

The 9/11 Commission Report: A 571 Page Lie

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In discussing my second 9/11 book, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, I have often said, only half in jest, that a better title might have been “a 571-page lie.” (Actually, I was saying “a 567-page lie,” because I was forgetting to count the four pages of the Preface.) In making this statement, one of my points has been that the entire Report is constructed in support of one big lie: that the official story about 9/11 is true.

Another point, however, is that in the process of telling this overall lie, *The 9/11 Commission Report* tells many lies about particular issues. This point is implied by my critique’s subtitle, “Omissions and Distortions.” It might be thought, to be sure, that of the two types of problems signaled by those two terms, only those designated “distortions” can be considered lies.

It is better, however, to understand the two terms as referring to two types of lies: implicit and explicit. We have an explicit lie when the Report claims that the core of each of the Twin Towers consisted of a hollow steel shaft or when it claims that Vice President Cheney did not give the shoot-down order until after 10:10 that morning. But we have an implicit lie when the Commission, in its discussion of the 19 alleged suicide hijackers, omits the fact that at least six of them have credibly been reported to be still alive, or when it fails to mention the fact that Building 7 of the World Trade Center collapsed. Such omissions are implicit lies partly because they show that the Commission did not honor its stated intention “to provide the fullest possible account of the events surrounding 9/11.” They are also lies insofar as the Commission could avoid telling an explicit lie about the issue in question only by not mentioning it, which, I believe, was the case in at least most instances.

Given these two types of lies, it might be wondered how many lies are contained in *The 9/11 Commission Report*. I do not know. But, deciding to see how many lies I had discussed in my book, I found that I had identified over 100 of them. Once I had made the list, it occurred to me that others might find this summary helpful. Hence this article.

One caveat: Although in some of the cases it is obvious that the Commission has lied, in other cases I would say, as I make clear in the book, that it appears that the Commission has lied. However, in the interests of simply giving a brief listing of claims that I consider to be lies, I will ignore this distinction between obvious and probable lies, leaving it to readers, if they wish, to look up the discussion in *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*. For ease in doing this, I have parenthetically indicated the pages of the book on which the various issues are discussed.

Given this clarification, I now list the omissions and claims of *The 9/11 Commission Report* that I, in my critique of that report, portrayed as lies:

1. The omission of evidence that at least six of the alleged hijackers – including Waleed al-Shehri, said by the Commission probably to have stabbed a flight attendant on Flight 11 before it crashed into the North Tower of the WTC – are still alive (19-20).
2. The omission of evidence about Mohamed Atta – such as his reported fondness for alcohol, pork, and lap dances — that is in tension with the Commission’s claim that he had become fanatically religious (20-21).
3. The obfuscation of the evidence that Hani Hanjour was too poor a pilot to have flown an airliner into the Pentagon (21-22).
4. The omission of the fact that the publicly released flight manifests contain no Arab names (23).
5. The omission of the fact that fire has never, before or after 9/11, caused steel-frame buildings to collapse (25).
6. The omission of the fact that the fires in the Twin Towers were not very big, very hot, or very long-lasting compared with fires in several steel-frame buildings that did not collapse (25-26).
7. The omission of the fact that, given the hypothesis that the collapses were caused by fire, the South Tower, which was struck later than the North Tower and also had smaller fires, should not have collapsed first (26).
8. The omission of the fact that WTC 7 (which was not hit by an airplane and which had only small, localized fires) also collapsed – an occurrence that FEMA admitted it could not explain (26).
9. The omission of the fact that the collapse of the Twin Towers (like that of Building 7) exemplified at least 10 features suggestive of controlled demolition (26-27).
10. The claim that the core of each of the Twin Towers was “a hollow steel shaft” – a claim that denied the existence of the 47 massive steel columns that in reality constituted the core of each tower and that, given the “pancake theory” of the collapses, should have still been sticking up many hundreds of feet in the air (27-28).
11. The omission of Larry Silverstein’s statement that he and the fire department commander decided to “pull” Building 7 (28).
12. The omission of the fact that the steel from the WTC buildings was quickly removed from the crime scene and shipped overseas before it could be analyzed for evidence of explosives (30).
13. The omission of the fact that because Building 7 had been evacuated before it collapsed, the official reason for the rapid removal of the steel – that some people might still be alive in the rubble under the steel – made no sense in this case (30).
14. The omission of Mayor Giuliani’s statement that he had received word that the World Trade Center was going to collapse (30-31).
15. The omission of the fact that President Bush’s brother Marvin and his cousin Wirt Walker

III were both principals in the company in charge of security for the WTC (31-32).

16. The omission of the fact that the west wing of the Pentagon would have been the least likely spot to be targeted by al-Qaeda terrorists, for several reasons (33-34).

17. The omission of any discussion of whether the damage done to the Pentagon was consistent with the impact of a Boeing 757 going several hundred miles per hour (34).

18. The omission of the fact that there are photos showing that the west wing's façade did not collapse until 30 minutes after the strike and also that the entrance hole appears too small for a Boeing 757 to have entered (34).

19. The omission of all testimony that has been used to cast doubt on whether remains of a Boeing 757 were visible either inside or outside the Pentagon (34-36).

20. The omission of any discussion of whether the Pentagon has a anti-missile defense system that would have brought down a commercial airliner – even though the Commission suggested that the al-Qaeda terrorists did not attack a nuclear power plant because they assumed that it would be thus defended (36).

21. The omission of the fact that pictures from various security cameras – including the camera at the gas station across from the Pentagon, the film from which was reportedly confiscated by the FBI immediately after the strike – could presumably answer the question of what really hit the Pentagon (37-38).

22. The omission of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's reference to "the missile [used] to damage [the Pentagon]" (39).

23. The apparent endorsement of a wholly unsatisfactory answer to the question of why the Secret Service agents allowed President Bush to remain at the Sarasota school at a time when, given the official story, they should have assumed that a hijacked airliner might be about to crash into the school (41-44).

24. The failure to explore why the Secret Service did not summon fighter jets to provide air cover for Air Force One (43-46).

25. The claims that when the presidential party arrived at the school, no one in the party knew that several planes had been hijacked (47-48).

26. The omission of the report that Attorney General Ashcroft was warned to stop using commercial airlines prior to 9/11 (50).

27. The omission of David Schippers' claim that he had, on the basis of information provided by FBI agents about upcoming attacks in lower Manhattan, tried unsuccessfully to convey this information to Attorney General Ashcroft during the six weeks prior to 9/11 (51).

28. The omission of any mention of the FBI agents who reportedly claimed to have known the targets and dates of the attacks well in advance (51-52).

29. The claim, by means of a circular, question-begging rebuttal, that the unusual purchases of put options prior to 9/11 did not imply advance knowledge of the attacks on the part of the buyers (52-57).

30. The omission of reports that both Mayor Willie Brown and some Pentagon officials received warnings about flying on 9/11 (57).
31. The omission of the report that Osama bin Laden, who already was America's "most wanted" criminal, was treated in July 2001 by an American doctor in the American Hospital in Dubai and visited by the local CIA agent (59).
32. The omission of news stories suggesting that after 9/11 the US military in Afghanistan deliberately allowed Osama bin Laden to escape (60).
33. The omission of reports, including the report of a visit to Osama bin Laden at the hospital in Dubai by the head of Saudi intelligence, that were in tension with the official portrayal of Osama as disowned by his family and his country (60-61).
34. The omission of Gerald Posner's account of Abu Zubaydah's testimony, according to which three members of the Saudi royal family – all of whom later died mysteriously within an eight-day period – were funding al-Qaeda and had advance knowledge of the 9/11 attacks (61-65).
35. The Commission's denial that it found any evidence of Saudi funding of al-Qaeda (65-68).
36. The Commission's denial in particular that it found any evidence that money from Prince Bandar's wife, Princess Haifa, went to al-Qaeda operatives (69-70).
37. The denial, by means of simply ignoring the distinction between private and commercial flights, that the private flight carrying Saudis from Tampa to Lexington on September 13 violated the rules for US airspace in effect at the time (71-76).
38. The denial that any Saudis were allowed to leave the United States shortly after 9/11 without being adequately investigated (76-82).
39. The omission of evidence that Prince Bandar obtained special permission from the White House for the Saudi flights (82-86).
40. The omission of Coleen Rowley's claim that some officials at FBI headquarters did see the memo from Phoenix agent Kenneth Williams (89-90).
41. The omission of Chicago FBI agent Robert Wright's charge that FBI headquarters closed his case on a terrorist cell, then used intimidation to prevent him from publishing a book reporting his experiences (91).
42. The omission of evidence that FBI headquarters sabotaged the attempt by Coleen Rowley and other Minneapolis agents to obtain a warrant to search Zacarias Moussaoui's computer (91-94).
43. The omission of the 3.5 hours of testimony to the Commission by former FBI translator Sibel Edmonds – testimony that, according to her later public letter to Chairman Kean, revealed serious 9/11-related cover-ups by officials at FBI headquarters (94-101).
44. The omission of the fact that General Mahmoud Ahmad, the head of Pakistan's

intelligence agency (the ISI), was in Washington the week prior to 9/11, meeting with CIA chief George Tenet and other US officials (103-04).

45. The omission of evidence that ISI chief Ahmad had ordered \$100,000 to be sent to Mohamed Atta prior to 9/11 (104-07).

46. The Commission's claim that it found no evidence that any foreign government, including Pakistan, had provided funding for the al-Qaeda operatives (106).

47. The omission of the report that the Bush administration pressured Pakistan to dismiss Ahmad as ISI chief after the appearance of the story that he had ordered ISI money sent to Atta (107-09).

48. The omission of evidence that the ISI (and not merely al-Qaeda) was behind the assassination of Ahmad Shah Masood (the leader of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance), which occurred just after the week-long meeting between the heads of the CIA and the ISI (110-112).

49. The omission of evidence of ISI involvement in the kidnapping and murder of Wall Street Reporter Daniel Pearl (113).

50. The omission of Gerald Posner's report that Abu Zubaydah claimed that a Pakistani military officer, Mushaf Ali Mir, was closely connected to both the ISI and al-Qaeda and had advance knowledge of the 9/11 attacks (114).

51. The omission of the 1999 prediction by ISI agent Rajaa Gulum Abbas that the Twin Towers would be "coming down" (114).

52. The omission of the fact that President Bush and other members of his administration repeatedly spoke of the 9/11 attacks as "opportunities" (116-17).

53. The omission of the fact that The Project for the New American Century, many members of which became key figures in the Bush administration, published a document in 2000 saying that "a new Pearl Harbor" would aid its goal of obtaining funding for a rapid technological transformation of the US military (117-18).

54. The omission of the fact that Donald Rumsfeld, who as head of the commission on the US Space Command had recommended increased funding for it, used the attacks of 9/11 on that very evening to secure such funding (119-22).

55. The failure to mention the fact that three of the men who presided over the failure to prevent the 9/11 attacks - Secretary Rumsfeld, General Richard Myers, and General Ralph Eberhart - were also three of the strongest advocates for the US Space Command (122).

56. The omission of the fact that Unocal had declared that the Taliban could not provide adequate security for it to go ahead with its oil-and-gas pipeline from the Caspian region through Afghanistan and Pakistan (122-25).

57. The omission of the report that at a meeting in July 2001, US representatives said that because the Taliban refused to agree to a US proposal that would allow the pipeline project to go forward, a war against them would begin by October (125-26).

58. The omission of the fact that Zbigniew Brzezinski in his 1997 book had said that for the United States to maintain global primacy, it needed to gain control of Central Asia, with its vast petroleum reserves, and that a new Pearl Harbor would be helpful in getting the US public to support this imperial effort (127-28).
59. The omission of evidence that some key members of the Bush administration, including Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, had been agitating for a war with Iraq for many years (129-33).
60. The omission of notes of Rumsfeld's conversations on 9/11 showing that he was determined to use the attacks as a pretext for a war with Iraq (131-32).
61. The omission of the statement by the Project for the New American Century that "the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein" (133-34).
62. The claim that FAA protocol on 9/11 required the time-consuming process of going through several steps in the chain of command – even though the Report cites evidence to the contrary (158).
63. The claim that in those days there were only two air force bases in NORAD's Northeast sector that kept fighters on alert and that, in particular, there were no fighters on alert at either McGuire or Andrews (159-162).
64. The omission of evidence that Andrews Air Force Base did keep several fighters on alert at all times (162-64).
65. The acceptance of the twofold claim that Colonel Marr of NEADS had to telephone a superior to get permission to have fighters scrambled from Otis and that this call required eight minutes (165-66).
66. The endorsement of the claim that the loss of an airplane's transponder signal makes it virtually impossible for the US military's radar to track that plane (166-67).
67. The claim that the Payne Stewart interception did not show NORAD's response time to Flight 11 to be extraordinarily slow (167-69).
68. The claim that the Otis fighters were not airborne until seven minutes after they received the scramble order because they did not know where to go (174-75).
69. The claim that the US military did not know about the hijacking of Flight 175 until 9:03, when it was crashing into the South Tower (181-82).
70. The omission of any explanation of (a) why NORAD's earlier report, according to which the FAA had notified the military about the hijacking of Flight 175 at 8:43, was now to be considered false and (b) how this report, if it was false, could have been published and then left uncorrected for almost three years (182).
71. The claim that the FAA did not set up a teleconference until 9:20 that morning (183).
72. The omission of the fact that a memo by Laura Brown of the FAA says that its teleconference was established at about 8:50 and that it included discussion of Flight 175's

hijacking (183-84, 186).

73. The claim that the NMCC teleconference did not begin until 9:29 (186-88).

74. The omission, in the Commission's claim that Flight 77 did not deviate from its course until 8:54, of the fact that earlier reports had said 8:46 (189-90).

75. The failure to mention that the report that a large jet had crashed in Kentucky, at about the time Flight 77 disappeared from FAA radar, was taken seriously enough by the heads of the FAA and the FBI's counterterrorism unit to be relayed to the White House (190).

76. The claim that Flight 77 flew almost 40 minutes through American airspace towards Washington without being detected by the military's radar (191-92).

77. The failure to explain, if NORAD's earlier report that it was notified about Flight 77 at 9:24 was "incorrect," how this erroneous report could have arisen, i.e., whether NORAD officials had been lying or simply confused for almost three years (192-93).

78. The claim that the Langley fighter jets, which NORAD had previously said were scrambled to intercept Flight 77, were actually scrambled in response to an erroneous report from an (unidentified) FAA controller at 9:21 that Flight 11 was still up and was headed towards Washington (193-99).

79. The claim that the military did not hear from the FAA about the probable hijacking of Flight 77 before the Pentagon was struck (204-12).

80. The claim that Jane Garvey did not join Richard Clarke's videoconference until 9:40, after the Pentagon was struck (210).

81. The claim that none of the teleconferences succeeded in coordinating the FAA and military responses to the hijackings because "none of [them] included the right officials from both the FAA and the Defense Department" - although Richard Clarke says that his videoconference included FAA head Jane Garvey as well as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and General Richard Myers, the acting chair of the joint chiefs of staff (211).

82. The Commission's claim that it did not know who from the Defense Department participated in Clarke's videoconference - although Clarke's book said that it was Donald Rumsfeld and General Myers (211-212).

83. The endorsement of General Myers' claim that he was on Capitol Hill during the attacks, without mentioning Richard Clarke's contradictory account, according to which Myers was in the Pentagon participating in Clarke's videoconference (213-17).

84. The failure to mention the contradiction between Clarke's account of Rumsfeld's whereabouts that morning and Rumsfeld's own accounts (217-19).

85. The omission of Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta's testimony, given to the Commission itself, that Vice-President Cheney and others in the underground shelter were aware by 9:26 that an aircraft was approaching the Pentagon (220).

86. The claim that Pentagon officials did not know about an aircraft approaching Pentagon until 9:32, 9:34, or 9:36 - in any case, only a few minutes before the building was hit (223).

87. The endorsement of two contradictory stories about the aircraft that hit the Pentagon – one in which it executed a 330-degree downward spiral (a “high-speed dive”) and another in which there is no mention of this maneuver (222-23).
88. The claim that the fighter jets from Langley, which were allegedly scrambled to protect Washington from “Phantom Flight 11,” were nowhere near Washington because they were mistakenly sent out to sea (223-24).
89. The omission of all the evidence suggesting that the aircraft that hit the Pentagon was not Flight 77 (224-25).
90. The claim that the military was not notified by the FAA about Flight 93’s hijacking until after it crashed (227-29, 232, 253).
91. The twofold claim that the NMCC did not monitor the FAA-initiated conference and then was unable to get the FAA connected to the NMCC-initiated teleconference (230-31).
92. The omission of the fact that the Secret Service is able to know everything that the FAA knows (233).
93. The omission of any inquiry into why the NMCC initiated its own teleconference if, as Laura Brown of the FAA has said, this is not standard protocol (234).
94. The omission of any exploration of why General Montague Winfield not only had a rookie (Captain Leidig) take over his role as the NMCC’s Director of Operations but also left him in charge after it was clear that the Pentagon was facing an unprecedented crisis (235-36).
95. The claim that the FAA (falsely) notified the Secret Service between 10:10 and 10:15 that Flight 93 was still up and headed towards Washington (237).
96. The claim that Vice President Cheney did not give the shoot-down authorization until after 10:10 (several minutes after Flight 93 had crashed) and that this authorization was not transmitted to the US military until 10:31 (237-41).
97. The omission of all the evidence indicating that Flight 93 was shot down by a military plane (238-39, 252-53).
98. The claim that Richard Clarke did not receive the requested shoot-down authorization until 10:25 (240).
99. The omission of Clarke’s own testimony, which suggests that he received the shoot-down authorization by 9:50 (240).
100. The claim that Cheney did not reach the underground shelter (the PEOC [Presidential Emergency Operations Center]) until 9:58 (241-44).
101. The omission of multiple testimony, including that of Norman Mineta to the Commission itself, that Cheney was in the PEOC before 9:20 (241-44).
102. The claim that shoot-down authorization must be given by the president (245).
103. The omission of reports that Colonel Marr ordered a shoot-down of Flight 93 and that General Winfield indicated that he and others at the NMCC had expected a fighter jet to

reach Flight 93 (252).

104. The omission of reports that there were two fighter jets in the air a few miles from NYC and three of them only 200 miles from Washington (251).

105. The omission of evidence that there were at least six bases with fighters on alert in the northeastern part of the United States (257-58).

106. The endorsement of General Myers' claim that NORAD had defined its mission in terms of defending only against threats from abroad (258-62).

107. The endorsement of General Myers' claim that NORAD had not recognized the possibility that terrorists might use hijacked airliners as missiles (262-63).

108. The failure to highlight the significance of evidence presented in the Report itself, and to mention other evidence, showing that NORAD had indeed recognized the threat that hijacked airliners might be used as missiles (264-67).

109. The failure to probe the issue of how the "war games" scheduled for that day were related to the military's failure to intercept the hijacked airliners (268-69).

110. The failure to discuss the possible relevance of Operation Northwoods to the attacks of 9/11 (269-71).

111. The claim - made in explaining why the military did not get information about the hijackings in time to intercept them - that FAA personnel inexplicably failed to follow standard procedures some 16 times (155-56, 157, 179, 180, 181, 190, 191, 193, 194, 200, 202-03, 227, 237, 272-75).

112. The failure to point out that the Commission's claimed "independence" was fatally compromised by the fact that its executive director, Philip Zelikow, was virtually a member of the Bush administration (7-9, 11-12, 282-84).

113. The failure to point out that the White House first sought to prevent the creation of a 9/11 Commission, then placed many obstacles in its path, including giving it extremely meager funding (283-85).

114. The failure to point out that the Commission's chairman, most of the other commissioners, and at least half of the staff had serious conflicts of interest (285-90, 292-95).

115. The failure of the Commission, while bragging that it presented its final report "without dissent," to point out that this was probably possible only because Max Cleland, the commissioner who was most critical of the White House and swore that he would not be part of "looking at information only partially," had to resign in order to accept a position with the Export-Import Bank, and that the White House forwarded his nomination for this position only after he was becoming quite outspoken in his criticisms (290-291).

I will close by pointing out that I concluded my study of what I came to call "the Kean-Zelikow Report" by writing that it, "far from lessening my suspicions about official complicity, has served to confirm them. Why would the minds in charge of this final report engage in such deception if they were not trying to cover up very high crimes?" (291)

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