

9/11 Truth and the Sound of Silence in Academia: “Critical Perspectives on 9/11 are Systematically Excluded from Universities.”

By [Adnan Zuberi](#) and [Lars Schall](#)

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Independent German financial journalist Lars Schall talked with Adnan Zuberi, the director / producer of the documentary movie “9/11 in the Academic Community.” Zuberi says: “Critical perspectives on 9/11 are systematically excluded from universities.”

I hope that this material will be made available to the wider international academic community in order to foster a wider, fact-based discussion among researchers and students alike.

Friedrich Steinhäusler

Professor of Physics at Salzburg University

Former Co-Director of the NATO ARW on Catastrophic Terrorism

Past Chairman, US/German Transatlantic Expert Group on Terrorism

This documentary confronts the academy’s uncritical response to the defining event of our times. It is an essential viewing for everyone in academe.

Lance deHaven-Smith

Professor of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University

Former President of the Florida Political Science Association

Academic freedom protects scholars who report inconvenient truths from the uninformed, but, as Adnan Zuberi reminds us, academic freedom is also the responsibility of scholars to pursue the truth.

Dr. Roger W. Bowen

Served as General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors,

Professor of Political Science and President of the State University of New York.

“9/11 in the Academic Community”, awarded for “Documentary Achievement” at the University of Toronto Film Festival, can be ordered through [its website](#).

“9/11 in the Academic Community” takes a critical look at the academic community’s treatment of critical perspectives on 9/11 by exploring the taboo that shields the American government’s narrative from scholarly examination. Its director / producer Adnan Zuberi is 26 years old and graduated from the University of Toronto and the University of Waterloo (theoretical physics). He

lives as an independent filmmaker in Toronto, Canada.

Preview: 9/11 in the Academic Community

TRANSCRIPT

Lars Schall: Why did you become interested in the topic of 9/11 in general?

Adnan Zuberi: Of the many ways I became interested, I was most interested in academia's treatment of critical perspectives on 9/11. During my time as a university student, I noticed that there was a much larger picture that required intellectual attention. For example, Maj. Gen. Mark O. Schissler, who served as the Pentagon's Deputy Director for the War on Terrorism, said to the Washington Times that this War on Terror is a generational war that will last 50 to 100 years. Schissler emphasized that politics should not interfere with this and the public needs to be committed to this long-duration war. (1) I became interested in documenting how many professors are harsh critics of various aspects of the War on Terror but most unusually, they accept without any critical examination, the narrative serving as the foundation for this war. No thinking person would ever commit to a vague 100 year war, or even a 5 year war, without examining its foundation. More importantly, how can one conclude that the War on Terror will last this long? As to how they arrived at these large numbers is itself suspicious as they indicate more of a geostrategic plan for expanding an empire for this century in view of scarce resources and competing regional powers. How can professors not question the foundation of such a suspicious long-duration war? So I began studying the mechanisms that structure intellectual thinking in this manner, exploring the nature and dimensions of the taboo surrounding critical perspectives on 9/11 within universities.

LS: Why did you develop an interest in the specific topic regarding 9/11 that your movie is dedicated to?

AZ: To expand on my answer above, I became interested and astonished at the specific ways in which the taboo against a critical examination of 9/11 works within academic institutions. I began documenting the phenomena in my film. If a professor verbally expressed his or her view that the events of 9/11 require a critical examination as to whether they serve as a justification for this generational War on Terror, the professor would incur social punishments from the university community. Additionally, local politicians would denounce the professor and in one stance, the political community threatened the funding of a university if it didn't fire the professor. Universities have to make difficult alliances with the government.

Since verbal expression didn't work, the film documents how professors then pursued the scholarly practice of engaging in a rigorous gathering and presentation of facts in a paper submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Despite the attitudes of journal editors serving as a barrier, there are over twenty peer-reviewed papers published in the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences and engineering. All of these papers have major implications as they show the official narrative of 9/11, as told to use by the Bush Administration, does not meet scholarly expectations. (2) And most interestingly, there is no response to or discussion of these papers within the larger academic community. These documentations show how critical perspectives on 9/11 are systematically excluded from universities.

Universities should be concerned about how the 9/11 narrative's construction exemplifies anti-scholarship. For example, the crux of the official 9/11 Commission Report, which concerns how these alleged hijackers organized, was entirely derived from torture testimony. The CIA tortured Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), over 180 times in one month. KSM later said that he made up a story in trying to escape the torture and the CIA also destroyed many of the tape recording crucial to the 9/11 narrative. So they based a story of that fateful day around on such testimony that is used to change domestic and foreign policy around the world in the worst of ways.

LS: How did you choose your interviewees?

AZ: As the film's focus was on academia's treatment of critical perspectives on 9/11, I chose to interview professors who have published papers or taught official courses on this subject from this particular angle. I also pursued other professors who felt that there is nothing wrong with the academic community's discourse on 9/11. They politely declined because they felt the film's focus was not within their expertise. However, I am happy to report that many of the professors who declined to be interviewed did watch the film and are now very supportive.

LS: What did you learn by producing that movie?

AZ: I learned that the film has an extraordinary potential in rationally persuading the academic community to seriously reflect on the intellectual discourse on 9/11 and the War on Terror.

In terms of approach, I departed from all activists in the movement towards an honest investigation of the events of that fateful day. For example, if there was an environmental hazard (i.e., industrial pollution hurting wildlife) occurring across the nation, many people may attempt to resolve this by gathering into groups that would directly speak or write to politicians, media personalities, and so forth. However, there wasn't much of a change in the approach of activists who were tackling the subject of investigating 9/11 which was different by several orders of magnitude than say, an environmental issue, in terms of its political implications. There was a series of communication failures among activists as traditional methods were failing and this can be probably attributed to an absence in formal training in the educational curriculum. Students around the world, whether young or old, are taught about the countless dates and events of how the Nazis committed horrific crimes, but students are not taught how to formally detect, organize, and prevent radical parties that may jeopardize the nation. Such topics are orders of magnitude above average issues (i.e., economy and healthcare) that dominate daily discourse.

In recognizing this, I learned that taboo subjects cannot be discussed directly and publicly with people, especially professors. The art of communicating taboos, that have unprecedented political ramifications, is essentially through private methods that promotes a comfortable atmosphere that protects the identity and views of people holding important positions in society. As a result, I have been able to engage intellectuals that would otherwise never respond to civil society's concerns about deeply important issues. The film has received positive and supportive reviews from several academics, some at very high levels, including a former President of the State University of New York, an Officer of the Order of Canada and award-winning former Director of the CBC (the Canadian crown corporation broadcasting national public radio and television), and a former Director of the NATO Advanced Research on Catastrophic Terrorism. The film is also making its way into

curriculum, as students in university classes are very supportive of the film.

LS: One academic whose views on 9/11 are widely discussed in the internet is Noam Chomsky. Your take?

AZ: Professor Noam Chomsky wrote in his book, 9-11, an international best-seller, „... evidence about the perpetrators of 9-11 has been hard to find.... Nevertheless, despite the thin evidence, the initial conclusion about 9-11 is presumably correct.“ (3) This phenomena, where professors „presume“ something to be true despite evidence to the contrary or without sincerely investigating evidence to the contrary, comes under the field examining „impairments in professional inquiry“. Charles E. Lindblom, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Yale University, wrote extensively about impaired inquiry among professors. I think we should still appreciate Chomsky's past contributions to the study of propaganda and war crimes. Activists attending presentations by Chomsky or participating in online forums about his paradoxical position on 9/11 should realize their energies can be better spent elsewhere.

LS: Do you consider it as ironic that some features of the official narrative of the events unfolding on 9/11 hardly stand the test of a real rigorous and sober scientific approach to them? If so, could you give us an example, please?

AZ: I receive e-mails from professors every week that agree that it is ironic that elements within the official narrative do not pass basic scholarly criteria. A most basic principle of scholarship is to verify sources of information. I can give four examples of information crucial to the 9/11 narrative that was destroyed by government officials. Academics should reflect on how this is a serious violation of scholarship.

[A] Some of the crucial tape recordings of communications among Federal Aviation Agency workers, concerning the hijackings that were occurring, were destroyed by a FAA supervisor. (4) [B] Some of the tape recordings of the torture testimony crucial to how 9/11 was organized were destroyed by the Central Intelligence Agency. [C] Despite an agreement to maintain Securities and Exchange Commission stock market information, critical data regarding the high probability of insider trading in the days leading up to 9/11 were destroyed. [D] Most academics in civil engineering are quite disturbed when they learn of a third skyscraper, WTC7, that came down on 9/11 that was not even hit by a plane. A computer model was used by NIST, a scientific institute funded by the U.S. government, to explain WTC7's demise. However, civil engineers trying to verify the computer model have been denied and the details of the computer model have been classified.

LS: Do you think that academics shy away from the subject of 9/11 in order to avoid to be scorned per se by their colleagues as „conspiracy theorists“? In other words, is this also a matter of timidity and the lack of courage in the sense as Robert F. Kennedy once put it: „Few men are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.“ (5)

AZ: Academics who have taught for over 30 years in top universities said during the film interviews that the main reason why academics do not critically examine 9/11 is because of timidity and laziness. Kenneth Westhues, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo, stated in his endorsement of the film: „Canadian academic

historian Michiel Horn has observed that as a rule, professors are milquetoasts. Here is documentary proof of Horn's observation, on the subject of this century's first great day of infamy. This film also documents exceptions to Horn's rule: professors with guts enough to raise critical questions. Highly recommended, especially for provoking reasoned political discussion and debate". Westhues' statement concurs with Robert Kennedy's observation regarding timidity. Professors have a unique profession because they have academic freedom. What's also unfortunately unique is that most professors don't make use of academic freedom. However, I am optimistic as I receive frequent e-mails from academics wanting to work together to bring to a halt this fraudulent 100-year war on terror.

LS: Thank you very much for taking your time, Mr. Zuberi!

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