

9/11; Response to a Financial Times Report regarding 9/11: “fails to deal with the evidence”

By [Elizabeth Woodworth](#)

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Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [Terrorism](#)

An Evidence-Based Response to Peter Barber regarding his article, “The Truth is Out There”, Financial Times, June 7, 2008 (see Annex below)

Dear Mr. Barber:

I am a professional medical librarian who delivered “best evidence” literature to the public health officers of the British Columbia government for 25 years.

Your article, “The Truth is Out There”, is an “ad hominem” approach to a critically serious matter, and it unfortunately fails to deal with the evidence involved.

You will no doubt agree that 9/11 has changed the world. It is a seminal event which has grossly undermined trust and erected enormous barriers between the West and the Middle East. And it has led to widespread mayhem and death in that region. Obviously, questions concerning our understanding of the event are of the utmost importance.

The US government has steadfastly refused to release the evidence which it claims to have. Evidence, which, if in existence, would settle once and for all the questions which are being raised, nearly 7 years later, on the front page of the Financial Times of London.

There were 85 cameras rolling outside the Pentagon, whose film could be offered to save the Times the trouble of running these articles.

There are small, indestructible time replacement parts in all aircraft which allow for positive identification, and these could be offered to silence critics about Flight 77.

For several years NIST has been promising its imminent report on the strange collapse of Building 7. This could be completed and released.

You say the 9/11 truth movement has taken over from the peace movement. Why don't you ask why the government doesn't do the obvious thing and produce the evidence to silence this vast new movement?

A full, credible, transparent account would be the responsible thing for the US government to do. Without such an account, or even the evidence which would allow for one, many concerned people have stepped into the breach.

It is unlikely, as you point out, that everyone will agree. But because the Bush administration has elected to withhold its purported fact-settling evidence, its citizens are

dealing with a mystery. The best the public can do is conduct its own investigation by working with available media reports, witnesses, and forensic samples.

There is a natural temptation to ponder what actually happened, and some people succumb to developing theories, it is true. But the scientific people in the 9/11 research community simply advance the “best evidence”, then demonstrate that it is incompatible with what we have been told, and call for a new investigation.

Having long provided Web-based literature to health professionals, I believe the links below to be trustworthy. If you, Mr. Barber, are interested in dealing with the facts themselves, rather than where Dr. Griffin lives, or what his dogs do when you come to the door, you might wish to pass this sample evidence-based information along to your readers (that is, if the FT has no agenda in running your long “ad hominem” piece as a front page feature article):

1. Dr. Steven E. Jones Boston 911 Conference 12-15-07 Red chips. Re the chemical signature of the highly explosive incendiary thermate found in the dust at the World Trade Center. Lecture at: http://youtube.com/watch?v=vVE_FdT6DN4&feature=related
2. In 2006, over 700 human bone fragments were found on the roof of the adjacent Deutsche Bank building, some less than a centimeter long. How does a simple gravitational collapse splinter and disseminate human bones in this manner? <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/15/nyregion/15letter.html>
3. Oral histories from first responders at the WTC scene indicating ground-shaking explosions from beneath the buildings were released in August 2005 by the New York Times, at <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20060118104223192>. There is a summary by Dr. David Ray Griffin at <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20060118104223192>
4. The 9/11 Commissioners themselves have said that they were denied access to key witnesses, and that their formal investigation was obstructed by the C.I.A. See: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/02/opinion/02kean.html>
5. My own article on the Military Drills of September 11th, which shows that there were 29 different reports of hijackings that morning, has 58 references, at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6906>

Thank you for looking this over.

For you, who seems interested in the event, the question is: if all this evidence does indeed point to US government complicity, would you want to know about it? And the answer to that is your worth as a journalist.

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ANNEX [link to the original article](#)

The truth is out there

By Peter Barber

Financial Times, June 7 2008

When Cynthia McKinney speaks the words of Martin Luther King Jr, they resound through the church with some of King's cadence. "A time comes," declares the former US congresswoman from Georgia, "when silence is betrayal." The congregation answers with whoops and calls of "That's right!" King was talking about America's war in Vietnam. More than 40 years later, before the packed pews of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, McKinney is speaking of the American government's war on its own people. The shock and awe phase of this conflict, we had been told earlier, began on September 11 2001, when the Bush administration launched attacks on New York and Washington, or at least waved them through.

According to a show of hands that February afternoon, several hundred people in the immaculate church believe this to be true. Some came in T-shirts bearing the words "9/11 was an inside job". One wore a badge demanding that you "Examine your assumptions". Quite a few bought the DVDs on sale in the foyer, most of which bore photographs of the Twin Towers spewing smoke. They had all come to hear the message of Architects, Engineers & Scientists for 9/11 Truth, one of the dozens of groups across the US which campaign to persuade us that everything we think we know about 9/11 is wrong.

Last winter, "Investigate 9/11" banners seemed to be popping up all over the place. Bill Clinton was heckled by "truthers" in Denver while campaigning for his wife. Truthers picketed the Academy Awards in LA - despite this year's winner of the best actress Oscar, Marion Cotillard, reportedly being one of them. But then, she's French. Literature lovers in that country pushed Thierry Meyssan's *L'Effroyable imposture* (The Appalling Fraud) - which asserts that 9/11 was a government plot to justify invading Iraq and Afghanistan and increase military spending - to the top of the bestseller list in 2002.

Country music star Willie Nelson is assuredly not French, but a week or so before the Oscars he described as naive the notion that the "implosion" of the Twin Towers was caused by crashing jets. Meanwhile the European Parliament screened the Italian documentary *Zero*, in which Gore Vidal, Italian playwright Dario Fo, and Italian MEP Giulietto Chiesa blame the US government, not al-Qaeda, for 9/11. The following month, Japanese MP Yukihiro Fujita raised his own doubts about the official story at a seminar in Sydney. A busy season for the "9/11 Truth" movement.

The events of 9/11 were recorded in many thousands of images, from crisp agency photographs to amateur camcorder footage. Every recorded trail of smoke, every spray of sparks is pored over by an army of sceptics, collectively described as the 9/11 Truth movement. They believe that the key to the mystery is hidden somewhere within the pictures, just as some people think that clues are contained in the Zapruder film which captured the moment of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Allied against them is a smaller group of rival bloggers who have taken it upon themselves to debunk what they claim are dangerous conspiracy theories.

There is some evidence that the truthers are swaying the rest of us. A New York Times/CBS News poll in 2006 revealed that only 16 per cent of Americans polled believed the Bush

administration was telling the truth about 9/11. More than half thought it was “hiding something”. This is not the same as believing the government actually launched the attacks, but a Scripps Howard/Ohio University poll the same year found that more than a third of those questioned suspected that federal officials assisted in the attacks or took no action to stop them so that the US could go to war.

The truthers certainly believe that they are on a roll. The crowd in the Immanuel Presbyterian Church seemed electrified. As the donated sound system pumped out angry rap, a giant video screen showed images of protesters demanding a new investigation into 9/11. The symbols and the language were borrowed from the civil rights struggle, but the truthers are an eclectic group, including anti-Bush, anti-war liberals and anti-government libertarians. A young man in a “Vote Ron Paul” T-shirt scuttled through the hall, filming us as we took our seats on wooden pews.

First up was Richard Gage, a San Francisco architect who founded Architects, Engineers & Scientists for 9/11 Truth, which now claims to have 379 professional members. Gage told us that the collapse of the Twin Towers could not have been due merely to gravity, the impact of the airliners and the resulting jet fuel fires – which would not have been hot enough to weaken the steel sufficiently. Behind him on the video screen was the south tower of the World Trade Center. Smoke poured from its upper floors. A respectful silence fell over the audience, followed by gasps as the building appeared to dissolve before our eyes.

While I have seen this footage countless times, it seems that I had clearly never understood what I was seeing. The destruction of the Twin Towers, along with the collapse of the nearby 47-storey World Trade Center 7 building, had all the hallmarks of controlled demolition, according to Gage. They all came straight down, almost at the speed of a free-falling object, right into their own footprints. Steel-framed buildings had never collapsed because of fires before. On this day three did, one of which, “Building 7”, was not even hit by an aircraft.

Gage, who had worked himself into a fever, exhorted the audience to stand up and be counted: “A country is at stake.” Then he welcomed on to the stage the star of the evening, Steven Jones. A softly spoken physicist, Jones is the movement’s designated martyr and seems to promise what the truthers so desperately need: scientific credibility.

Jones entered into truther lore in 2006 when he was put into early retirement by Brigham Young University in Utah after giving public lectures on his paper “Why indeed did the WTC buildings collapse?”, which he published on the website of the university’s physics department. Jones contended that the towers were demolished by cutter charges which had been placed throughout the buildings, probably involving an incendiary called thermite. BYU’s College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and the structural engineering faculty, followed by the university administration, disowned him.

Still, Jones is no fool. He has published more than 50 scholarly papers, including pieces on cold nuclear fusion in journals such as Scientific American and Nature. He invented a cooker which uses solar power and has donated models to poor families in the developing world. Jones tells us he believes laboratory testing of dust from Ground Zero will reveal residue from a thermite reaction.

As soon as the seminar is over, Jones is mobbed by people asking him to pose for photos and offering their own views on the 9/11 plot, as well as others such as the presence above

our heads of chemtrails (deadly toxins sprayed by unidentified aircraft, which some believe are part of a secret global depopulation programme). This is the world Jones now inhabits – it seems a long way from a Utah physics department. I ask him later by phone if he has any regrets about publishing that fateful paper: “No regrets. I’ve thought of Galileo a few times. He got a little worse than I did, I suppose.”

Jones is typical of many 9/11 researchers in that the subject has taken over his professional life. Down the coast in Santa Barbara is another of the movement’s luminaries. On the beach at Isla Vista, one of the most expensive real-estate spots in the US, lives David Ray Griffin, a former theology professor. As his dogs scratch excitedly on the sliding door, Griffin explains that America’s primary faith is not Christianity, but nationalism. “Other countries do really terrible things. Our leaders never would. And that [belief] has been the biggest impediment to getting people to look at the evidence, because they just know a priori that that is ridiculous.”

Griffin now thinks the evidence to the contrary is incontrovertible. Until 2002, he had busied himself far from the rancour of public controversy writing rather obscure philosophical books and teaching philosophy of religion at the Claremont School of Theology. But the course of his research changed abruptly when he heard a visiting British theologian question the official account of 9/11. Two years later, Griffin’s *The New Pearl Harbor*, with a foreword by British MP Michael Meacher, became a touchstone in the 9/11 Truth movement. He has since written others, including one detailing the “omissions and distortions” of the 9/11 Commission, the report of which fits the definition of “conspiracy theory” neatly, he says. “They started with the conclusion that al-Qaeda did it and didn’t even consider the alternative that it was an inside job.”

Griffin was a script consultant on *Loose Change Final Cut*, part of the internet phenomenon that set off the current explosion of low-budget 9/11 DVDs. The previous version was viewed more than 10 million times on Google Video, according to *Vanity Fair*. In 2002, armed only with a laptop and off-the-shelf video production software, Dylan Avery, an 18-year-old resident of Oneonta, New York, set about making a fictional film about discovering, with his friends, that 9/11 was orchestrated by the US government. At some point in his research, Avery had a “Dude, this shit is real!” moment and *Loose Change* entered the realm of agit-prop documentary. *Final Cut* makes a bold new allegation: the Twin Towers were packed with deadly asbestos, which would have cost billions to clean up. “If you bring down the buildings,” says Griffin, “not only do you not have to pay ... to clean them up, somebody is going to make billions of dollars on the insurance.”

September 11 as insurance job? This seems to expand the circle of conspirators somewhat. Griffin ventures another possible explanation: the psychological impact. “You had these massive explosions, which rather looked like a nuclear blast,” he says. “That’s always been the deep fear of America. In the run-up to the Iraq war, that’s what they were talking about – we cannot wait until we have a nuclear cloud.”

Griffin offers one further speculation, this time on a question which is controversial even among 9/11 sceptics: what hit the Pentagon? Thierry Meyssan was the first to claim that it was not Flight 77 – an American Airlines 757 carrying 64 passengers – but a cruise missile that hit the west wall of the Pentagon at 9.37am on September 11. Websites have followed suit, pointing to the apparent lack of plane debris on the Pentagon lawn and the fact that the hole left in the outer ring of the building looks too small to accommodate the wingspan of a 757. Retired US Air Force captain Russ Wittenberg from *Pilots for 9/11 Truth* asserted

that no inexperienced pilot could have performed the manoeuvre the 9/11 Commission concluded that al-Qaeda conspirator Hani Hanjour pulled off that morning: a 330° turn, 2,200ft descent, a full-throttle dive and then a 530 miles per hour plunge at ground level into the Pentagon. Call it “the magic plane theory”: doubters believe that, just as the bullet that killed Kennedy appeared to defy the laws of physics, so the plane that struck the Pentagon was like no other in existence.

And just as Nasa was forced to counter claims the moon landings were faked, these and other claims have forced the US State Department into the debunking business. Its Identifying Misinformation website states that debris from Flight 77 was indeed recovered, as were the remains of passengers and crew. Many witnesses saw the plane come in, and a number of passengers made phone calls to their loved ones telling them their flight had been hijacked.

There is also another obvious problem: if a missile hit the Pentagon, what happened to Flight 77? “There was a rumour that an airliner had gone down on the Ohio/Kentucky border and that was taken very seriously early on by the Federal Aviation Authority,” says Griffin. It later rejected the story. But Griffin claims the only evidence that Flight 77 was aloft after that was an alleged phone call from Barbara Olsen to Ted Olsen, the solicitor-general of the United States.

So how does he explain that phone call? Ted Olsen is a Bush administration insider, he says. Another possible answer, though, is “voice-morphing technology”. This would also explain the flurry of phone calls from United Airlines Flight 93, which, as the official story has it, crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers revolted against their hijackers.

It’s not just supporters of the official story who roll their eyes at these claims. They put Griffin in the camp of the “no-planers”, at least as far as the attack on the Pentagon is concerned. The no-planers enrage the rest of the truthers, who accuse them of sabotaging the credibility of the movement. The claim that no plane hit the Pentagon is a Trojan horse, they say – disinformation that serves the conspirators. Some – such as former MI5 whistleblower David Shayler – have even asserted that no planes, but missiles disguised by “cloaking technology”, hit the Twin Towers. Shayler, incidentally, proclaimed himself the Messiah last year.

If the 9/11 truth movement is fighting a kind of asymmetric war against official sources of knowledge, it is also battling itself. As the movement morphs into an international activist group, it recognises that if it is to convince middle Americans, it must distance itself from its exotic fringe. Once, it was the Mihops versus the Lihops. These factions, who sound like warring species from an H.G. Wells story, are those who believe the government Made It Happen On Purpose and those who think it Let It Happen On Purpose. The Mihops are in the ascendancy.

The genesis of all this can be traced back to a schism that followed the first real attempt to bring scholarly credibility to the 9/11 sceptics. In 2005, Steven Jones was invited to form a group called Scholars for 9/11 Truth by James Fetzer, a professor in the philosophy department at the University of Minnesota and the author of some 20 books on the philosophy of science and artificial intelligence. Fetzer teaches critical thinking, and is nothing if not critical. He has been campaigning for more than a decade to prove that the Zapruder film is a hoax perpetuated by the same government intelligence agencies that orchestrated JFK’s assassination.

But within a year, Jones had written to all members of Scholars announcing that he and others no longer wanted to be associated with Fetzer, who was, in the rebels' opinion, holding them up to ridicule. Fetzer had backed a theory by Judy Wood, a former assistant professor in mechanical engineering at Clemson University, proposing that the Twin Towers were brought down by a "directed energy" weapon developed as part of the US government's Star Wars programme. It prompted a stampede to a new group, Scholars for 9/11 Truth & Justice, headed by Jones. Confusing the two groups would be like mistaking Monty Python's Judean People's Front for the People's Front of Judea: this was a major doctrinal split.

Fetzer's view is that any serious inquiry into what happened on 9/11 should look at all possibilities. Supporters of the directed energy hypothesis keep popping up at 9/11 Truth lectures to heckle what Python fans might call the "splittist" thermite theorists. Among the advocates of the Star Wars theory is Morgan Reynolds, perhaps the first prominent US government official to claim that 9/11 was an inside job. At the time of the attacks, Reynolds was chief economist at the US Department of Labor.

Some Star Wars supporters, in turn, accuse proponents of the thermite hypothesis of being government shills. One, on CheckTheEvidence.com, alleges that Jones's public denunciation of Star Wars theories is actually a Trojan horse; he notes that Jones once worked at Los Alamos, where directed energy weapons are researched. This line of conjecture also entangles Norman Mineta, US transportation secretary on September 11 2001. Mineta was the man who grounded all civilian aircraft on that morning. But he was also once vice-president of Lockheed Martin, a founding member of the Directed Energy Professional Society ... In this outer reach of the blogosphere, no one is ever more than six degrees of separation from the heart of the conspiracy.

Jones did, in fact, do post-doctoral research at the Los Alamos Meson Physics Facility for the University of Wyoming, but he says it was peaceful and non-weapons-related. He says the more out-there theories, including those of the no-planers, are harming the movement. "First, they discourage others who are trying to do serious work, and they tend to be quite vocal about their heckling," he says. "More serious is that when we're really trying to look at an evidence-based approach, we get lumped in with these people and then dismissed as a whole."

Two days before Jones's lecture in LA, his erstwhile colleague was taking his own campaign on the road on the other side of the country. After addressing Student Scholars for 9/11 Truth in New Hampshire, Fetzer was off to that seat of academic respectability, Yale University. To prepare for our meeting, I watched a DVD of a 9/11 symposium he held in his new hometown of Madison, Wisconsin last year. The star of this show was Alfred Lambremont Webre, a judge on former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's alternative international War Crimes Tribunal in Kuala Lumpur and co-author of the Space Preservation Treaty. He delivers what might be the most momentous opening line in the history of town hall seminars. "Fellow Citizens... 9/11 was a false flag operation by an international war crimes racketeering organisation to provide a pretext to engage in a genocidal and ecocidal depleted uranium bombing of central Asia, Afghanistan and Iraq in order to secure vast oil and uranium reserves; to roll out a terror-based national security state system worldwide and ... to implement the final stages of a world depopulation policy." There are two more "false flag" operations in the pipeline, he says. The first is the war against asteroids, the second the "war against the evil aliens".

Hearing this, you either experience the thrill of revelation or the sinking feeling that the person you are listening to is having some kind of breakdown. Within 30 minutes, Webre has folded into the 9/11 plot the Skull & Bones society at Yale University – or the “Brotherhood of Death”, as he calls it – neocon think-tank the Council on Foreign Relations, the Rothschilds, the Queen and the City of London. I wondered how all these conspiracies could be maintained without the whole conceit unravelling.

The answer, of course, is that there is only one conspiracy. Pearl Harbour, the moon landing, JFK, 9/11, the Illuminati, the Black Helicopters, Skull & Bones, chemtrails: all faces of the same demon. The plot goes all the way to the top, and all the way back in time. You could come to believe that it involves everyone except yourself – at which point it’s all over for you. And as I listened, I just waited for him to say the Word. And, inevitably, Webre brought it all back to the “international neo-Zionist organisation”.

I asked Fetzer about this as we sat in a cafe across from Yale, home of the Brotherhood of Death: how did he keep his scholars on message? “It’s obvious to me that you have to consider all the possible alternatives,” he says. “You can’t exclude any, lest, as you proceed in your investigation and eliminate hypotheses, you eliminate the true hypothesis because you’ve never allowed it to be considered.”

Fetzer’s talk later that night does not go well. A Yale student had promoted the lecture on Facebook Events, but fellow students had apparently been unwilling to add their names, which anyone can see, perhaps for fear of ridicule. Only six show up. When it becomes clear that Fetzer is implicating some kind of Star Wars weapon, the two next to me begin scrolling distractedly through their mobile phone messages. Within 10 minutes, they have left.

The conclusion of the 9/11 Commission – the official story – is that the 2001 attacks got through because those charged with protecting America had not truly conceived of the threat: in its author’s evocative phrase, they had suffered a “failure of imagination”. After trawling the internet in search of 9/11 Truth, it seems to me the American imagination is strong. “Americans are very good at dreaming up these scenarios,” says Lewis Lapham, the former Harper’s magazine editor and a prominent critic of the Bush administration post-September 11. “We are open to all kinds of magical theories,” he says, citing the continuing fascination with the assassination of JFK. “We are also good at creating religions.” Lapham thinks the theory that 9/11 was an inside job follows in this long tradition, but also reflects cynicism among Americans towards their government. He does not accept that the Bush administration planned 9/11 or even allowed it to happen. Nonetheless, he thinks a new investigation is warranted. In 2004, Harper’s ran a trenchant piece describing the 9/11 Commission as a “whitewash” and a “cheat and a fraud” for downplaying evidence that warnings of the al-Qaeda threat were ignored. Such flaws allowed space for alternative theories to develop, Lapham says.

In this, there are shades of the Warren Commission into the assassination of President Kennedy, which served merely to deepen popular distrust. But if we have seen the likes of the 9/11 Truth movement before, it also represents something new. “With the Kennedy assassination, pretty soon after the events themselves there were fairly significant questions being raised by people of all types and stripes about what actually happened,” says Mark Fenster, a University of Florida law professor and author of *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture*. “But whereas then it was a generalised, amorphous kind of response, the amount of organisation – politically and through alternative media – is far more striking now than it was back then.”

Fenster thinks that the 9/11 Truth movement is in some ways a typical American response to a surprising and traumatic event. But it also represents a step change in its use of telecommunications technology. "One of the interesting things, particularly in the beginning of this movement, was the extent to which there were a lot of local groups in different cities organising protests ... and they could co-ordinate and create a national and international movement," he says. "Whether that translates into more people actually believing in the conspiracy theory is a completely different question."

Fenster believes the few published polls on the subject, rather than showing any real depth of suspicion about 9/11, demonstrate declining trust in the Bush administration generally. The author of one of the most rigorous of the websites that aim to debunk the conspiracy theories, Debunking911.com, notes that the most recent Zogby poll on attitudes towards 9/11 found only 4.6 per cent of Americans believe the Bush administration blew up the Twin Towers. "If you follow the website hits, you'll find that since Debunking911 came into existence, conspiracy sites have been losing readership," he says via e-mail. "I think all they needed was someone to fill in the parts conspiracy theorists left out of the conspiracy story and their numbers begin to shrink."

Perhaps the 9/11 Truth movement is what one would expect in the dying days of an unpopular administration, and with no end in sight to a costly war. Whether it can maintain momentum when that government leaves office next year is anyone's guess. In the meantime, some on the left accuse it of letting the leaders they so vehemently distrust off the hook. "They make a mockery of [civil rights] causes by associating their nonsense with genuinely important issues, and by diverting a large number of people who should know better into a unicorn hunt," says British writer and activist George Monbiot. Monbiot is regularly heckled by 9/11 truthers at public events after accusing them in The Guardian of undermining genuine political opposition. His first column on the truthers prompted a near-record number of postings on the paper's Comment Is Free website - 777 - many accusing him of being part of the conspiracy.

"It's very interesting to see," he says, "particularly in the United States, how the anti-war movement has been largely co-opted in many places by the 9/11 Truth movement. And we desperately need an active anti-war movement, because there is a lot of reckoning to be done."

Peter Barber is the FT's deputy comment editor Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2008

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