG at the time of 9/11 when all the investigations were going on?

THOMAS Joel Brenner was actually—he came in in early 2002, late winter, early spring of 2002. He was the Inspector General at NSA during the Joint Inquiry.

JON Okay, now, was anyone in NSA held accountable?

THOMAS No.

JON Nobody was. Do you know—this is something that happened throughout the Government—so, I'll just ask you. Were people that should have been held accountable rewarded and/or promoted?

THOMAS That's an understatement.

JON Within the NSA?

THOMAS NSA, my gosh! I just look at the group pads of all the people that I—remember, all these seminal players that I either worked for or were hired by or got to know during my time there, were all promoted, richly rewarded and the revolving door, they're cashing in big time. (Wow) Or have already cashed in big time or continue to cash in big time.

Look, screwing up, failing the nation—I remember, the Navy supposedly, right, when I was—especially if you're at sea, the commander is supposed to take the hit. It was on your watch, right? It happened on your watch. (Right) You're supposed to take responsibility for it.

Hayden has never taken responsibility for ANY of the failures that fall at the feet of NSA. He just refuses to do so. It's like he pathologically refuses to accept any responsibility or any accountability for 9/11. And I know why. Because he chose in his mind that he would put his stamp, his secret stamp on history. And his secret stamp on history is that NSA—let me just give you a quote. I mean, I think it's illustrative for your listeners just to give you a forward response that he gave to Diane Roark, which is actually accounted for in the seminal article about my case still to this day, written by Jane Mayer in a *New Yorker* article called "The Secret Sharer: with a question, me, as enemy of the state question mark. In there is an account of Diane Roark confronting Michael Hayden, General Hayden, in the summer—get this! During the period which I was a material witness for the Joint Inquiry—confronts Hayden in the summer of 2002. And at the end of the conversation, after they're going back and forth, she's basically looking at him and saying: "Why? Why did you do this? Which was just violate the Fourth Amendment. And he didn't—his answer is extraordinarily chilling! Four-word answer—We had the power. (Right, well--) We had the power."

JON That's one of the things you spoke about. One of the things Dick Cheney was very interested in doing was expanding executive power, which he feels dwindled over the years. And on the day of 9/11 one of the very first things he does is he calls his attorney, David Addington, and brings him back to the White House to discuss exactly how far—how much power that the Unitarian executive, as you mentioned, could have.

THOMAS Nine-Eleven was his convenient cover. Nine-Eleven was—I mean, I can only imagine in his mind, it was, that Cheney grin. I can only imagine because, look, he—I mean, this is where people have to understand history

—Cheney goes way back. Cheney is well-knew in Government. (Absolutely) Cheney—if there was any one person who understood how Government works, it was Cheney—from the inside out. And he knew the intelligence really, really well. Remember, he had been the Secretary of Defense back during the Persian Gulf War.

JON Chief of Staff to Ford.

THOMAS Well, Chief of Staff to Ford—and this is the critical history. He always thought Nixon got a raw deal and he has actually said this. People forget what—he's flagged himself for years, right, as to where his inclinations lie. He said—a long time ago, way before 9/11—said that if you ever got in a position of power, came back into the Government, that he would restore the imperial presidency. He would restore the presidency, because he always thought Nixon got a raw deal. That the office of the President had been besmirched, had been tarnished, and that he would restore its glory. Well, guess what? He was given the National security portfolio hook-line-and-sinker or lock-stock-and-barrel (Right, laughs), by Bush himself. Bush is a total neophyte in terms of National security. And so, that was also engineered. The fact that Cheney was even his vice-President was engineered. (Right) Because he was actually the head of the selection committee and figured the only person that was qualified was himself, which I find that quite revealing.

JON I do remember that.

THOMAS So, here he is, now an opportunity to very quickly acquire, restore the glory of the office of the President, and bring back all those powers that were quote unquote—that were contained and constrained the executive, as a result—we keep forgetting all those scandals and the fact that the Government had in secret violated the rights of Americans on a routine basis for many, many years, if not decades. (Right) Actually, going back to the end of World War II. (Absolutely) And people forget that history. They forget about FBI's COINTELPRO. They forget about CIA's Operation CHAOS. They forget about NSA's MINARET and SHAMROCK. They forget about all those programs.

JON You just brought up COINTELPRO and one of the first things John Ashcroft did after 9/11, and you mentioned the Church hearings where COINTELPRO was exposed, he reinstated COINTELPRO.

THOMAS Yes.

JON Now, one of the things—we spoke of warnings. I don't know if you remember, but after 9/11 we were told, repeatedly, that there were absolutely no warnings. That nobody had any idea that anything like this was going to happen. Now, one of the questions I have for you: There was, or is, I don't know if it's still around, a system at the NSA known as Echelon. It has been described as "a global system for the interception of private and commercial communications." There are allegations concerning the usage of Echelon for corporate espionage among other things. With regard to 9/11, and this is from HistoryCommons.org, it says that in June 2001, "German intelligence warns the CIA, Britain's intelligence agency, and Israel's Mossad that Middle Eastern militants are planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack "American and Israeli symbols, which stand out." A later article quotes unnamed German intelligence sources who state the information was coming from Echelon surveillance technology, and that British intelligence had access to the same warnings." Do you know if the allegations regarding that warning is true? And also, were you aware that in 2001, the European Parliament released a report on Echelon?

THOMAS I am very aware. Read the full report from the European Parliament. It all got—because of 9/11 no one ever really picked up on it at that point. Echelon was—look, I mean, I was in the system, as we're talking about, the latter years of the Cold War, Echelon was an extraordinary intelligence sharing system between what we called the five eyes. So we had the United States, Great Britain/United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. And I know that system real well. I'm well aware of sort of the dark side of the system where it was used for other purposes because information is power, right? So it wasn't just for intelligence. You got to use it for other things.

That system was re-ignited—I'll put it that way—mildly, after 9/11. (Right) And because of the advances in technology it was one of the mechanisms that existed between those five countries for intelligence sharing on an extraordinary scale.

I cannot speak directly in terms of personal knowledge of the warnings, although I was aware of warnings that had been provided. But, let me tell you this, the warnings—just because another country—see, here's the thing. If another country gives a warning, and this is sort of the arrogance and

hubris of power—well, it's not our warning, it's your warning. So, it tends—it doesn't have the same equivalent, resonance, because it's coming from somewhere else.

JON Well—

THOMAS And—And, you have to remember the system. These were warnings, it's true. You have the Bojinka plot going back to '95. Remember, all this stuff that took place between—even though the original attempt to drop the World Trade Center towers from '93 all the way up to 2001. You had the Cole bombing. You had the Khobar towers. You had all these other terrorist instances, but you also had other threats and warnings. All of this—and you had Tenet saying the system was blinking red three years before 9/11. None of that made a difference.

Here's why. The system was designed as a Cold War system. A symmetric system. It was not designed for asymmetric. It was not designed for having large amounts of information. It wasn't designed for that. So, you have an irony here. The Echelon system, which came out of the Cold War, was collecting massive amounts of information, you had beyond Echelon you had all the other systems. All this stuff is just piling up and people are trying to make sense of it.

So something gives a warning in the middle of all this—what does it mean? Right? It's just some warning—some unspecified threat. There might be some militants or some radicalized element. Remember what I said the General said back in 1993? Who cares? (Right) Right? This was largely dismissed except for a very small cadre of analysts recognizing the growing threat separate from the historical roots for all this, right? And their attempted redress for grievances, which is turning into mass casualties attacks of a spectacular nature and they kept ramping it up.

It was well-known. I will flat-out tell you that using airplanes—who have the history of hijacking, for cripes sake (Right)—so, using airplanes as weapons, right, was not—and this is where Condi Rice is just covering up for herself—no one could have imagined, right? No one could imagine. That's not true. Not just wasn't it no one could have—people did imagine it and there was actual, active plots to bring down airliners. (Right) So, you can imagine—and I pause, because of what I ended up finding out shortly after 9/11 and then what I discovered from others at NSA, then found in NSA's own databases regarding the core threat here. It was

asymmetric, that's the problem. It wasn't—NSA really didn't have the full capability or capacity to bring together asymmetric, unassociated bits of information, and make sense of them in context. And so it was a fragmented picture. It was always fragmented. It was never enough. It never rose to the threshold of it—even though Tenet said the light was blinking red—it never rose to a level that said, you know what? This is a real threat. We have to align the institution to deal with it. And that did not happen.

JON Well, there are—do you remember the August 6th Presidential Daily Briefing, which was called Bin Laden determined to strike in the U.S. (Yeah) That got a lot of attention during the 9/11 Commission, but we found out from Kurt Eichenwald that the PDBs that came before it made the August 6th PDB pale in comparison (Yes) as compared to—with the information that was within them.

Now, isn't this—I guess the information that the—is within the PDB partly comes from the NSA, does it not?

THOMAS More than just partly.

JON [Laughs]

THOMAS It's fair to say, having been part of a process when I was at the CIA, when I was an imagery analyst down what was NPIC—National Photographic Interpretation Center—and then later at the Pentagon, but especially when I was at the CIA where there's a whole process for how information gets into the President's or the Presidential Daily Briefing—the PDB. I've known many number of people that actually worked directly on it. It's for the senior analyst from the respective intelligence agency. As we moved in to, you know, the Information Age, Analog Digital Age, right, with Internet, more and more of the intelligence that was in the President's Daily Brief was a higher percentage of it. The good stuff was coming from Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). (Right)

And the reason is because more and more people are communicating electronically, okay? And, so, it would stand to reason by virtue of where intelligence is coming from, both secret as well as from open systems, upwards it's probably—I would hear different figures. NSA used to brag about it internally that 90 percent of the good stuff comes from us, right? And let no one forget it. Like sort of bragging rights with the rest of the

agencies. It's probably fair to say that a good two thirds plus—I can't give you specifics because you'd have to go back and analyze every single one if you want to do it accurately. But, let's just say that a significant majority of the core intelligence, indications and warnings intelligence, was based in part or as primary from Signals Intelligence.

JON Okay, now—

THOMAS And—but, see—here, this is part of the problem. You end up blinding yourself. And I say SIGINT—notice, I used to work at DIA when I was in the Navy. I was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency at the Pentagon. They're the ones that were actually responsible, as an agency, for the National Military Joint Intelligence Center. So, you get blind to your own INT and you dismiss any other information that may discount it, or may amplify it, or may be from a different source. Because you are quote unquote "the source." So you tend not to include, by virtue of accepting it, you accept it, you only include it when it actually aligns with your own sources and methods.

Remember, the irony here, NSA was a tentacle [AUDIOBAD] formed in 1952. It was never designed to do finished intelligence. And, yet, they took on the prerogative that only we can understand SIGINT because it's really complex stuff. So we will interpret it so you can understand it.

JON Okay, now, with regard to that report from Parliament, I just want to read this little clip I got. (Sure)

"A report issued by the European Parliament last week advises the use of encryption software to protect electronic communications against the Echelon spy network. Against continued U.S. denials, the report concluded that the spy network does exist and that its primary purpose is to intercept private and commercial communications, not military intelligence."

And that is from wsws.org, June 6, 2001.

(Yeah) So, all right. I'm going to get into the next question. (Sure) And I hope I say this correctly.

There was a communications hub in Sana'a Yemen that was used by Al-Qaeda for many years. It was apparently used for the U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S.S. Cole bombing, and for 9/11. This communications hub was extensively monitored by the NSA. Can you tell us about this hub?

THOMAS Yeah, the hub existed. NSA had been monitoring probably since at least 1996. I gave extraordinary amounts of material evidence to both, but particular the Joint Inquiry, regarding this hub. And the fact, based on other information, that NSA knew precisely what numbers were calling into that hub and when the hub was calling out to other numbers. That included the two hijackers that were living in San Diego.

JON Well, that gets to my next question.

Two of the hijackers living in San Diego made several calls to the communications hub in Yemen. The Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11 says that: "The NSA did not realize the hijackers were in the U.S. at the time the calls were made." On 6/4/2014, Abby Martin had two NSA Whistleblowers on her show "Breaking the Set." They are William Binney and Kirk Wiebe. During this interview, William Binney tells us: "I know specifics . . . like six or seven phone calls from San Diego back to the Yemen facility. And, by the way, BOTH ENDS WERE KNOWN. I MEAN BOTH NUMBERS WERE THERE. THAT'S HOW CALLER ID WORKS (emphasis mine)."

Now, can you tell us if this means that the NSA lied to the Joint Congressional Inquiry and knew the hijackers were in the United States and didn't bother to tell the FBI?

THOMAS NSA lied, yeah. Look, this has come up before. I've yet to actually say this because I've never been asked—accept the Joint Inquiry—I've never been asked after all this, even after in the last number of years, even after the Risen/Lichtblau article from 2005, no one has yet to invite me before a Congressional Committee, because obviously there's been no investigation since. All right?

Anyway, yeah, NSA flat out lied about this. They knew what the numbers were. But, remember, they're numbers. All right? And these numbers are well—the numbers point back to where they come from. It's the way the system works. You cannot be monitoring the hub without knowing what the

other number is, because that's what you're monitoring. Right? Obviously, you know what the number is for the hub and when your number comes in you know what the ID of the number is that's coming in. (Okay) I'll say it that way.

Here is where you get it [AUDIOBAD] I know some people think of conspiracy theories and other things, right? And there are conspiracies, all right? But, here is where people have to understand the culture, right? Part of the problem here is that you have other parts of the Government that were attempting to make these hijackers informants, all right? You get into a really, really weird set of mirrors, where the Government is actually working against itself, and obviously, when it came to the domestic sphere, because of other restrictions, NSA cannot operate there—although, I will tell you, given the nature, rises to a threat sufficient enough, you go to the court; you've got resident legal aliens living in the United States; you go to the secret court, you can do the equivalent of cast iron—as we would call it back in the business—cast iron coverage. You, as NSA, have FBI, go up to the court and say, yes, we're going to monitor this phone call. Or phone numbers. There were more than just a couple.

But they didn't. Okay? They didn't, because you've got this other operation going on, right? You also have the CIA that was "tracking" certain hijackers, certain meetings in Malaysia, lost track, then they're in the United States. You've got the FBI actually doing surveillance, right, on the very hijackers, okay? Because they're in the loop, and yet—then you've got Coleen Rowley, remember? From Minneapolis where now they're getting trained to fly airplanes but to quote unquote "land" not to take off.

JON There was an FBI agent, Michael Maltbie. They were actually turned on to people training at flight schools in Arizona. I think it was Moussaoui. They identified Moussaoui—the flight schools actually called the FBI (Yes!) and Michael Maltbie was warning people left and right that people were training—

THOMAS Yep, in a strange manner.

JON He actually, I think he predicted (Yep) that planes would be used as weapons and so on and so forth.

So, there's a lot of information about the FBI, and with regard to the CIA trying to get those two hijackers as informants, I think, isn't that just a

theory that was posited as to the reasons why the CIA essentially protected those two hijackers?

THOMAS Well, I don't think they protected them. I just think they had Alec Station. I mean they had the Bin Laden unit. I mean, you can talk—I never met him or never spoke to him, Michael Scheuer, although there's others in the loop as well.

Here's the kabuki dance is that they're all kind of running their own ops, right? They're not—remember, I have to say it again for your listening audience—there was a disincentive for any of these agencies to share what they knew with each other. And, so, you have that sort of the classic, you know, who's the famous author with the elephant story where one was on the trunk and one was on the leg and one was on the tail and they're all trying to figure out what it is, right? And if they just shared the information with each other, they would figure out it was an elephant, okay?

JON My problem with that is that if individuals made decisions to withhold information that could have prevented the attacks, then those individuals should have been held accountable, as far as I'm concerned.

THOMAS Yeah, but see, it's an institutional thing, because you're talking about analysts who are concerned enough about what's happening and they go up through channels.

Look, I'll give you the example that I know directly. Right after 9/11, I had an analyst, very agitated, come to me in secret at great risk. They even told me that. They knew that I worked directly for the SIGNALS Intelligence Director. They came to me with the report that I made reference to earlier. Very large report; been many months in the making; it was all done in early 2001, and they were never allowed to share it with anybody else in the community. They come to me—they come to ME—with this report. They actually gave me a copy of it, okay? Both electronic and hard copy. I go to the Signals Intelligence Director with this copy, and the response told me everything: "I wish you had never brought this to my attention." Remember, this is AFTER 9/11. The last thing NSA wanted to do was admit its own failure. They did not want to admit that they actually knew something now that 9/11 had happened and then have to 'fess up about it. (Right) And I know this directly because—again, there's so much more to this story than we're even talking about right now—

I was—when the Saxby-Chambliss subcommittee, 9/11 Inquiry, which was a harbinger for the Joint, they announced in December 2001; they started interviewing witnesses and doing interviews at NSA in early 2002. I was asked by Maureen Baginski to take the lead at NSA, enterprise-level lead, to work a statement for the record, which NSA would come before the Saxby-Chambliss' subcommittee and would—because they were asking all the right questions. The actual questions that the subcommittee was asking were all all right, like: "What had happened? We can't never let this happen again." Now, we had this whole edifice put into place to prevent another—you know, we were supposed to preclude another Pearl Harbor, an electronic Pearl Harbor, right? Would never happen again. Well, it did. In the digital age. So why?

NSA, of course, is in the bullseye on this by virtue of its own capability, its own technology, its own capacity. So, I—I had a team, right? I had a virtual team, plus I had one of the people on my own team. We were burning the midnight oil and then some, over the space of about two weeks to put together the statement for the record. And we went to the ends of NSA to find out everything there was to know about what we could have known, should have known, and did know prior to 9/11 and even after 9/11.

Because it is true that after 9/11, NSA did a comprehensive sweep using its "corporate" technology—I have to qualify this—go back into the databases, right, to find out anything that we might have missed, right? Of course, the things they missed, they buried. That's part of the obstruction. That's a fact. They actually knew things that were discovered by their traditional systems and they chose not to share it because it meant that they knew something, but because they had it, but didn't know it, would have made them look really, really bad, right? So, they chose to simply say: "We're not going to share that with the investigators."

So, I'm on this—I've got this responsibility and I'm overseas on another effort, okay? I get this frantic phone call from my direct report, all right? And—sorry, I'm their direct report. So, I get this frantic phone call and saying: "We've been taken off the effort." And I say: "Why?" Well, you're going to have to ask Mo—Maureen Baginski—when you get back. And so I do. I come back from overseas. I confront her in a leadership meeting, right? And she says: "I'll have to take it offline with you." And, so, I confront her privately in her office, and she says: "It's a data integrity problem."

A data integrity problem. Yes. What an interesting phrase to use as a euphemism to cover up the truth. Because what we discovered—we included the earlier report, another amplifying report, additional information, of course, that had come to light since 9/11. Here it is February, late February of 2002, and they've shut down the effort and they're now in full cover-up mode with an official 9/11 Congressional Investigation. (Wow)

I don't know what else to tell you. I mean, that to me—I had some people, well, I said, I was there. I saw that from my end happen. Other people have attempted to say: "Well, there's got to be—they had this information, knew it, and withheld it on purpose to set it up where 9/11 would happen." No, that was not the case. It just wasn't. There has been no evidence, credible evidence ever brought to me, okay, that there was some kind of conspiracy here, when in fact, it was people in power who didn't want to admit failure. And people in power should have known better. People in power, and their arrogance and hubris were not listening to the people and doing their real work. People that were doing the real work were warning people in power: "You know what? There's a threat here. This threat has existed for a long time and not only was the system blinking red, it was now in your face. You just chose not to admit it."

And, so, then the evidence comes forward to prove it and you simply shut it all down. You cut off your own face in the mirror. Right? Which is the reflection—again, it's this reverse psychology, because you actually are culpable and you refuse to accept any responsibility for it.

JON Well, after—

THOMAS So what you end up doing—and this is what happens. Now, you get to the whistleblower side of me—is you now insure that we're going to make life as difficult as possible for anybody who dares reveal the truth about what NSA actually knew, could have known, or should have known.

Look, I gave the Joint Inquiry—I'm going to use really strong language—I gave the Joint Inquiry the smoking gun evidence, okay? It's smoking gun. You wonder why, after 12 years, no one can find the evidence in the archives? That the only record that exists is I was interviewed but there's nothing, no other accompanying information. You wonder why, even during my own criminal trial—when we attempted to get information, all the evidence I gave at yet another investigation that took place over several

years with the Department of Defense Office Inspector General, when the chief prosecutor comes back and says: "Oh, all that evidence has been destroyed as part of the document destruction policy." When, in fact, they did that on purpose? (Wow) You really have to wonder.

Because they were so hyper about protecting their "reputation."
Institutionally, they had the power and so we're going to blame the messenger. We're going to shoot the messenger and not deal with the message.

JON One of the things that the Bush Administration—they had two choices after 9/11. They could either take responsibility for the failures within the Government, or they could deny everything and cover their asses, and they chose the latter. And that's one of the reasons why there are conspiracy theories out there (Yes), is because of the fact that they covered up everything.

THOMAS That is part of the—that IS the conspiracy. Remember, I will tell you, there are a lot of other indicators, obviously. There was a memo being circulated even during the transition, the Presidential Transition Team—the PTT—late December of 2000, early 2001, before Bush takes the oath for the office with the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court. And there was a memo circulated where NSA was looking for relief in terms of the Fourth Amendment Probable Cause standard, all right? No one really thought much about it then, but that was now being circulated. Clearly, those that were coming into power wanted to have additional powers.

But, I will tell you—this is where I actually accept much of what Richard Clarke has said, right? Where counterterrorism simply was not on their radar. It was not considered—in spite of ALL of the evidence—it was just not a focus. It just wasn't. (Well—)

Even when—remember, just because there's a warning, just because there's an indication of something happening, or there's a planned attack—when it's not specific enough: I don't actually see a tank. I can't see an airplane. Okay? Right? And even though there's the warnings and there was already the interdictions of certain plans, like the Bojinka thing over the Pacific, right? It was a very comprehensive plan that got broken up. Or the Millennium thing, right? All of that, right, was still not sufficient, right? And that's the burden I carry.

But the conspiracy was—this is why it's worse, in part. You talk about the real conspiracy.

One, 9/11 was a trigger to subvert the Constitution. Now, it has to cover up to subvert the Constitution.

Two, cover up the actual evidence that we actually had—in particularly at NSA, but clearly elsewhere as well—FBI, CIA. That could have, if it had been shared properly, the way it was supposed to be shared within the system. The way in which I was trained to share it right up to and including the President of the United States, what's called the critic system where it has to land on his desk in ten minutes, right? The problem was you had all these layers and they just didn't rise to that occasion. It would make us look bad. It was nothing that was—remember, asymmetric. They were not—the institution was not designed to respond to asymmetric indications in warning. And that was a systemic failure.

So, now you face—you hold up a mirror with the smoking gun evidence and what do they do?

JON Destroy it.

THOMAS That's correct. And then they go after the very people who would dare do so. (Right) And that includes me. Okay?

JON Right. Well, I don't know exactly what the Bush Administration knew. I mean, we don't have access to the Presidential Daily Briefings. As far as them not taking the threat of terrorism seriously, the reason was they were preparing for the Iraq war. They were—first of all (Yes!) the Neocons within the Bush Administration were telling Bush that the threat was not Al-Qaeda (That's right), but was instead Saddam Hussein. (That's right). And I remember reading the CIA sent—in one of the Presidential Daily Briefings, I think, the CIA actually said that: "No, this is not disinformation as the Neocons were telling Bush. There is an actual threat out there."

And, there's a lot of questions out there as to what they knew. And, I, unfortunately, can't tell you what they knew because I'm just a regular citizen. I don't have subpoena power, and so on and so forth. Now, the last question I'm going to ask you—

THOMAS Well, I can tell you—is it okay if I just insert here parenthetically?

JON Sure, go ahead.

THOMAS Look, their focus when they came into office was not counter-terrorism. Their focus was actually Iraq. Their focus and the quote unquote the "three countries." Remember the three countries? (The --) The axis of evil? (Yes) Isn't it interesting that that axis of evil is still, in part, the same axis, slightly modified?

JON Well, actually because of the fact that there has never been an investigation into 9/11 that didn't have its own version of compromise and corruption (Yep), they can actually point to any country and say, yeah, they were involved in 9/11 and that's what they've done, essentially. The Taliban in February, 2001, actually offered to hand over Osama bin Laden (Yes). I don't know what happened with that. They blamed the Taliban after 9/11 for harboring Al-Qaeda (Yeah) and now the Taliban is back in power greatly in Afghanistan.

THOMAS Yeah, more opium is being produced now in Afghanistan than ever before (Right). I mean, it's extraordinary. And we're—it's just—this is—you know, I call it end trails of Empire. I mean, it's just, it is extraordinary, and I—see, I served, remember, I was at—see, there's just so much to talk about here (Laughs, I know), because there's so many other threads here.

I mean, just think of someone, special forces in Afghanistan and Tora Bora. What if I shared with you—although books have been written about this from people actually there. Remember, I used to be an analyst. I had wide prevue; lots of connections. That's where I came from—that space. You're in Tora Bora; you have all the intelligence; you've got Osama bin Laden and his close associates all surrounded. And then you're given these mysterious orders coming down from the DOD (to let him go) to pull assets out because guess what? The higher priority is Iraq. We need to prepare for Iraq.

JON Right. Well, they essentially allowed Osama to escape from Tora Bora.

THOMAS Yes, that's correct.

JON Now—

THOMAS Now, you tell me. I mean, people—I can't speak directly to that, because I was not there in the field, but I can tell you people that I have spoken with and others, okay? (Mm-hmm) Who I knew that have spoken, right? Were just besides themselves.

JON Well there were other instances throughout, before 9/11 that it seemed that Osama bin Laden had been protected. Michael Scheuer, I think, even wrote about or talked about how there were ten different instances where he had Bin Laden in his sights and was told to back off.

THOMAS There is a weird thing that when you have—it's convenient to keep someone alive, sort of this weird Old West, dead or alive? (Right) Once they're dead, right? Then they no longer have the same kind of resonance in terms of all the efforts you need. Because once they're dead, then what do you do? Take all—you shut down all the posses? [Laughs]

JON Right, well, obviously, if they had gotten him in November of 2001 (Yeah), then—we didn't have a reason to go to—to have the War on Terror anymore.

THOMAS Precisely. Precisely.

JON That in itself is just criminal. Now—

THOMAS Yeah, well, but see, so imagine those of us seeing all this play out from the inside, how they manipulated the highest levels of our Government—and, of course, you had genuflecting media, right, parroting—basically, stenographers (Right), press is stenographers of the Government—and be imbedded and given special briefings and off-the-record briefings, and anonymous briefings, just, yeah, well—You saw what *The New York Times* did with Iraq, okay?

So, it really—you saw what happened with James Risen and Lichtblau with the warrantless wiretapping program—the domestic. (Right) Where they knew they had had this information for 14 months, even back prior to the 2004 elections. They—for mass security reasons they—*New York Times* editor said: "Nope, we're not going to publish."

JON Right, and then it was the Bush Administration that asked them specifically not to.

THOMAS Yeah, what does that tell you when you've got the Government now manipulating the press because they want a particular outcome? Or the thing with Judy Miller. I mean, Judy Miller, that was all manipulated. Cheney actually saying what's being reported based on what he actually gave them. (Right) Well, that's convenient. Wow.

JON I know.

Now, according to Michael Isikoff and David Corn, some time between 2001-2002, Scooter Libby's office was reading "unvetted transcripts of National Security Agency intercepts." Scooter Libby was the Chief-of-Staff for Vice President Dick Cheney. According to *The New Yorker*, "policy makers are not supposed to have direct access to raw intelligence. The information is supposed to first be scrutinized and vetted by professional analysts in the intelligence community to ensure that the information is sound. This filtering process, which has been in place for some 50 years, is also intended to prevent intelligence from being used to service a particular political agenda."

Do you know if Scooter Libby's office was reading these transcripts before 9/11? It's something they don't make very clear.

THOMAS I can tell you—I can't give you specifics, and I don't actually know the specifics about Scooter Libby directly, okay, because in some ways he was the Chief-of-Staff. He was a functionary, very high-level functionary to do Cheney's bidding. (Right) He's also a convenient cut-out as well because he can be used as cover. And we know that from the Valerie Plame situation. (Right) Where he's the one that quote unquote "will take the fall" for his boss, all right?

Now, the fact remains, even before 9/11, Cheney wanted his own intelligence. He didn't trust—he knew the bureaucracy really well. He wanted a direct pipeline, so that's what he set up. He sent up his own, essentially, covert line to the White House. So, the White House is now on special distro—to say it that way—special distro for the kind of intelligence that he wants. And he was obviously able to get Hayden, who had no problem believing his boss. That's the one thing Hayden was—pleasing his boss was Job #1. (Right)

So, he gave the intelligence, as well as other—and George Tenet, to Tenet—I think Hayden was more political about it. Tenet just wanted to please his boss, period. Remember the slam dunk thing? (Yeah)

Well—(Yeah, okay). There was a pipeline, even before 9/11.

JON [Laughs] Honestly, I want Dick Cheney and George Bush on the stand, under oath, separately taking questions about a lot of things.

THOMAS They've got—they have the equivalent of sovereign immunity. The last thing they're going to do is open up a huge can of worms in terms of—it's going to be, I'm afraid it's going to be left up to the longer arc of history to put all this into its light. I mean, some people said, wake-up decades or centuries from now and look back, whatever the history is of that day and say: "What were we thinking?" (Wow)

See, none of this had to happen, and yet, here you see at the highest levels of Government using what was an extraordinary day of 3,000 people being murdered, failing to protect the country and then using that as an excuse to take us, as we now know, down many, many dark paths—

JON We're still going through.

THOMAS And, then, thinking people—and I think maybe the false hope and the desire for change in electing Obama as President, thinking that he was not Bush, let alone Cheney, and then finding out that he's now institutionalizing —

JON Well, that's just one of the things is that when you give power to the executive office, that office is never going to give up that power.

THOMAS He's admitted as much, quite in his own way—you know he has this way of sort of wrapping himself in his own robes and moral rectitude that somehow he's the President but he knows already what it's like in terms of history. And, so, then he analyzed himself. "Yes, Yes, I said all that, but then I became President and you're not." (Laughs) "I became President and you're not, and because you're not the President, you don't know what I now know. And because I know what I now know, well, things are different." (Well--) He told Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show* some months ago, which I think people never really picked up on this. He was already considering his legacy and that he wanted to have this legal framework in

place. The last time I checked, the only legal framework that he is obligated, under a special oath, okay, to preserve, protect, and defend is the Constitution. (Right) There is no other legal framework.

JON Well, that's—you're very big into the Constitution, obviously, and he's a supposed Constitutional lawyer, to boot. So—[laughs]

THOMAS Let's say he's on—he is—I recognize his Seminole place in at least U.S. history and, obviously, partially World History, what will history ultimately say?

JON That he continued and expanded on (Yes) all of Bush's worst policies.

THOMAS Well, but Bush actually said in his own memoir that all this stuff, like the surveillance stuff, in particular, of course which is closest to me—there's a whole lot of other things, including torture, which we came [AUDIOBAD] state-sponsored program of just egregious proportions. (Right) And that's the CIA masking themselves as committee members, committee staffers, to see what they're reporting on. Yeah, they got stuff to cover up. Hayden lied, it's clear. Absolutely, lied before the Committee about this some years ago.

So, yeah, in terms of history, yeah—if you're presiding over—it's extraordinary power. You're right, you're not going to want to give it up. I saw—I was too close—I have to say, I saw it happen to people. This kind of power is extremely seductive, and when Bush handed Obama all of the state secrets and all that surveillance on a silver platter, Obama looked at it and said: "You know what? I'm going to keep that."

JON Right.

Now, what advice do you have for people who might be considering to blow the whistle on something?

THOMAS Oh, wow—given what I went through? (Laughs) You better first engage with an attorney that's REALLY experienced, a criminal defense attorney, who's really experienced in this space first. And second, also engage the services of a whistleblower support advocacy group, like the Government Accountability Project, where I ultimately went, but of course, after the fact, okay. Because I knew—see, I knew when I was indicted, facing 35 years in prison, that had been hanging over my head all those many years.

Many attempts to get me to plead out—to many years in prison, as it turns out. You've got another, much longer, deeper back-story here.

I knew that it would be challenging enough to deal with main justice, especially with William Welsh as their chief prosecutor, I knew it would be challenging enough dealing with my defense, my criminal defense, and of course, I had run out of money with my private attorney, so I had public defenders. I knew I had to find a way to influence the court of public opinion. I just didn't know at that time how I would do that. I just knew that I needed to. I knew that I couldn't say, because anything I said during the pre-trial criminal proceedings could be used against me. (Right)

So, long story short, I engaged—because Jesselyn Radack who heads up a National Security Human Rights program at the Government Accountability Project wrote this extraordinary Op Ed in the LA Times shortly after I was indicted, and I recognized, finally, someone gets what's at stake here. She had been a whistleblower herself during the early years of the Bush Administration, like I was. But her case went public quite rapidly in the Winter/Spring of 2002.

So, I engaged Radack. She became a representing whistleblower attorney and she defended me in the court of public opinion and became my voice when I had none. So if you're a whistleblower—and there are other organizations as well, depending on the type of whistleblowing you do—there are several channels, as well. But, of course, in my case I was facing prison as a felon.

So it's really important, particularly in light of what's happening under Obama. It's important to know, Bush never actually indicted anybody. The investigation of me did start in 2006, and went on for four years before I was ultimately indicted. But, he himself—and I meant to say this earlier—he in his own memoirs said with respect to surveillance: "Oh, it's just a policy difference. Why should anybody go to prison?" A policy difference. Even made reference to the torture program. (Right)

A policy difference? Well, for Obama, apparently for him we've got to set some examples. We've got to fry some people. Like really do it. And under Holder, Laney Brewer was a supervising official for Welsh. Welsh was given the Espionage Act portfolio and we're going to burn some people and that's—they borrowed some investigations that remained open from Bush, started some of their own.

And here we are, six years now into his administration and—I sort of lost count, eight, nine indictments, either been charged or indicted for espionage, and many, many people that you never even hear about that were threatened.

JON Right, oh, absolutely. Well, that's during the Bush Administration. And it's funny that you mention this, Cindy Sheehan—I don't know if you're familiar with her (Yeah). I guess you are. Okay. She even said that during the Bush Administration she would get arrested and they would let her go. Now, I have personal experience with Cindy Sheehan of being arrested under the Obama Administration and they made an example of us. They actually gave us a stay-away order that said if we went within anywhere within a certain area of the White House that we would face six months in prison. These kinds of things didn't happen under the Bush Administration.

THOMAS No, they didn't. I mean, I keep reminding people of this. Some people, you know, are in denial. Because, like, wait a minute, he was supposed to be different. Then there's sort of this dyspepsia of the political soul, like: "Who did we vote for? Who did we support? Look what's happening. He's actually expanded all of this." (Right) And it's protecting a look backwards to prosecute those. We want to make examples of them because they dared speak truth to another power. But we're definitely not—in all other respects. Not only are we going to look forward, we're going to expand the horizon. (Right) What the heck is that? I mean it's—

JON [Laughs] It's horrible. It's one of the reasons I like to point out the fact that we were lied to about 9/11 is to take away the justification for what's happening.

Anyway—

THOMAS And then you have the whole complex. I mean, this is—I'll leave you—there is this huge elephant. There still is. And most people still don't want to touch it.

Eisenhower warned the nation during his farewell address in 1961, about the military, the rise of the military industrial complex. And people were like what is he really talking about? They kind of dismissed it. Those words really, really do ring in my ear so often nowadays, because you have people like Hayden who cashed in big time with the Chertoff Group. You've got

Alexander who was even more bold about it. You saw what happened. It's been published. He had quote unquote "hired" the chief technology officer from NSA for 20 hours a week while he was still working full time at NSA.

I mean, what does that tell you? I mean, it's just—we're selling out National security, cyber security and all of this is just a way to make all kinds of money for the one percent? I mean, it just—this is what's happened. It's just become a huge growth industry, and people don't want that gravy train to end. They just don't.

JON Well, certain people don't. I certainly do.

THOMAS Well, no, certain people. But the certain people are in incredible positions of power.

JON Oh, you don't have to tell me. I know.

THOMAS And those people that are in power also are insuring that those in the corporate side are protected and more often than not, they're just going back and forth.

See, Mike McConnell is like the exemplar of how this works. I know him because he was the NSA Director from '92 to '96. He was a Navy Admiral. He retires. He goes to Booz Allen where I was working. He was on my promotion committee to management level. The day I first met him, actually, we were standing side-by-side in the men's room. That's how I actually met him, okay? (Laughs) So he gets to Booz, he gets the call, right, making beaucoup bucks, right? Gets the call to become the DNI. He comes back to serve his country one more time. Right? (Right) Then goes right back to Booz Allen. I mean, it's just, you know, it's like—[Laughs]

JON Yep, it's horrible.

THOMAS And all that knowledge, all that information is power and that can be converted into money. The temptations are huge. I still remember a very senior manager in a particular defense company come into my office when I was still at NSA offer me 4x my salary, okay, which at the time was \$130K plus. He says: We'll give you a base salary four times what you make now—he was talking \$600,000, before bonuses. (Wow) Just come work for us. You know we need someone like you.

I said: "You keep talking I'm going to turn you in to the contracting office." (Laughs) And he was all: "I never seen you like this." And he backed out of my office quite quickly. I mean, he was like figuring if you dangled enough money in front of him—well, that's happened. I had colleagues. Colleagues that said: "Tom, it's just—I can form my own company. I can hire about five or six people and million bucks. Boom. Just like that."

JON I respect people very highly who cannot be bought. I associate—I try to associate with as many of them as possible.

Is there any help that you need and if so, how can people help you?

THOMAS Well, help me, wow. It's been extraordinary. I mean, I don't talk about this much. I mean, it's—I went into severe debt. There's a lot—I'm free, but what price do you put on freedom?

JON Well, is there anywhere that anybody can go to donate to help you? Or—

THOMAS There's no specific site to donate. If anybody wants to donate, then I encourage them, and there is a Government Accountability Projects is to donate to their funds and designate it for National Security and Human Rights. That's what I can share with your listeners. Because that organization, they, in terms of—if you're talking about boxing as limited a budget as they have, which is shoestring budget, and as few people as they have, they fight several classes above their weight, okay? (Mm-hmm) And it's probably, right now as you ask me, that's what I would do.

I have sought other work, but no one—it's really interesting to become a whistleblower in this space and give them the publicity, because many people, even people that should know better, it's like, well, we're afraid if we hire you, because you're a whistleblower. It's either stated indirectly or quite directly. I've yet to find any other work besides what I do right now, which pretty much everybody knows that knows me in this space or has heard about me knows I work at an Apple Store. An extraordinary place to work, but it's certainly a lot different than what I used to do.

JON You are probably the only legitimate genius at an Apple Store in the entire company.

THOMAS Well, I'm actually an expert there.

JON [Laughs] Okay.

THOMAS But yeah, I'm still there, okay? Because I have to work. I'm a wage-earner employee. I have bills. I have debt—

JON I understand.

THOMAS But for me, there's a larger context here. For me, what's at risk is our very liberty and our very sovereignty. And the last thing that I'm going to do is remain silent. So that's why I've dedicated the rest of my life defending life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

JON That's why I don't think that you are a failure. Because, you said earlier that you failed, and I think the history is still being written, as to whether or not people like you, people like Coleen Rowley—who, by the way, I want to thank very much for making this interview possible. She is a wonderful human being and a brave individual in her own right.

THOMAS Sure is. No, I know her well. I've spoken in several forms with her. There was a period there not long after 9/11, 2002, 2003, where she was actually acknowledged with a couple of others. It was sort of the year of the whistleblower. And then whistleblowers became persona non-grata. (Right) One other thing I would tell your listeners. You will find this interesting. It should tell you how challenging it is for me and others. I'm actually writing a book about all of this. Recognizing the constraints, I'm under because of where I used to work. I'm writing a book about all of this. With Jesselyn Radack, and it's going on three years now and still cannot find a publisher.

JON Oh, believe me, I wrote a book—I wrote a book in late 2011, and I could not find a publisher, and so I just self-published because I wanted the information out there. It was more important for me to get the information out there than it was to get a publisher and so forth.

THOMAS Well, that's a route that I will consider sort of as a last resort and there are some new leads that have come my way that I'm going to run down over the next few months, but—

JON Well, I want to thank you Mr. Drake (Sure) for doing what you did and for being on my show. It's an honor and a privilege. Again, thank you very much for your time today. I hope people learned something from this.

THOMAS Well, thanks for having me.

JON Thank you very much and you have a good night.

THOMAS Yep. Take care now.

JON Bye, bye.



Chapter/Episode 12 – Philip Shenon – November 14, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

Philip Shenon (PHIL)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network. This week we're going to further discuss the 9/11 Commission, Philip Zelikow, Saudi Arabia, and a number of other issues and concerns.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with Phil Shenon. How are you doing today, Phil?

PHIL Fine, Jon, thanks for having me.

JON Oh, thanks for being on. I'm going to quickly read your bio.

Philip Shenon, the bestselling author of *The Commission: The Uncensored History of the 9/11 Investigation*, was a reporter for *The New York Times* for more than twenty years. As a Washington correspondent for the *Times*, he covered the Pentagon, the Justice Department, and the State Department. As a foreign correspondent for the paper, he reported from more than sixty countries and several war zones. He lives in Washington D.C.

All right, so, let's get into the questions. What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

PHIL I was home watching television when the second plane went in and, obviously, I thought at that moment a terrorist attack was underway and that I had to get to work. I live several blocks away from *The New York Times* Washington Bureau, so I began the long trek in, and as I was going in much of the city was trying to evacuate. I was going in and lots and lots of people were coming the other directions.

So, I spent most of that day, like every other journalist in Washington, trying to make sense of what we were seeing. And I do recall going to the White House shortly after I arrived at the Bureau just to see what the scene was and, again, it was one of utter panic with people trying to get away from the White House, to get away from downtown Washington on the assumption that another terrorist strike was coming.

JON Can you tell us a little bit about your history with The New York Times and how you came to be their reporter for the 9/11 Commission?

PHIL I began as a copy boy at *The New York Times* right out of college. I went to work for, as a copy boy, a columnist in the Washington Bureau by the name of James Reston who was the former executive editor in a real institution in Washington and he was a fantastic boss. And I've always said it was kind of tragic that my very best boss was the one I had first off at the beginning of my career.

But from there I worked my way up to being a Metro reporter in New York and then back to the Washington Bureau and then to several different posts overseas as a foreign correspondent. After working overseas for several years, I was sent back to the Washington Bureau where I had covered Congress and State Department and the Pentagon. And when the 9/11 Commission was established, the decision was made by my editors in the Washington Bureau that they needed a full-time correspondent. And at that point, I think I was doing sort of general investigative projects and they put me on it. I was actually kind of reluctant to take on the assignment of covering the 9/11 Commission, but it certainly proved to be one of the best assignments I would ever have.

JON Wow, so you were reluctant to do it.

Did you attend every hearing? And what was your opinion of how the 9/11 Commission conducted itself publicly. And when I say that, I'm referring to things like the back and forth banter between commissioners and witnesses. Stuff like that, and not holding people under oath and so on and so forth—originally—the families had to shame them into holding people under oath. What is your opinion of it?

PHIL Well, I think I attended most of the hearings. Actually, I tried to attend all of the important ones. I will say, having covered Congress, that I thought by comparison to the way Congress holds public hearings, the 9/11 Commission didn't do a bad job. And there was this banter that could become very awkward among the commissioners, but it was fairly limited. I had criticism of the way they ran the public hearings, most importantly the hearing at which Condoleezza Rice testified, because she just played them for time and was able—and was really rarely asked a significant question that she gave a significant answer to.

JON Right, yes, Condoleezza Rice seemed to do a lot of evading that day.

PHIL She knew the time was limited and her strategy clearly was when she was asked a question, she would drone on and on and on and on, eating up time so she couldn't be asked the questions that the other commissioners wanted to address to her. Because, obviously, she should have been a principal target of this investigation.

JON Absolutely, she committed perjury, essentially. And should have been held accountable for that. They were talking about—and, by the way, she started saying this when the August 6th PDB was first leaked that the information was historical in nature and so on and forth, but it was present tense information. And, there were a lot of things that she said that could be considered to be a lie.

PHIL Certainly, she was accused of that at the time. And, you know, I think the record shows that in the Summer of 2001, there was a tremendous amount of intelligence information, (Correct) the August 6th PDB was only part of it. But there's a tremendous amount of intelligence suggesting that a terrorist attack on American soil might be imminent. And a lot of that material ended up on her desk, and the question becomes: "What did she do with that information?" And the record shows she did remarkably little with that information.

JON Well, as you say, it was the Summer of Threats and the August 6th PDB got a lot of attention in the 9/11 Commission and, from what we've learned from Kurt Eichenwald, apparently, the PDBs that came before it make the August 6th PDB pale by comparison as far as the Stark warnings and so on and so forth.

PHIL But I think in my book about the 9/11 Commission I give a roster of the titles of all of the intelligence reports that came in that summer, and you're right, the August 6th PDB was only one of several that were red alerts that something terrible was about to happen.

JON Right. Did you talk to either the 9/11 Family Steering Committee or 9/11 CitizensWatch during the time of the 9/11 Commission?

PHIL You know, I get lost at a lot of the names of a lot of the family groups and the other groups that were operating at that time. I certainly think I spoke to most of the major advocates on the part of the families. And I certainly spoke to the Jersey Girls, in particular, on a daily basis.

JON Lorie Van Auken actually told me that the families saw the banter that I spoke of as a waste of time when they could have been asking some of their questions.

And, it's funny, you brought up Condoleezza Rice, but before Condoleezza Rice testified, they sent in Richard Armitage in her stead, and some of the banter I was talking about, they were talking to him about basketball and stuff like that.

PHIL Well, because Armitage didn't have the ability to answer a lot of the questions that he was being asked in her stead. He didn't know the answers. That was a really wasted day. And, of course, what happened is that Richard Clarke testified and that blew up in the White House's face, and Condoleezza Rice's face in particular, and she was then forced to testify.

JON Right, and when Richard Armitage did testify, the Jersey Girls and I think other family members walked out in protest.

PHIL Right, and I think their protest was principally focused on the fact they thought Condoleezza Rice should be sitting there, not Armitage. And Armitage, I think, did the best job he could under ridiculous circumstances.

And, of course, what happened in the end is that the pressure built for Rice herself to testify.

JON Well, I firmly believe that people like Richard Armitage are criminals, but that's my opinion.

At what point did you realize there was a cover-up transpiring?

PHIL Well, I'm not quite sure I know what you mean by cover-up. I mean it was very clear to me from the earliest days that there were some terrible conflict of interest problems that this commission faced. Most importantly the choice of Philip Zelikow as the executive director, since I was startled on the day of his appointment to discover that he was a friend of Condoleezza Rice's. He'd written a book with her. What was this man who was a close friend of Condoleezza Rice's doing leading the day-to-day investigation? An investigation that should have made Condoleezza Rice in many ways a target.

JON Well, the cover-up that I'm referring to, I mean, there are a multitude of cover-ups. I mean, every agency; every alphabet agency, essentially lied. You can look anywhere. You can look at the CIA about the information regarding the two hijackers in San Diego. They lied about that. You could look at the NSA who told the Joint Congressional Inquiry that it couldn't identify where the calls were coming from San Diego to Yemen, when in fact they did know the identities of the phone numbers, of the hijackers. NORAD lied.

PHIL And, clearly, the 9/11 Commission believed that NORAD lied, and they also were very concerned about the truthfulness of George Tenet, the director of Central Intelligence. (Right) I can see where there were a number of discreet cover-ups going on.

JON Right, and with regard to NORAD's cover-up, I think that staffers and members of the 9/11 Commission wanted to refer them to the Justice Department for a criminal investigation, but I think it was Philip Zelikow that actually got them to refer it to the Department of Justice Inspector General instead.

The difference being that the Inspector General can't actually hold anyone accountable. They can only recommend that people be held accountable. Whereas the Justice Department could hold people accountable. And from

what I read, I think it was Frank Rich who said that the Department of Defense, Inspector General, during the time these investigations were taking place was a corrupt individual? He was a Bush puppet of sorts.

PHIL I know—I hadn't been in contact with these people for some time, but I know the staffers believed that at the end of the day, this was a terrible whitewash by the Pentagon of real misconduct, including perjury by—including people well up the ranks at the Pentagon. Certainly, there was a great deal of concern that there had been Generals who had lied under oath to the 9/11 Commission about the events of the morning of the attacks.

JON Right, and this, unfortunately, we saw this all throughout the investigations is that people lied and we don't know the truth about a number of things as a result of that, and no one was held accountable.

PHIL Right. It is a thoroughly remarkable thing that all these years later essentially nobody lost their jobs, nobody was even demoted as a result of what seems to be sort of blistering incompetence, or worse, in the run-up to 9/11 and on the day itself.

JON Well, and not only were they not, but they were in some cases rewarded and promoted throughout Government. And it makes no sense whatsoever. In fact, I think, Thomas Kean at one point said that if it was his job or if he was working in Government, or something to that effect, that there would be people in Government that would no longer be there if he had an opinion on the subject.

PHIL Well, it's fine for him to say that, but of course, he was instrumental in the decision on the 9/11 Commission not to hold individuals accountable.

JON Right, and at the very first public hearing I think he said: We're not here to point fingers. And when I spoke with Lorie Van Auken, 9/11 Family Member Lorie Van Auken on this show, she told me that the families DID expect, you know, if people were to lie under oath that the Commission would have held them accountable. That's what the families were hoping for.

PHIL Sure, and they were—I remember the day of that hearing when Governor Kean announced that there would be no finger-pointing and no personal accountability, and I remember how angry the families were that day.

JON Yeah, it's just horrible.

What are some of the questions you still have about 9/11?

PHIL Oh, I have plenty of them. You know, principally, I think a big disclosure in my book that I've been kind of disappointed nobody's followed up on is, there apparently is a vast record at the NSA, the National Security Agency, of files that document what was known about terrorist threats before 9/11, Al-Qaeda threats before 9/11. And the 9/11 Commission really bungled its handling of the NSA files. It really never got into depth with those files until the very last stages of the investigation. And as best I can tell, those files still have not been gone over all these years later.

JON Well, it's funny that you mention that. My last guest was NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake, and he is the one who testified before the Joint Congressional Inquiry that showed the smoking guns. He provided them with a report that showed the information that the NSA had prior to 9/11 and apparently, all of those records have been destroyed, according to him. The only reference is that he did testify. That's the only information out there.

But, yes, as you said, the 9/11 Commission almost completely ignored the NSA and, I think, it was you that wrote it was sexier to concentrate on the CIA, and stuff to that effect. And it was Philip Zelikow, essentially, that steered the Commission away from the NSA. And then at the end of the 9/11 Commission he made some kind of statement that said: "Yes, it's unfortunate that we might have missed some information. We just ran out of time." And I thought that it was interesting that he, of all people, would say that considering it seemed to be that he was responsible for not going to the NSA.

PHIL Well, I think the responsibility probably belongs in several laps, but he—I was intrigued that he was ready to acknowledge that the commission had made a mistake by not going deeper into the NSA files. I think that was a big concession on his part.

JON So what we found out last week was that the NSA had a ton of information about Al-Qaeda, about the 9/11 attacks apparently. And, who knows? We have no idea what was in those files.

PHIL And, I'll say, in terms of cover-ups, my understanding—and I should have put this in the book—it was that the NSA was actually willing to cooperate. It sort of said to the 9/11 Commission, you can come to the NSA at Fort Mead, Maryland. You can go through all the materials, and that they were surprised that nobody showed up to do it. And it was only one particular member of the 9/11 Commission staff who blew the whistle at the end of the investigation and said: "Listen, most of the raw material in the Government's files about terrorist threats is from the NSA and why haven't we gone through that material?" And it's only after she blew the whistle at the end of the investigation that there was this frantic weekend trip to the NSA to try to get to some of that material, but at that point it was too late and most of that material wasn't reviewed and is not reflected in the 9/11 Commission's final report.

What other questions I have? I, like everybody else, am fascinated to know what's in the famous 28 pages, because I have many questions about Saudi Arabian Government involvement in Al-Qaeda and even possibly in the 9/11 plot, and these 28 pages, apparently, reflect some of the evidence of that, and of course, that's still being denied to the public.

JON Well, we're going to get into that a little bit later.

Now, you once told me that you were surprised that the "9/11 Truth Movement" wasn't using your work to further its cause, and that indicates to me that you had sympathy for us and for what some of us were trying to do. Am I right about that?

PHIL I certainly support the efforts of the truth movement to force the Government to release more of what's in the files. I was surprised after revealing what I revealed about the NSA files—the files that were not reviewed by the 9/11 Commission—I was surprised that the Truth movement didn't jump on the idea of pressuring the Government to release those files, or at least have somebody go back in there and take a look at them. And my book had a lot about this question of the Saudi Government's possible involvement with Al-Qaeda and what the 9/11 Commission knew, and what it wasn't able to report in its final report. And I'm surprised that people didn't jump on what I disclosed about that to argue again for further disclosure.

JON Well, I think you wrote the NSA when they opened their doors to the 9/11 Commission, you said perversely the 9/11 Commission seemed less

interested. The more the NSA was willing, the less interested the 9/11 Commission seemed to be.

PHIL As I understand it, NSA was ready from the get-go to open its files to the 9/11 Commission and it just didn't happen. And, as you mentioned, my book, it was told to me by members of the 9/11 Commission staff that there was this fixation on the CIA as this very, the sexy spy agency they wanted to investigate. And the NSA, which was perceived at that point as a bunch of sort of engineers and geeks and a less interesting place to try to understand. Times have changed and the NSA is considered a much sexier story than it was several years ago.

But that was it. It seems to have been—the idea was that it was just more interesting to investigate the CIA than the NSA, even though the NSA might have had much more valuable information to share with the investigation.

JON Well, one of the interesting things is that some of the information they came across supposedly tied Iran, or—

PHIL No, that's actually what got the 9/11 Commission very interested, right at the tail end of its investigation. This one staffer on the 9/11 Commission was going through some of the NSA documents and noticed the NSA suggested there were ties between Al-Qaeda and Iran, not Iraq, which had been the fixation of the Bush administration and so many others before in that time period. And it was on the basis of that information about a possible Iranian tie to Al-Qaeda that led the staff of the 9/11 Commission to try to get to some of the NSA files before the Commission closed its doors.

JON Well, I think Russ Baker, Gareth Porter, and, well, myself have written about the idea of Iran being connected to 9/11 and it just doesn't seem credible based on the information that we're aware of.

Now, Dietrich Snell, recently there was a lawsuit, and somebody was trying to blame Iran for 9/11. And Dietrich Snell, who was one of the staffers, I think, on the 9/11 Commission was a star witness for this courtroom. And, apparently, at the end the judge ruled that Iran had something to do with 9/11, and it's just ridiculous to me because Dietrich Snell—

PHIL What I recall is that some of the documentation turned up by the 9/11 Commission at the tail end showed that some of the 9/11 hijackers had

transited in and out of Iran and had been involved with Hezbollah and Lebanon which is tied into Iran. That for some reason the Iranian Government had made life easier for some of the hijackers in the months and years leading up to the attack. All I can tell you is that there was nothing to tie Iraq to Al-Qaeda, but there was some evidence that might tie Iran to Al-Qaeda. That's what I was going to say the files apparently showed.

JON Well, but they—from what I remember simply the hijackers passed through Iran—they passed through Germany, as well, so does that tie Germany to the 9/11 attacks? They passed through Saudi Arabia, obviously. That just, it just doesn't seem credible to me. And Iran has denied it on several occasions. In fact, President Ahmadinejad, when he was still in office, wrote a letter to Bush saying, we know we're being lied to about 9/11 and so on and so forth.

PHIL I wouldn't put much stock in President Ahmadinejad's truthfulness, but—

JON I'm just saying—go, ahead.

PHIL All I can tell you is that what the NSA shared with the 9/11 Commission at the tail end—or rather, what the staff of the 9/11 Commission discovered at the tail end of the 9/11 Commission investigation was that there was possibly a link between Iran and Al-Qaeda and it's a shame that they didn't know about that much earlier on during the investigation because they would have the chance to follow-up. There was no time to follow-up.

JON Well, with regard to the "9/11 Truth Movement," I am aware that people started to give you a hard time because you weren't talking about controlled demolition or saying that 9/11 was an inside job. And I want you to know that I have used your work a lot and I want to thank you for the tidbits that you did provide to us.

PHIL Well, I appreciate that and I say I do think—I did disclose a lot about this turmoil within the staff of the 9/11 Commission and Zelikow's role, which is something that also has not been widely followed up on in the wake of my book.

JON Oh, my goodness, I've tried to bring so much attention to Philip Zelikow, because I think that's one thread that if you pulled on it, it could unravel the entire 9/11 cover-up. He was, essentially, in charge of the 9/11 Commission.

(Mm-hmm) He did a number of things and several of them you wrote about. He wrote a complete outline with Ernest May of the final 9/11 Report before the investigation even started, and they decided to keep that outline a secret from the staffers (Mm-hmm).

With regard to Saudi Arabia's role, you wrote about how he blocked half of the investigation requests that—he was making it difficult for individuals to gain access to the 28 redacted pages we were talking about, including—

PHIL He actually fired a staffer over—

JON Exactly, Dana Lesemann, who went through a back channel to gain access to those 28 redacted pages.

By the way, 28 redacted pages that I think she helped to author (that's right) because she was a part of the Joint Congressional Inquiry—she was a part of the Joint Congressional Inquiry.

PHIL Right—No, no, she was one of the two authors of that document, as I understand.

JON Yeah, it was Mike Jacobson and her, I believe (Exactly), and she went through a back channel and then Zelikow fired her. (Mm-hmm)
And you're right about how he and Dietrich Snell took part in a late-night editing session to remove Saudi support for the hijackers from the final 9/11 Report and they relegated it to a footnote in the back of the book.

One thing you wrote about—and I have to ask you about this—in your book you said that Philip Zelikow was sympathetic to the Saudi investigators. And just based on what I just went over, it seems contradictory to me.

PHIL That he was sympathetic—I'm losing you a bit.

Well, I'd say, I don't think—the staffers had on that particular issue as I recall, the staffers, the lower-level staffers, who were doing a lot of the actual digging had just as much anxiety over Dietrich Snell, and it was overseeing that part of the investigation, as they did with Philip Zelikow. (Right) But there was certainly a feeling that they had turned up a lot of very troubling evidence suggesting ties between the Saudi Government and

Al-Qaeda and, even possibly, to the 9/11 attacks. And they were very angry that that material did not go into the final report.

JON Right, and I don't know if you're aware, but the memorandums for the records that had been released, the MFRs from the 9/11 Commission, which are basically overviews of interviews done with witnesses. Prince Bandar's MFR is classified. In three of the MFRs having to do with people that are related to the Saudi side of things have specific statements calling into question the credibility of the witnesses that they're talking to. And yet, the 9/11 Report still absolved the Government of Saudi Arabia.

And with regard to the 28 redacted pages, Saudi Arabia is still pointing to the 9/11 Commission and saying: "Well, look, they cleared us."

PHIL The Saudi's, to their credit, have actually called for the 28 pages to be released.

JON Right. I think it's possible when they called for the release of the 28-redacted pages, I think they pretty much knew that they would not be released. (Right)

Now, with regard to the MFRs that I'm talking about there were—well, three of the individuals that were interviewed, one of them was Osama Bassnan and this is directly from his MFR. It says:

"The interview failed to yield any new information of note. Instead, in the writer's opinion, it established beyond cavil the witness' utter lack of credibility on virtually every material subject."

Fahad al Thumairy, it says:

"Our general impression of Thumairy is that he was deceptive during both interviews."

And the last one is Saud al-Rashid:

"We believe that al-Rasheed was being deceptive. Our impression that he has had enough time to develop a coherent story and is sticking to it (and that he even may have been coached at some point)."

PHIL Well, that's all to the credit of the staff of the 9/11 Commission that they saw these guys as not telling the truth and they wanted to report that.

JON Right, but even still the 9/11 Report absolves Saudi Arabia even though things like that transpired.

Now, are you aware of the efforts underway to get the 28 redacted pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11 released?

PHIL Yeah, no, I saw and there was a piece in the New Yorker magazine a couple of weeks ago about it, and I know that there's additional efforts to get them declassified and it's bipartisan, which is intriguing.

JON Right, and unfortunately, there was an event that took place yesterday in New York City and it got no press that I could see. I have a story here. Are you aware of what Obama, the Obama administration has done with regard to Saudi Arabia and 9/11?

PHIL Umm, only in the most general sense.

JON Well, okay, a little story.

When Obama first came into office, one of the first things he did was have a meeting with 9/11 Family Members. And the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the closing of GITMO. And while at that meeting Kristen Breitweiser asked him to release the 28 redacted pages and he said he would and never got back to her. And then I think it was a week later he used that meeting with the families as the justification for sending more troops to Afghanistan. It was a reminder, a great reminder. Something to that effect.

And then, about five months later Elena Kagan on behalf of the Obama administration filed a brief with the Supreme Court asking them not to hear the case, essentially, of the families. So, essentially, they were siding with the Saudis over the 9/11 families. And 9/11 Family Member and Jersey Girl, Kristen Breitweiser, said at the time:

"I find this reprehensible. One would have hoped that the Obama administration would have taken a different stance

than the Bush administration, and you wonder what message this sends to victims of terrorism around the world."

On May 30, 2009, the victims' family members released two press releases. The first one states:

"Today the Obama Administration filed in the Supreme Court a document that expressed the Administration's decision to stand with a group of Saudi princes and against the right of American citizens — 9/11 Family Members — to have our day in court. Let there be no doubt: The filing was political in nature and stands as a betrayal of everyone who lost a loved one or was injured on September 11, 2001."

The second statement says that:

"On the day that President Obama holds his first summit with Saudi Arabian King Abdullah in Riyadh, the 9/11 Families United to Bankrupt Terrorism charged that recent actions by his administration would enable five of the king's closest relatives to escape accountability for their role in financing and materially supporting the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks."

The second press release lists:

"Allegations made in 2002 of the Saudi royal family's sponsorship and support of Al-Qaeda that the families believe have been ignored by the Obama Administration."

So, basically, Obama has continued Bush's stance with regard to protecting Saudi Arabia. Now, at the end of last year, December 2013, there was a lower court that actually gave the families the right to sue some people in Saudi Arabia. I think they absolved like the Bin Laden group and so forth. They can't sue like those people, but they can sue some people in Saudi Arabia, and just recently, I think it was in June, the Supreme Court let that decision stand.

So now, right now, the families are trying to get the 28 redacted pages released so they can bring them into a courtroom. And as we talked about,

you know, the Saudi's are going to point to the 9/11 Report, which absolved them.

PHIL Well, but again, maybe with the release of the 28 pages the world will be a difference place because people will have evidence they don't now have.

JON Well, but I'm saying like just recently, Lawrence Wright wrote an article about the 28 redacted pages, and he cites Philip Zelikow who said—I think he said: Wild accusations and so on, like he gave no credibility to the idea or the notion that the Government of Saudi Arabia may have been involved. And it concerns me for the families' sake if they do bring this into court. The 9/11 Commission, it can't be looked at as credible. In my mind anyway. At least with regard to that—well, with regard to a number of other things—but, especially, with regard to that.

You once told me that you were interested in the possible Pakistani ISI connection to 9/11. Do you still have questions about that?

PHIL Sure, I haven't revisited that issue in a long time, but obviously, Al-Qaeda had its training camps in Afghanistan. People used to reach those training camps through Pakistan and it was always believed as I understood it that elements of the Pakistani intelligence agency were letting them go in and out of Afghanistan, and what ties were there between Pakistan and Al-Qaeda. The fact more recently that Osama bin Laden turned out to be living in Pakistan should give us real reason to wonder what has the Pakistan intelligence agency been up to all these years?

JON The story goes that then head of the ISI Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed ordered Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire transfer \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta. And CNN reported on it two times, and then the story seemed to go away, and other people were put in place as the paymasters of 9/11. And, meanwhile, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh sits in jail in prison for the part he supposedly had to play with the murder of Daniel Pearl. And, incidentally, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh recently attempted suicide in his prison cell. And he's somebody I'd love to be able to talk to.

Now, it's interesting to me that after, I think after CNN reported that he was the paymaster of 9/11, there was an indictment made against him in the latter part of 2001, but it had to do with a crime he committed like six years earlier, or something to that effect. It's just interesting to me that it seems

like they were interested in getting him, but they didn't want to tie him to 9/11 it seems.

PHIL I have no expertise on that, I just think the Pakistani ISI seemed to be involved in a whole bunch of unsavory activities going back decades. They played a real double game with the United States, supposedly our allies, but often operating against the United States. Certainly operating against the United States military. And that should be much better explored than it has been.

JON Well, they have also worked with the CIA.

PHIL Oh, I'd say it's a double game.

JON Yeah it's—there's a lot of questions about it. When the FBI talked to Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, he said he didn't want to talk about his ties to the Pakistani ISI for fear of his life or the life of his family (Mm-hmm), and it just—I've never seen anyone in Government come forward and say why these allegations are incorrect, that Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, had nothing to do with 9/11 and here's why. I've never seen that. So I still have—to me, if you look at the reporting on the issue, it seems that there's more reason to think that it did happen than not. And so, it's just very interesting to me.

Now, one of the biggest revelations in your book is that Karl Rove was speaking to the executive director of the 9/11 Commission, Philip Zelikow, during the time of the 9/11 Commission. Can you please tell us about the specifics of this allegation?

PHIL Well, it's complicated, but it was apparently known on the staff. It certainly was known to Philip Zelikow's secretary that Karl Rove called in a number of times during the course of the investigation. And when it became well known on the staff that Karl Rove was calling in people were alarmed. You know, what was the executive director of the 9/11 Commission doing on the phone with the man often referred to as Bush's brain, Bush's chief political guru. What possible reason could those two men have to talk?

And there's this odd situation in which Zelikow apparently calls in his secretary, closes the door, and orders her not to keep a phone log any further of his contacts with the White House. And she is so alarmed by this that she goes to the general counsel of the 9/11 Commission by the name of

Dan Marcus and says what should she do? She'd just been told by Zelikow not to keep a record of his phone calls. And the general counsel, Dan Marcus, tells her to just ignore Zelikow's orders. I know that Dr. Zelikow later went on television to say that this was all a figment of somebody's imagination. There had been no phone logs.

I can tell you that I've seen that phone log. Because it's your definition of the word "log" but there is a—the secretary kept a record of Zelikow's phone calls, including these phone calls from Rove. There was a log to that degree.

And, Zelikow has acknowledged, or went on to acknowledge that he did talk to Rove. And the reason he talked to Rove was because of Zelikow's past work at the University of Virginia where he was an historian and this was all very innocent. I can't tell you the content of the phone calls between Rove and Zelikow, I can just tell you that when the staff of the 9/11 Commission found out that Zelikow was on the phone with Rove, there was a huge sense of shock and alarm.

JON Well, he shouldn't have been talking to him at all. The 9/11 Commission was supposed to be this non-partisan or bi-partisan effort and here we have the executive director of the 9/11 Commission speaking with the White House Chief of Staff and telling people not to record his phone calls. And, as you mentioned on television, he contradicted himself. He said: "Two of the three people that took my calls" and then he says: "the commission had no phone logs." So, he's contradicting himself, essentially. He's playing semantics. There were no official "9/11 Commission phone logs" (Well, I told--) but he had three people taking his messages.

PHIL Well, it seemed crazy the idea that there weren't—so nobody was recording messages when they came in? Of course they were. And I've said, I've seen the pages of the log in which the secretary recorded these phone calls from Rove. And it's not just the secretary who offers this story. The—I say she protested to the general counsel of the commission about this. And I think if you look at the record, neither the secretary nor the general counsel have denied the accuracy of that story in my book.

JON I honestly believe that Philip Zelikow needs to be put on the stand, under oath, to take questions, and if he lies under oath then he should be held accountable. I honestly, I think he's a criminal. I think he belongs in jail.

You might disagree with me, but he was instrumental in making sure that the real truth of 9/11 was never told.

And, you know what? For Karl Rove, I think he was like an architect of the 9/11 Commission, wasn't he? Didn't he select Thomas Kean?

PHIL Yes, well, he was certainly in on the decision to select Kean, and I believe he was in on the decision, initially, to have Henry Kissinger.

JON Right, exactly. I mean, it's just ridiculous.

Now, you once wrote an article entitled "They Knew but Did Nothing" for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. What are some of the indications that you are aware of that they "knew" about the impending attacks?

PHIL Well, that was actually an excerpt of my book, so it offered the chapter of my book in which I reported that in the summer of threats, these intelligence warnings came in daily, almost hourly, warning the White House, warning the National Security Council that there was a dire terrorist threat that summer and that somebody needed to get on top of it to try to pre-empt it and it's clear that the White House did unhappily precious little with that information. So that's what I talk about. That's what they knew. They knew in the sense they had these intelligence reports of an imminent terrorist strike and they did remarkably little with that information.

JON Well, from what I've read, some of the Neocons within the Bush administration, were actually telling Bush that the threats concerning Osama bin Laden were disinformation and the real threat is Iraq.

PHIL Well, yeah, you have to remember in this time period, the Bush White House, they didn't seem terribly interested in the threat of Al-Qaeda. They were much more alarmed by the axis of evil. They were concerned by North Korea, Iran, and most importantly, Iraq.

JON Well, from what I've read, their main focus was Iraq and partly Afghanistan to a certain extent.

Now, my last question—is a difficult question, but it's a hurdle that a lot of people face, so I'm just going to ask you.

Regardless of whether or not you think the evidence is there to support this, do you think it's possible that elements within our Government and other Governments may have been criminally complicit in the attacks? Could people be capable of such a thing?

PHIL I just have not seen any credible evidence of it. I certainly hear that allegation made.

JON Well, that's not what I'm—I'm not asking whether or not you think the evidence is there. I'm just asking do you think that it is possible for elements within our Government to do something like that?

PHIL Well, anything is possible. But it's not my job to report what is possible in this world, because everything is possible. I can only—if I saw credible evidence of it, I would have reported it. It would have been the story of the decade, the story of my lifetime. I just didn't see it.

JON Right, and it's unfortunate—I think information out there exists that suggests such a thing.

PHIL Well, let me ask you a question. What is that information? Give me one clear example of it.

JON One clear example of criminal complicity? Well, Okay, look at Alec Station—Doug Miller, two FBI agents were stationed at Alec Station, which was the CIA's Bin Laden group and one of the FBI agents wanted to send a warning to the FBI that one of the hijackers had a U.S. visa and under orders from Tom Wilshire, somebody blocked the cable that the FBI agent wanted to send, and then hours later sends out a cable to the CIA saying that the FBI has been notified.

It just seems like criminal behavior to me. I'm not—I don't know for sure. One of the things that I do is I admit that I don't know what happened on 9/11, or who was ultimately responsible. It just seems there are instances within the Government that people were trying to do their jobs and they started to be blocked at the highest levels from doing their job. One of the things that—

PHIL But it's your suggestion though that they were being blocked from doing their jobs because somebody wanted the terrorist attack to take place on 9/11.

JON It seems that way to me. I mean—

PHIL I certainly heard the allegation made that people were blocking action before 9/11 because they were trying to protect perhaps some of the hijackers because the hijackers were somehow Government informants?

JON That's one of the theories is that—

PHIL I've heard that theory offered, and I think that was—I think there was a flapover, some comment Richard Clarke made in recent years about that. But, again, inside involvement that 9/11 was an effort by elements of the United States Government to carry out that attack? I certainly would like to believe that wouldn't be the case, and I certainly haven't seen any credible evidence to show it was the case.

JON I ask—I don't think people should undercut the notion though that it might be possible, and that might be why there are so many coverups. And, when I look at the Bush administration they were more than willing—they helped to rewrite EPA reports that put thousands of people in New York in danger, and now thousands of 9/11 first responders are sick and over a thousand have died. They were more than willing to lie us into war, which resulted in thousands of our soldiers being killed and upwards of 1.25 million Iraqis dead.

I mean, it just seems like they would have no problems killing 3,000 people considering what other actions they've done. Maybe I'm wrong. It is possible I'm wrong to think such a thing. I just, I don't know. And I wish I did know. So—I really do.

All right.

PHIL I'm with you in the sense that I do believe that anything is possible. But, I think the business that I'm in requires me to not report everything that is possible, but to report what I can. And I think the evidence that I offered in that book and elsewhere at least gives some evidence to people like you to demand further release of information about what exactly the Government knew and what it was doing before 9/11.

JON Well, and that's another thing, the 9/11 Commission released—Oh, Christ, I think it was 35 percent of the documents that they had and that, you know,

they're still holding so much more. And many of the documents that had been released are greatly redacted.

You know, so, we have the 28 redacted pages of the—

PHIL I don't think that was a decision of the 9/11 Commission though, and I think I've heard—

JON No, it wasn't.

PHIL But I think I've heard recently that Kean and Hamilton have called for the release of more of the documents, including the 28 pages.

JON Yes, in fact, I'm the one that posted the video of them saying that. (Laughs)
No, but I understand—

PHIL That's all a step forward.

JON Right, well, but it's not happening in—

All right, my very last question for you and I understand that you just wrote a book. I've read a review of the book. I haven't read the book yet.

You recently released a book on the JFK assassination. Can you please tell us about this?

PHIL Sure. Well, actually, that book I was taken to that book by my first book. The first book was about the 9/11 Commission. After that book came out, I got a phone call at my desk in the Washington Bureau of *The New York Times* from a prominent American lawyer who had begun his career almost 50 years earlier on the other great blue ribbon commission investigation of our lifetimes, which is the Warren Commission. And he said wouldn't you like to do a similar book about the Warren Commission. And he promised to help me meet all the staffers who were still alive who participated in that investigation.

So, off I went and that was supposed to be sort of an insiders' history of the Warren Commission. It became a much larger book because I kept discovering evidence about the assassination that had not been revealed to the Warren Commission that had been covered up—to some extent shades of 9/11. And the discovery at the end of the research on the Kennedy book

was that the large discovery in my own mind that the two great national tragedies of my lifetime—the Kennedy assassination and 9/11—just did not have to happen. There was more than enough intelligence and Government files before those two awful incidents to have allowed the Government to pre-empt them. But combination of incompetence and laziness prevented that from happening.

JON So, your position is that incompetence or neglect is why Lee Harvey Oswald—you think Lee Harvey Oswald was the shooter? I don't know.

PHIL I think all the most credible evidence points to him as the shooter. But the question is who else knew about—I mean, Oswald was portrayed by the Warren Commission as a total lone wolf, that nobody knew what he was going to do; nobody could have predicted what he was going to do; nobody helped him do what he was going to do—and doing research on my book I think I found evidence to suggest that people did know what Oswald was going to do. That he talked openly about it and that some of those people may have encouraged him to go to Dallas to do what he did.

JON Well, from—unfortunately, I'm not much of a JFK expert as much as I am a 9/11 expert, but I think there was something in the 70s that there was an investigation that found there was more than one shooter. Is that right?

PHIL [Laughs] Jon, we'll be on this for hours if we go down that path.

JON Okay, no—

PHIL No, there was an investigation by Congress, by the House Elect Committee on Assassinations, and they were pretty much going to support the Warren Commission Report until the final stages of that investigation. There was some acoustical evidence produced at the final stages to suggest there was a second gunman in Dealey Plaza, subsequent analysis by lots and lots and lots of very credible scientists showed that that acoustical evidence was wrong. And my understanding is that all the most credible evidence points to one shooter in Dealey Plaza and that was Lee Harvey Oswald.

JON Well, I—

PHIL But that doesn't mean there wasn't a conspiracy though, because if people knew what Oswald was going to do it, and encouraged him to do what he

was going to do, and helped him—promised him help—so he was able to carry it out, you are talking about by legal definition a conspiracy.

JON So, from what I've read, the book basically focuses on the Commission, and it was a lot like the 9/11 Commission and how much a cover-up or white-wash it was.

PHIL Well, the—

JON See, to me, there's an old saying: "It's not the crime that gets you; it's the cover-up." And there are just so many examples of people lying, of people attempting to hide information, or to cover-up information—

PHIL It is even more clear-cut in the case of the Kennedy assassination and the Warren Commission. It's very clear how the—that there were cover-ups, there were lots of lies told under oath, and we're all paying the price for that today, because, you know, all that cover-up resulted in all the conspiracy theories we are now confronted with.

JON Well, I don't know. See, to me, the phrase "conspiracy theory" is just—it's a phrase used by the establishment to silence and/or discredit dissent. Like if—the corporate media over the last 10 years have done its very best to paint people like me—who's an advocate for 9/11 justice, who supports the families seeking 9/11 justice, who supported the 9/11 first responders seeking healthcare—they were painting people like me as no different as a baby killer or dog torturer. If you even say "truther" today or "9/11 Truther" you have people cringe because of the campaign of the corporate media over the years.

And the phrase "conspiracy theory" I think was first brought about because of the JFK assassination.

PHIL Well, I think it goes back much further than that. You know, there were conspiracy theories about Lincoln and—I think that phrase has been around a long time, well before Kennedy. But, it obviously really took flight after the Kennedy assassination.

JON Right. I wish, I hope someday that we have truth. I hope that there is some form of accountability with regard to the 9/11 attacks. I hope that the War on Terror ends. This perpetual war can't continue.

I just can't imagine being a family member, like one of the Jersey Girls who knows everything that we do and has had to watch their names of their loved ones used to do all these horrible things around the world. All the while not knowing exactly what happened, who was responsible and so on and so forth. When you try to put yourself in their shoes, it's just unimaginable. At least to me, it's unimaginable.

PHIL I agree, and that's why I dedicated my first book to the 9/11 families and their quest for the truth because it was clear to me they did not have the full truth at that point.

JON I hope that maybe you start pushing in your articles for the release of things like the 28 redacted pages, or the documents from the 9/11 Commission, in some of your articles in the future.

PHIL And I think if you take a look at the piece in *The New Yorker* a couple of weeks ago, the author actually credits me in my book for making clear why that information should be made public.

JON Right, excellent.

Well, Phil this was a long time coming. We've corresponded for years through email. This is actually the first time we've ever spoken on the phone, that I know of.

Anyway, I want to thank you very much for your time today, and I hope to hear from you again. And good luck with all of your endeavors and, especially, with your new book. And thanks for taking the time today.

PHIL Great, Jon, my pleasure.

JON All right, Phil, have a good day.

PHIL Thanks a lot, Jon. Talk to you later.

JON Bye, bye.



Chapter/Episode 13 – John Albanese – December 14, 2014

Jon Gold (JON)

John Albanese (JOHN)

JON Hi, everyone, and welcome to my show called, "We Were Lied to About 9/11." I am your host, Jon Gold, and this show is part of the Soapbox People's Network. Today's show is going to focus on the topic of disinformation, misinformation, the infiltration of movements, among a number of other issues. There's even a little debate on how important the topic of 9/11 is in the scheme of things in today's world.

Okay, this is Jon, and I'm here with John Albanese. How are you doing tonight, John?

JOHN I'm fine. How are you doing?

JON I'm doing as best as I can.

All right, so, I'm going go ahead and read your bio.

John Albanese is an independent filmmaker and writer from New York City, and was one of the original members of New York 9/11 Truth. John's film, *Everybody's Gotta Learn Sometime*, received national attention when it

premiered at the Tribeca screening room during the Tribeca Film Festival in 2006.

Okay, that's the end of your bio. Before we begin, I want to make sure that people know that this is a very difficult topic to cover. We are risking making people angry, and unfortunately, it simply can't be avoided. Some people have hated me for years, so it's nothing new for me. It's just a burden I've had to bare. However, we believe this is an important topic that needs to be discussed and addressed, and hopefully, people will learn something from our discussion. That's what this show is all about.

All right, so John, are you ready for your first question?

JOHN Sure, go ahead. You make it sound pretty ominous. [Laughs]

JON [Laughs] What was the day of 9/11 like for you?

JOHN Well, it was a pretty rough day. I live in New York City and my wife and I were both working in Manhattan when it happened, so we witnessed it. And, I actually rushed downtown to get my wife, so we weren't in the financial district, but she was a lot closer to the scene than I was. I was working uptown. So, as people from New York, you can see the World Trade Center from almost anywhere in New York. We were down around Union Square and we saw the buildings collapse and we saw people's reactions. I think it was people's reactions that impacted us the most. People were just hysterical—crying in the streets, walking around not knowing what to do.

So, it was pretty impactful to our lives. Both of us had post-traumatic stress for a long time afterwards from what we had witnessed that day.

JON You had told me, or I had heard you talk about how people were meeting at churches after 9/11 to comfort themselves. Did you go to those churches?

JOHN That's where I actually came across New York 9/11 Truth at that time (Okay--) was a meeting at the Unitarian Church in Manhattan. And, when I—yeah, I was actively seeking it. I started to ask questions pretty early on about the event. I guess my way of dealing with the emotional fallout was to study it. Go online and look at what had happen and read everything I could on the subject, because it was my way of dealing with the emotions.

And, I did come across this group in New York and the questions that they were raising, so I did seek them out so I went to the Unitarian Church, and up on stage was Kyle Hence, who later went on to make the film *Press for Truth*, one of the better treatments on the subject. Les Jamieson, who went on to actually gain control of New York 9/11 Truth, eventually. Nicholas Levis who was also one of the founding members of the New York 9/11 Truth and was very active with writing on the subject and is still an activist, I think, to this day on other issues. And Nico Haupt was up on the stage.

JON All right. Just to clarify, it was Nick Levis that coined the phrase 9/11 Truth, was it not?

JOHN I've heard him say that and I believe him because I know that these were the earliest days of the questioning that started to happen. So, it would not surprise me at all that he had coined the phrase.

JON What was the first thing you questioned about 9/11?

JOHN Well, of course, the question I had was: "How could this have happened in this day and age with the technology that we have and the intelligence apparatus that we have—how could this have happened?"

And, of course, I think the question everyone was asking: "What did they know and when did they know it?"

And the thing that struck me as most peculiar was that within 24 hours they had pictures of all the hijackers on TV; they knew their names; they had photographs of all of them; and they basically declared these are the people who did it.

JON Is that true? Is that true that they did have their photographs within 24 hours? I know they had their names within 24 hours. As far as photographs, are you absolutely sure?

JOHN I'm not absolutely sure—but, I will tell you, if you're asking me what is one of the things that struck me as questioning the event, it was the quickness with which we declared who had done it, and the photographs being on TV. Now, was it 24 hours, was it 48 hours, 72 hours? I'm not exactly sure. I don't think it makes much of a difference.

JON Well, but I thought I had read once from a debunker site that it was two weeks for them to post pictures (No, no) Okay.

JOHN No, not two weeks. It was within days of the events. That I would be willing to stake my reputation on.

JON Well, one of the things that Kristen Breitweiser asked at a meeting—9/11 Family Member Kristen Breitweiser—she asked, and I don't remember, I wish I had the quote in front of me—she was at a meeting with the families and the FBI, and she asked them, basically, how were you able to swoop in within hours to the flight schools that some of these hijackers trained at? And the FBI told her that "we got lucky." So—to give an indication that these people must have been on the radar prior to 9/11.

JOHN Well, we now know from the information that's out there that they were being watched and they were being tracked. That's no longer a mystery. (Right)

But, there were other claims like they found the passport of one of the hijackers in the rubble of the World Trade Center.

Now, I don't know if that's true or not. Again, I don't want to speculate. But, if you're asking me what are the things that triggered my thinking on the subject, these were the things that triggered my thinking. I don't know, actually, to this day what they mean. But it seems very strange to me that given the volume of destruction at the World Trade Center, just the amount of space and the amount of rubble that was in that area burning, actively burning, and being worked on by the first responders and the fire crews, to have found the paper passport of one of the hijackers struck me as—seems suspicious to just be one of those things. Astronomical odds may just have occurred on that day, magically occurred on that day, but it was one of the things that did strike me as—it got my interest up enough that I saw the dilemma and I started to actively seek some of the answers to some of the questions that I had. And I started to see that there was the beginnings of a movement nationwide of people who were pointing at various things that seemed off, whether inaccurate or seemed suspicious—that's really how it all started for me.

JON Have you ever had an experience where you believed what someone was saying and promoted that information only to find out that that information was wrong?

JOHN (Chuckling) I would say the majority of the time.

JON The majority of the time?

JOHN The majority of the time, yeah. Once the years started to pass and this became a phenomenon. 9/11 Truth started to actually gain some traction and became a nationwide phenomenon. When I started looking at the things that people were promoting, I would say there was more garbage out there than there was actual factual, well-researched, vetted information. And that was, of course, the central problem with this whole issue.

JON So, you're saying that you have promoted bad information in the past, is what you're saying.

JOHN Myself? (Yeah) Well, yeah, actually I think that I did get caught up in a couple of—it was kind of like a vacuum cleaner sucking up everything that was available, all of the research that was available and throwing it out there as part of the strategy of just getting these questions recognized and getting the public's attention.

In retrospect, I regret a lot of the information that I believed at the time was—I was told by people that I trusted that this was legitimate information and then of course, hindsight's always 20/20 and then the perspective of time now I look back and not everything that I included in the information that I was sharing was accurate.

JON Well, the reason that I ask, and—did you lose credibility amongst the people you were telling this information to?

JOHN That's a tougher question, because it was such an odd assortment of characters.

It was a very colorful—let's just put it that way. It was a very colorful movement, as you probably know. A lot of the people who were involved were central to the reason why the movement over time lost a lot of its credibility because they—at least I can admit that I wasn't always right. There were a lot of people who were promoting information that were demonstrably wrong and they were not able to even look at facts that would demonstrate that what they're promoting is demonstrably wrong. (Well—)

Something that we talked about offline, there's something called the backfire effect. It's a phenomenon with people who have very strongly held beliefs that if you present facts to these people, the research shows that people will not become swayed to believe what you're saying, but they'll actually become more entrenched. So, the more—

For example, the anti-vaccine community. You can try presenting facts to them. You can show them the scientific research. You can show that the person who started this whole thing with the autism claims has been stripped of his medical license, his research has been totally discredited and has been labeled as completely made up. This will not change their mind. It will, in fact, harden their position. They'll find extraneous reasons to explain all of it away. They'll go out on a limb and say: "Well, it's all a conspiracy and the doctors are all—the pharmaceutical industry is withholding money from researchers," and they'll create a whole scenario where these facts can be dismissed, and that's the backfire effect.

We had backfiring going on in the "9/11 Truth Movement." To the point where the worst possible research became what was in the front.

JON Well, the reason that I asked is—

JOHN The harder we tried to demonstrate to them the foolishness of their ways, the more entrenched they became in their position and the more they doubled down on stupid.

JON Well, the reason that I asked this question is I wanted to tell my own experience with promoting bad information, to show that neither of us are perfect in any way, shape, or form. But, I think, one of the differences is that we'll admit when we're wrong when we're shown to be wrong on something, and we learn from our mistakes and we try not to repeat them. But neither of us are perfect and I just wanted to make that point.

One instance where I can remember—two actually—where I had heard some information and I thought it was credible because people told me that the person promoting it was credible. I think the name was Karl Schwartz and at the time—he was saying that he had footage of a plane that was different than what we were told hit the towers. And everybody at work I was telling about this—this is a long time ago—and when nothing came out, when he had absolutely nothing to show that commercial airliners didn't strike the towers, I lost a lot of credibility among my co-workers

because of it. They started calling me a conspiracy theorist. I think that was the first time where I had that kind of experience.

And another time that I can remember, someone by the name of Stanley Hilton—do you remember him?

JOHN Well, that name no. The first name you mentioned, I do remember him. I knew him personally. But the second name, no.

JON Okay, Stanley Hilton, I think—I think he was portrayed as Chief of Staff for Bob Dole at one time. He was a lawyer. I think he was representing, I think 400 family members at one time who were trying to file a lawsuit, and it fell through, and stuff like that. I think, at one time, Stanley Hilton said that he had actual documentation to show that the Bush administration was responsible for the 9/11 attacks. And I thought well Stanley Hilton, geez, he was the Chief of Staff for Bob Dole. This is somebody who's credible, my God! And again, I think I promoted that information and nothing ever came of it. No documentation was ever presented to anybody that he was describing. It was just—I learned a lot of lessons over the years about promoting information, promoting bad information, and it came to bite me in the ass.

My very first interview was with Opie and Anthony who were rivals of Howard Stern. And I was horrible during that interview. If you go back and listen to it, I mean, I didn't have talking points for it now, like I would today. It was just—we're not perfect. I've made many mistakes, and I just want people to know that. Neither of us are.

So, as we move on, what part has the corporate media played with regard to spreading disinformation?

JOHN As it pertains to 9/11? Or as it pertains to life itself?

JON Well, 9/11—I would love examples of 9/11, if you could, but anything is fine.

JOHN I think that since 9/11, and maybe not necessarily as a direct result of 9/11, but since 9/11, we've seen the technology taking us to a place that is very different from anything we've seen before. The advent of social media like Facebook and Twitter—all of that technology, plus the proliferation of smart phones and the Internet itself, has created a phenomenon where I

believe people can be manipulated in such a way that we've never seen before.

When we talk about COINTELPRO—the techniques that they used for COINTELPRO, compared to today, there's such a difference that the proliferation of the disinformation that's out there now, they found a way to actually get the public to do the dirty work for them. In that, all they need to do is seed the Internet and the social media with these ideas and there seems like there's an endless supply of useful idiots out there who are willing to pick up this information and run with it. So, they're getting free labor from the American public, and really, they have to do very little but sit back and watch it unfold. I think the term is AstroTurfing. It gives the illusion of a grassroots movement, where people pick up on certain ideas and they organize around it, but AstroTurf is not real grassroots. It's really being engineered by corporate interests or political interests or organized religions, or maybe in foreign interests. At this point, it's become very hard to tell where our facts come from.

JON

Well, with regard to the corporate media and the individuals you spoke of who were more than willing to promote certain information, those are the individuals that the corporate media focuses on in order to paint the whole in a certain light.

But, with regard to the corporate media, there was a time when you could openly question 9/11 and be cheered for it. If you watch the third-party debates between David Cobb and Michael Badnarik from 2004, which is available on my YouTube channel, which is Gold9472, they openly questioned 9/11. And the reason they were okay with doing so was because the media did not have the chance yet to have its attack campaign, making anyone who questions 9/11 be the equivalent of a baby-killer or a dog-torturer.

With regard to the "9/11 Truth Movement" and disinformation from the corporate media, they jumped on murderers who just happened to post something about 9/11 on the Internet and saying they're 9/11 Truthers. The 9/11 Truthers are murderers. They're all dangerous and—I saw that happen a number of times. There was a guy called the Pentagon shooter who took a couple of shots at the Pentagon, and I guess he said something about 9/11 online, and at the Treason in American Conference in 2010, *ABC News* came to the event in an attempt to paint everyone there as dangerous. And it was at the time of the Pentagon shooter. And RT, *Russia Today*, also

showed up to do news coverage of the event. But they were there to do real news, to talk about what exactly was going on at the conference. The *ABC News* had an agenda. And there was actually a paper in Philadelphia that wrote an interesting article showing the contrast between the two media outlets.

So, there was the Pentagon shooter. There was the guy who went into the Holocaust Museum and shot and murdered someone and I think Glen Beck said that he was a hero of the "9/11 Truth Movement." (Right) There's so many instances of that. That is disinformation from the corporate media. If you think that somebody who questions 9/11 is a murderer or unpatriotic, then I think that you've been watching a little bit too much television, unfortunately.

JOHN Well, it shouldn't surprise anyone that the media produces propaganda, especially during the time of war. The nation was attacked and the country was mobilizing for and—the country had very little patience and very little tolerance for any sort of dissension in the country, of any form. They basically crucified anyone who even questioned the marching orders of that administration.

And we still see it reverberating to this day with the revelation that the CIA was engaging in illegal activity and torturing people. The very reasons we went to Iraq—the weapons of mass destruction—there was some voices that were ringing the alarm bells, leading up to the invasion of Iraq saying: "Wait a minute, these aluminum tubes, they're not being used for nuclear centrifuges." But it was a time when there was very little tolerance for any voices that strayed from the singular determination that this nation was going to go to war. We had been attacked, and we needed to just unify behind a singular voice—and we see how that worked out for us.

JON Well, that's another—

JOHN When I look at the failure of 9/11 Truth as a movement, I put that failure squarely on the shoulders of the members of 9/11 Truth itself. The media, sure. It should surprise no one that they produce propaganda trying to demonize us in the eyes of the public. But no one demonized us more than ourselves, by putting out garbage, crazy conspiracy theories—this was never meant to be a conspiracy theory movement. It started as an accountability movement. People asking how did this happen? Who's responsible? Who's going to pay for these mistakes?

JON Right, well—

JOHN Why were there collapses and why are the facts that were being given not adding up? Why are there so many discrepancies in the official account? Why are so many pages of the Congressional Report redacted and blacked out? And what was the Saudi relationship to all of this? That's how it began.

But it fell into the same bucket that we're now in right now where we live in a highly paranoid society now where everything is a hoax. Everything is a conspiracy. Every mass shooting, every high-profile crime, every natural event is the product of some conspiracy that Obama is behind, or the anti-gun lobby is behind. And the word "truther" has become the actual opposite of its literal meaning which is—and it's true.

I mean, if you look at what the truthers out there are promoting these days with high-profile crimes like Aurora and Sandy Hook and Virginia State and even Ferguson. It's my understanding that Alex Jones is promoting the idea that the Ferguson shooting was a hoax and that Obama was behind it.

People reach their saturation with this nonsense. Because the Internet enables the worst among us that have the loudest voices. And it—

JON Well, let me say something.

Very early on the "9/11 Truth Movement"—you said this was about supporting the families seeking a 9/11 Commission, and then once that report was released, it was about getting their unanswered questions answered, among other things. It was about asking good questions and demanding answers. Basically, it was about supporting the family members, seeking truth, accountability, and justice. And somewhere along the way, the movement lost its way.

And I want to talk about what you just mentioned. I think one of the reasons that there are people out there who say that everything is a conspiracy theory is because of something that I call the conspiracy theory industry. And you mentioned someone, Alex Jones, who is somebody who I think is in the conspiracy theory industry. He's a businessman. And he is notorious for saying that everything that happens is a false flag attack or some kind of conspiracy, and people—unfortunately, people pick up on that.

That's something else I want to address. What's the difference between disinformation and misinformation? Because there's disinformation, which I think is information that is bad, that is purposefully put out there for whatever reason. And misinformation is when somebody, a good-minded person, somebody good-hearted, trying to make a difference, picks up this information, this bad information, and promotes it thinking that it's good. That's misinformation.

And I, actually, as we spoke earlier, I have some pity for people that do that. And I do my best to try and talk to people like that. Not confrontationally. I mean, you talked about how we were our own worst enemy, the "9/11 Truth Movement." And all of the in-fighting that took place. And a lot of it having to do with these theories that people were putting forward. And we were trying our very best, very, very best to remain as credible as possible.

JOHN

Who's we though? I certainly—I always felt you had integrity in what you did, and there were a select few who had integrity and were approaching it in a way that I can respect. But, I would say the vast majority of it was—I could remember being angry with the media for referring to us as conspiracy theorists, but now in the context of time, they were right. It was conspiracy theorizing or speculation. What if the planes were remote controlled? What if there's a plane—what if it was a fly-over the Pentagon as opposed to an actual strike? What if it was a missile? What if it was this? What if it was that? And that's what most people were clinging to. And I never saw a really solidified movement.

We keep using the term movement. I see there were some right-wing leanings come out of the Alex Jones camp, and the Loose Change camp, and the Libertarian movement that was taking it that direction. Yeah, it was a conspiracy theory movement. And that's where it essentially went wrong. And I think it remains an extremely dangerous situation that we live in currently, because people do not seem to be able to differentiate between facts and fiction.

And people now are enabled—that's the key word here—people are enabled to shop for the truth that they're comfortable with. You don't like Jews? That's fine. You can go on Google and you will find a lot of support out there on certain websites that will tell you the Holocaust didn't happen, and

they will seem, they will appear very scholarly and well-researched, and very convincing if you already have this precondition.

JON

Well, I generally tell people—I generally tell people, don't just listen to what the "9/11 Truth Movement" is saying. Go look at what debunkers are saying. Go look at what other people are saying. And, I often say to people to go to the source as often as you can. If there's a report about something, about 9/11, and there's a name mentioned in the article, maybe you can get in touch with the individual who's mentioned and get their story.

I've done that—there's the story of the Lt. General Mahmud Ahmed from the Pakistani ISI wire-transferring \$100,000—ordering Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire transfer \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta—and I took that story as far as humanly possible. I even tried to contact the arresting officer in India who arrested Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh to try and talk to him about him. I followed his prison movements to see which prison he was being held in because he was being moved a lot. And I just couldn't take it any further, unfortunately.

But, I mean, that's the level sometimes—if you can do that, if you have the time to do that kind of research, wonderful. But, you have to be very careful with what you promote. You have to—because when none of us, very few of us have letters after our names like Ph.D. or whatever that brings a sense of credibility with what we say. So, when we approach people or when we talk to people, we have to use the best information possible, stuff that really can't be debunked, in order to plant the seeds to get people active for this issue, which is still today a very important issue.

And, one thing I want to talk about is human nature. When the Government refuses to answer our questions, when those who should be able to answer our questions refuse to do so, it's human nature to speculate as to the reasons why. But you have to be able to differentiate what is speculation and what are facts.

JOHN

How do we—but the problem, the brick wall that I've hit with this is that having observed 9/11 Truth, what I found was that what was created there was a false dichotomy between junk science and then this other classification, which may or may not be the truth, and this false dichotomy was—it created an environment that people were so repulsed by the garbage theories that they ran into the arms of the only other alternative. They ran into the arms of the activists that were promoting something that

seemed credible because they had a choice between the two. It's kind of like the way Fox and MSNBC works. People were repulsed by Fox News so they run into the arms of CNN. How do you know CNN is telling you the truth? You don't. But it seems more credible to watch sensibilities when you compare it against the strawman of Fox News.

And the problem that I have is, at this stage, how do we know anything is the truth anymore? How do we know any of the research that we've promoted that seems credible, like this is the good stuff, this is the stuff that we tell people?

Well, I'm not a professional journalist. I certainly have no connections in politics or the military industrial complex or in Pakistan. How do I know that the information that I'm promoting wasn't seeded, just for me to pick up and run with, by some other entities—some foreign entity, some political entity, military industrial complex—

JON You're absolutely right, but unfortunately, if you can't prove that, then you have to say that okay, there might be some credibility to this particular story. Or, for instance, that story, the wire transfer story. The *Times of India* that reported it, and *Agency France Presse* also corroborated the story. You look at the FBI, apparently, made statements saying he was a pay master, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, by CNN in late 2001. You have Indian investigators telling Robert Mueller in early 2002 about Saeed Sheikh's role in 9/11. You have somebody who was tortured, unfortunately, and actually mentioned that Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh wire transferred \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta.

When you look at all of this information, it starts to—you can see that there's more reason to think that it might be true than not, so—but you still can't, unfortunately, prove it. And—

JOHN Right, but that's also the hallmark of disinformation. The hallmark of disinformation is planting not just one seed, but planting a row of seeds that cause people with cognitive dissonance and disenchantment with their lives and with society and the political system that is inherently dishonest, and all the rest of it, it causes them to connect the dots. These seeds could be planted very cleverly to make it appear like a web of evidence. I mean, that was the crux of the play *Twelve Angry Men*. You have 12 people sitting in a room. They had facts on the table, a lot of facts, and they all pointed in the same direction that this person was guilty of murder. One

problem: he wasn't. Facts are a funny thing. You can have individual facts, even if the individual facts are correct, you could assemble facts in such a way that it paints a picture that is just completely wrong. And—

JON Oh, absolutely, you can do that.

JOHN And, when you add disinformation to the mix that is being crafted by people who have political interests, foreign interests, military agendas, or whatever it might be, it becomes almost impossible to sift through it and have—I mean, you may think you have a handle on reality, but what I'm becoming increasingly convinced of is that we live in a bubble. We live in a very tightly controlled environment where people are enabled to shop for the facts that they want. The Tea Party has their set of facts and we have our set of facts, and I'm a little uncomfortable that we might just be the Tea Party of the Left.

JON No, you know what—there are two sides or three sides, however many sides, to the story. And what I have done over the years is, as I said, is I looked at both and I see that one doesn't address certain issues, disregard things, just omits information. I have to think well maybe that this side, this point of view, is probably correct as compared to that point of view. But, one of the things that we—that there's absolutely no doubt of, is the fact that we were lied to about 9/11. About a great many things.

JOHN Well, I can expand on that though. We are lied to about everything.

JON No, I understand that.

JOHN And what if that's just the new policy for controlling people? And keeping this plutocracy going and keeping the ruling elite in control, and the national security agency, and all the rest of them—maybe that's just policy. We don't get the full story on anything. The dialogue in this country is very carefully constructed and controlled. We're told what we can talk about. For some reason, the decision was made what we can talk about what this country did with interrogations, and enhanced interrogations techniques, and torture—that's going to be allowed this week, and next week we'll talk about Bill Cosby.

JON Well, actually, they don't really talk—they talked about the senate report, but they don't talk about how that it still might be going on. Who knows what JSOC is doing? And the force-feeding in GITMO is considered to be

torture by the UN, I think. And so, it's still going on and they also—they didn't cover some of the more heinous things that I heard with regard to torture. I mean, I heard Seymour Hersh talked about how kids, little kids, boys, were being sodomized in front of their mothers and that there was this ungodly shrieking. The Pentagon has these videos that show these things.

JOHN But how do we know that—but is Seymour Hersh telling you the story that you want to hear?

JON No, but the thing about Seymour Hersh is you have to look at his history as far as getting things right. And, a lot of times Seymour Hersh has gotten it right. So, when somebody like that—

JOHN Well, yeah, and that's another whole mark of disinformation. It's mixing lies with the truth and Carl Bernstein did a whole story in the 70s and, keep in mind that's 40 years ago, regarding the influence of the Central Intelligence Agency in the media, the mainstream media. The major networks, the major press releases at the time—print was king at the time, you know, print journalism was king. And the influence of the Central Intelligence Agency within the print media and his findings was that, it's saturated with intelligence assets who mold and manipulate and control and influence the direction in which the message that is given to the American public is pointed. And, that was 40 years ago.

JON No, but I—I hear what you're saying, but you know, what's the alternative? That we listen to absolutely no one at all?

JOHN Well, this is—the fact that the—

JON To me, in the corporate media—

JOHN It's a dilemma. Unless we face up to the reality of the dilemma that we're faced with, which is we're living in an age of almost an airtight sort of information gag order associated with our ability to penetrate, the inner workings of our own Government and the policy makers and the policies that are being crafted. That is the modern-day dilemma.

And, we're in such flux at this point with so many people running in so many different directions, it seems so engineered, at least to my sensibilities. It's not just the Tea Party that's Astro Turfed. I think there's Astro Turfing going on on the Left. There's Astro Turfing going on in the