

The 9/11 Attacks, "Keeping the Lid on the Lie": Media Response to the Growing Influence of the 9/11 Truth Movement

Part III: Media Coverage of the International ReThink911 Campaign, 2013-14

By <u>Elizabeth Woodworth</u> Global Research, March 12, 2014 Region: <u>USA</u> Theme: <u>Media Disinformation</u>, <u>Terrorism</u>

It is impossible to keep the lid on a lie forever – especially a major deception carried out in full view of witnesses and cameras.

The last article in the Media Response series was published in February 2010, when public broadcasters in eight countries were reporting doubts about the official 9/11 story, and nine corporate media reviews had explored the issue during the previous year.[1]

Since then, the mainstream media has forged ahead on the subject. In the past six months alone, 20 stories in major papers have covered the September-December 2013 ReThink911 campaign – including Time Magazine, the NYT, the Ottawa Citizen, and BBC News Magazine.

As time passes our memories of 9/11 becomes less painful and more open to public discussion. There is increasing skepticism in both the social and corporate media about the credibility of 9/11 as the foundation for the continuing global war on terror.

Last year, President Obama was prevented from waging – on grounds of state terrorism –war with Syria.

As of March 2014, seven congressmen, backed by impacted 9/11 families, are calling for the release of a secret 2002 congressional study that implicates Saudi Arabia in financing the alleged hijackers.

Establishing the truth about 9/11 is a fundamental necessity for the achievement of peace between East and West.

The horrendous visual images of airliners careening into the tallest buildings in America were seared into the collective world brain on 9/11.

This collective human experience has been so powerful and haunting that no equally powerful and pervasive experience has emerged to show that the Twin Towers were not brought down by Muslim hijackers run by Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan.

Yet the weakness and falsity of the official story has been amply demonstrated by more than a decade of peer-reviewed research and scholarship, as shown by the 23-member 9/11 Consensus Panel's evidence-based Consensus Points and reading list.[2]

And people suspect this. A 2011 poll shows that 42% of Canadians believe US government

information about 9/11 has been intentionally hidden from the public.[3]

The tale of 19 hijackers is viewed more and more as a construct – and the "reality" that it created, as a contrived perception.

If there is one force with the power to reverse this perception, it is the dynamic ReThink911 campaign, which has taken hold strongly in the US and Canada and has plans to expand into Britain and other countries.

The ReThink911 Campaign

The ReThink911 organization spearheads its campaign with the Achilles heel of the 9/11 perception – the sudden collapse, later in the day, of the 47-storey steel skyscraper World Trade Center 7, which stood adjacent to the Twin Towers.

Massive in area, Seven's base was the size of a football field. It was not hit by a plane.

It took the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) seven years to devise a computer simulation purporting to show how an enormous steel skyscraper could collapse symmetrically with a level roofline in six seconds – from "office fires" alone.

One dismayed professor of chemistry told how he watched its collapse ten times on YouTube, his "jaw dropping lower and lower...I have not slept since that day."[4]

But NIST concluded that on one floor, one over-heated beam expanded and detached from one pillar, thereby causing the entire building to drop like a stone –with all columns failing simultaneously.[5]

So for the month of September 2013, ReThink911 purchased large blue and orange billboards in major cities across Canada, the US, England, and Australia.

These included an enormous 5-storey high sign[6] in New York City's Times Square, posted throughout September and October, and seen by millions of people. A similar sign was posted in Dundas Square, Toronto.[7]

Needless to say, the media could hardly ignore an "elephant in the room" this size, towering beyond the windows of the New York Times.

How did the media deal with the situation?

First, it is important to consider that the survival of truth in a democracy rests on the outcome of an information war that is based largely on psychological operations and propaganda.

With regard to the truth about 911, the history of corporate media reporting is reminiscent of Gandhi's famous statement: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

In 2010, at the time of my last media survey, the mainstream media was waking up to research from the 911 truth community.

By the fall of 2013, the new ReThink911 campaign had gained considerable attention in papers such as the New York Times, Time Magazine, the BBC Magazine, and the Ottawa

Citizen.

Most of the 20 or so stories were neutral in tone, with only a few ridiculing or opposing the campaign.

I. New York City:

On October 15, 2013, New York'spopular Village Voice ran a long story about the ReThink911 billboards in Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Dallas, San Diego, San Francisco, Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Sydney, and London – with the enormous Times Square ad as the centerpiece – adding that

"Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth has denounced the NIST report as fraudulent and insist the truth has yet to be revealed."[8]

The Village Voice then gave a lengthy description of the ReThink911 media blitz, printing about a dozen of the 200 emails they had received, and ending with "Thanks for your thoughts, everyone." (The article attracted 79 comments.)

Compare this to the rambling Libertarian Republic article[9] that set out to debunk what it called persistent "conspiracy theories." (The term "conspiracy theory" is a well known psychological thought-stopper.)

It was full of superficial obsolete evidence (compared, for example, to new evidence emerging through the 9/11 Consensus Panel's research[10]) and full of irrelevant speculation about what motivates 9/11 researchers.

Understandably, it received only one comment.

However, the piece was published in a mainstream conservative journal, and because the author had worked long and hard to challenge the ReThink911 campaign, and because the publisher gave it so much space, it fits into Gandhi's category #3, "then they fight you." (which is the last stage before truth wins)

Time Magazine, on the other hand, published an objective account (on September 11, 2013 anniversary) about the ReThink911 campaign's leading spokesman, architect Richard Gage:

In 2006, Richard Gage, a San Francisco-based architect, founded Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, which doubts Building 7 collapsed because of fire. Gage and other architects and engineers argue that 7 World Trade Center came down in a free fall, which could only have been caused by a deliberate demolition explosion. More than 2,000 architects and engineers have signed a petition calling for a new investigation into the building's collapse.[11]

However, Time marginalized public support for the controlled demolition evidence by citing a 2011 BBC poll showing that only 15% of Americans believe the government was involved.[12]

Note that back in September 2006 Time had reported:

"A Scripps-Howard poll of 1,010 adults last month found that 36% of Americans consider it 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' that government officials either allowed the attacks to be carried out or carried out the attacks themselves. Thirty-six percent adds up to a lot of people. This is not a fringe phenomenon. It is a mainstream political reality."[13]

The New York Times, also on the September 11, 2013 anniversary, reported in neutral terms that "a group known as Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, which wants a new investigation into the events that day, is buying billboards in New York and other cities as part of what it calls its Rethink911 campaign," and linked to the ReThink911.org website.[14]

And in January 2014, the Village Voice ran a second article featuring actor Austin Farwell ("The Long Ride Home"), who wrote:

I hope and pray daily that we as a nation recognize that forensic evidence exists proving that Building 7 was brought down in a controlled demolition. We at rethink911.org and the entire crew at Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth have been tirelessly pursuing recognition for our peer-reviewed critiques and experiments into how and why Building 7 (the third tower to fall at freefall speed on 9/11) fell the way it did. Our hope in another new year is that the American people receive a true and impartial investigation into the events of 9/11.[15]

In summary: Twelve years after the event, the New York media has become simply factual – rather than dismissive and scornful – in reporting the work of a credible professional group calling for a reinvestigation of 9/11.

This move beyond "ignoring" and "ridiculing" signals a sea change in media receptivity to the idea that rogue elements within the US were somehow complicit in 911.

II. "Then They Fight You"

However, three news accounts were either sensational or condescending in taking issue with the ReThink911 evidence.

The Dallas Observer, referring to Dallas as the "City of Hate," wrote at the top of its piece, "We Apologize in Advance for This Particular Item."[16] It then lumped together doubts about Pearl Harbor, JFK, and 9/11 as (thought-stopping) conspiracy theories.

The Observer did do its homework, though – enough to cite an academic paper arguing against a classic 9-author per-reviewed study[17] that found nanothermite, an incendiary/explosive, in the WTC dust.

This willingness to argue the evidence in a mainstream newspaper is an encouraging sign that a public debate is no longer taboo.

And indeed the piece did generate a fight, as shown in its 269 comments. The most recent commenter wrote: "I'm not going to speculate on motivations re. the slant of this article, but it amounts to a denial of an objective, careful look at the evidence." [18]

The Huffington Post Canada's editorial piece, "9/11 Conspiracy Ad On Ottawa Buses And

Toronto Billboard Sparks Outrage," produced 377 comments.

Although the paper referred to "the well-known 9/11 'Truther' organization Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth," it focused strongly on the "widespread outrage" – the "disrespectful" and "disgusting" notion that the US government may have been complicit in the attacks.[19]

This is the sort of superficial outdated pap (insulting to an infantilized but media-savvy public) that is leading the fight (against the truth of the people) that Gandhi described.

When ReThink911 purchased 100 ads in the Bay Area Transit System, the San Francisco Weekly reported on the advertizing angle.[20]

After devising a particularly sarcastic title and describing the ads as "a valiant form of evangelism," the paper did manage to briefly discuss the controlled demolition debate between NIST and the architects and engineers from AE911truth.org.

The four comments supported the ReThink911 campaign.

It seems that when the media disparages 9/11 skepticism these days, the fight is on.

III. The Canadian Media: 1.Ottawa

"The ads in Canada sparked more public discussion than anywhere," reported campaign manager Ted Walter to the BBC News Magazine.[21]

In Ottawa alone, six newspaper reports followed the controversy over OC Transpo's decision to allow prominent ReThink911 ads on 300 of its city buses for the month of September 2013.[22]

The first story, in the Ottawa Citizen, reported in a neutral, balanced way:

Did you know a third tower fell on 9/11?

The question appears on 300 OC Transpo buses this week in a global advertising campaign challenging the official version of the Sept. 11, 2001, disaster in Manhattan.

New York-based Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth is trying to rally public pressure for a new official inquiry into whether the World Trade Center towers and neighbouring WTC Building 7 were actually toppled by shadowy U.S. forces using controlled demolitions.

Though the group is careful not to blame anyone in particular, the implication is that elements allied with the former administration of president George W. Bush needed to manufacture sufficient reason to justify planned military assaults on Afghanistan and Iraq.[23]

Sun News also reported the group's position on the WTC collapses, and quoted Mayor Jim Watson's comment, "I disagree with the sentiment of the truther movement, obviously. I think it's very disrespectful ... but we do in this country have free speech, and at the end of the day they met council's (advertising) standards and they're allowed on the buses."[24]

An editorial by the Ottawa Citizen came down strongly in favour of free speech, defending ReThink911's right to advertize its views:

The ads in question are the work of people who question official accounts of what happened at the World Trade Center. The group, including the New Yorkbased Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth, ran the ads in cities across North America, including Ottawa, to make their point. The 9/11 truthers believe there is compelling forensic evidence to show the towers were not destroyed by fire, as official accounts maintain. These people believe advanced military grade explosives and clandestine demolition measures structurally weakened the buildings before the planes crashed. They are entitled to their views, and if they want to disseminate them, it is their right to do so.[25]

A poll run by 1310News asked "Should the ads from 'ReThink9/11' be allowed on OC Transpo buses?" 91.5% voted "yes" and 8.5% said "no."[26]

In December 2013 the ads resumed, and the OC Transpo review issue hit the headlines again.

The Ottawa Citizen City Hall Blog suggested that pressure from city councillors was more than coincidental:

"One of the odder spectacles at Wednesday's meeting of the city's transit commission was councillors insisting that the review they've ordered up of OC Transpo's policy on the ads it accepts has nothing to do with the ad campaign bought by 9/11 truthers to coincide with the anniversary of the terrorist attacks (or, let us allow for the conceivable possibility, fake terrorist attacks) this year.

Keith Egli tried that line out: 'It is not about a particular ad campaign,' he said. It's about the transit commission doing due diligence, as a new body, to make sure its policies and whatnot are in shape, he said. Shad Qadri and Diane Deans gave versions of it, too, though less stridently. They're just being responsible overseers. The 9/11 truther thing? No connection.

Yet Deans was the one who <u>called for a review of the advertising</u> policy specifically in response to the 9/11 truther ads."[27]

The City Hall Blog then tracked the public debate, showing clearly that the issue boiled down to free speech versus demonstrable bias. A city lawyer was cited. When "Rainer Bloess asked [the lawyer] whether there's any indication that the city's in violation of any relevant law or jurisprudence. No, she said."[28]

MetroNews Ottawa produced a balanced report as well, quoting 9/11 Truth spokesperson Isabelle Beenan:

"The goal of rethink 9/11 is to make this information widely known by running advertisements in cities around the world, encouraging the public to look at evidence and decide for themselves," she said.

"Should such an activity be blocked because some in our society are uncomfortable about the implications about this building being brought down by controlled demolitions? The Canadian charter of rights and freedoms says, 'no.'"[29] This article received 185 comments (which are usually moderated in online papers), the most recent being:

Glad *someone* is educating the public about the collapse of Building 7... the mainstream media sure aren't! Take a look please, and judge for yourself; don't buy what others tell you to think about it. It will definitely surprise you how strong the evidence really is for controlled demolition of this building, including its free-fall.[30]

Summing up the controversy, the Ottawa Sun wrote: "And while it's hard, if not sometimes seemingly impossible to do so, it would be far better if councillors' personal points of view are left out of guiding any policy on city advertising."[31]

The Ottawa media coverage of the ReThink911 campaign shows that within Canadian public culture, the idea of US complicity in 9/11 has shifted from the unthinkable to the debatable.

IV. The Canadian Media: 2. CBC, Toronto Star

On September 11, 2013, Canada's national public broadcaster covered the ReThink911 Ottawa story via print and TV.

CBC TV News in Ottawa reported the organization's belief that the World Trade Centre was felled "not by planes but by controlled explosives."[32]

The CBC article cited a letter from the ReThink911 website addressing fears that questioning 9/11 might show "insensitivity" to the surviving families:

"The ReThink911 coalition includes 9/11 victims' family members who want nothing more than an accurate and unbiased accounting of the death of their loved ones.[33]

Indeed it was a group of 9/11 families who scheduled a Capitol Hill press conference for March 12, 2014, along with seven US Congressman, urging Congress to publicly release 28 strangely classified pages from a 2002 Congressional Report that have remained secret for 12 years.[34]

Canada's largest newspaper, The Toronto Star, covered the ReThink story at street level in Toronto, quoting comments such as, "What brought down these buildings? It was actually a controlled demolition."

A young man said, "Once you see the evidence – people don't want to put the few hours in it takes to be convinced –" adding that even his mom, after hearing a lecture in Hamilton, is convinced. "We're not conspiracy theorists. We don't know who the conspirators are."

As to the huge ReThink911 sign in Dundas Square, the Star quoted a student's answer to the question it posed, "Did you know a third tower fell on 911?"

"They're not trying to sell you anything, it's just a question, and they're giving you the opportunity to answer."

V. London, England, BBC News Magazine, December 16, 2013

The BBC coverage was subtly dishonest, announcing the ReThink campaign but moving immediately away from the evidence itself to a red-herring discussion of whether Canadians tend to be wary of US officialdom.[35]

And it emphasized perceptions rather than evidence. For example, it related how Canadian nuclear physicist Frank Greening had been intrigued by the collapses and did his own research, teaming up in 2008 with a co-author to write a paper concluding that the allegations of controlled demolition had no merit.

But then he heard about evidence of explosive residue in the dust and invited his co-author to explore it. Greening was disappointed to be told, "Frank, look, the intent of the paper was to silence the truthers. I consider it mission accomplished."

Now Dr. Greening is no longer sure. "My motive was not to silence anybody, but to get to the truth," he said. "If I ever make it to heaven, my first question will be: 'OK, tell me what really happened on that day.'"[36]

There's a new development that might help Greening to decide. The NIST Report simulations, showing that WTC7 came down by fire alone, left out vital pieces of the building structure that would have made its collapse impossible.[37]

The devil, as they say, is in the details.

Mr. Richard Gage will be presenting these details on his cross-Canada speaking tour, March 13 to April 1st.[38]

If the media ever starts investigating the details rather than the perceptions, there's bound to be a reinvestigation and a big fight.

"And then you win."

Notes

[1] Elizabeth Woodworth, "The Media Response to the Growing Influence of the 9/11 Truth Movement: Part II: A Survey of Attitude Change in 2009-2010," Global Research, February 15, 2010 (http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-media-response-to-the-growing-influence-of-the-9-11-truth-move ment/17624).

[2] The Consensus 9/11 Panel, "Evidence-Based Literature Sources Opposing the Official Story of September 11," (<u>http://www.consensus911.org/references-evidence-based/</u>). The Consensus Points, developed by more than 20 researchers using a medical review model, are at http://www.consensus911.org/the-911-consensus-points/

[3] Benjamin Shingler, "Many Canadians unsure they've been told everything about 9/11: poll," The Toronto Star, September 10, 2011

(http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/09/10/many_canadians_unsure_theyve_been_told_every thing_about_911_poll.html).

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[5] Pepper, William F., "The NIST Report on the Collapse of WTC Building 7 Challenged by 2100 Architects and Engineers." Submitted to US Department of Commerce, Office of the Inspector General, December 12, 2013

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[9] Austin Petersen, "False rumors still persist about '9/11 truth,""The Libertarian Republic, September 11, 2013

(http://thelibertarianrepublic.com/911-conspiracies-debunked/#axzz2vFrAmkCL).

[10] See http://www.consensus911.org/the-911-consensus-points/[

11] Nate Rawlings, "Sept. 11 'Truthers' Mark Anniversary: With a billboard in Times Square and a global ad campaign, a group keeps questioning what happened twelve years ago," Sept. 11, 2013 (http://nation.time.com/2013/09/11/sept-11-truthers-mark-anniversary/).

[12] The poll was commissioned by Mike Rudin, producer of the BBC's "Conspiracy Files," which has a long history of seeking to debunk emerging evidence about 9/11. See BBC, "9/11 conspiracy theories," August 29, 2011 (http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-14572054).

[13] Lev Grossman, "Why the Conspiracy Theories Won't Go Away," Time Magazine, September 3, 2006 (http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1531304-1,00.html).

[14] Stuart Elliott, "12 Years Later, Americans Are Asked to 'Take a Day' for 9/11," New York Times, September 9, 2013 (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/09/business/media/12-years-later-americans-are-asked-to-take-aday-for-9-11.html? r=1&).

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Huffington Post Canada, "9/11 Conspiracy Ad On Ottawa Buses And Toronto Billboard Sparks Outrage," September 12, 2013

(http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/09/12/911-conspiracy-ad-ottawa-bus-photo_n_3913937.html).

[20] Rachel Swan, "Truther in Advertising: 9/11 Conspiricists Decide Commuters are Ready to Learn a Terrible Secret," San Francisco Weekly, September 25, 2013 (http://www.sfweekly.com/2013-09-25/news/truthers-rethink911-bart-advertising/).

[21] Tara McKelvey, "Canadians wary of 9/11 explanations – and of US officials," BBC News Magazine, December 16, 2013 (http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25370076).

[22] This list of references starts with the earliest report, and includes Ottawa city newspapers:

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Jon Willling, "Free speech protects 'disrespectful' 9/11 conspiracy bus ads: Ottawa mayor," Sun News, September 12, 2013 (http://www.sunnewsnetwork.ca/sunnews/politics/archives/2013/09/20130912-154907.html).

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Susan Sherring, "OC Transpo bus ads draw attention," Ottawa Sun, November 20, 2013 (<u>http://www.ottawasun.com/2013/11/20/oc-transpo-bus-ads-draw-attention</u>).

Trevor Greenway, "More 9/11 'truther' ads to hit Ottawa buses," Metro News Ottawa, November 21, 2013 (<u>http://metronews.ca/news/ottawa/860796/more-911-truther-ads-to-hit-ottawa-buses/</u>)

"OC Transpo's advertising-policy review is all about the 9/11 truthers," Ottawa Citizen, City Hall Blog, November 21, 2013

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[27] "OC Transpo's advertising-policy review is all about the 9/11 truthers," Ottawa Citizen, City Hall Blog, November 21, 2013

(http://blogs.ottawacitizen.com/2013/11/21/oc-transpos-advertising-policy-review-is-all-about-the-91 1-truthers/) It is interesting to note that the article in which Deans called for a review (the link to it is underlined) has disappeared from the Internet, and is also not available in the Internet Archive. The URL was

http//www.ottawacitizen.com/news/questioning+truth+appear+Transpo+buses/8899246/story.html

[28] Ibid.

[29] Trevor Greenway, "More 9/11 'truther' ads to hit Ottawa buses," Metro News Ottawa, November 21, 2013 (<u>http://metronews.ca/news/ottawa/860796/more-911-truther-ads-to-hit-ottawa-buses/</u>)

[30] Ibid.

[31] Susan Sherring, "OC Transpo bus ads draw attention," Ottawa Sun, November 20, 2013 (http://www.ottawasun.com/2013/11/20/oc-transpo-bus-ads-draw-attention).

[32] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aye5yAK0Yes&feature=youtu.be

[33] CBC News," Group behind 9/11 bus ad responds to criticism," September 11, 2013 (http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/group-behind-9-11-bus-ad-responds-to-criticism-1.1703868)

[34] Paul Sperry, "Victims' families: Release secret 'Saudi' 9/11 report," New York Post, March 8, 2014 (http://nypost.com/2014/03/08/victim-families-release-secret-saudi-911-report/).

[35] Tara McKelvey, "Canadians wary of 9/11 explanations – and of US officials," BBC News Magazine, December 16, 2013 (<u>http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25370076</u>).

[36] Ibid.

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[37] William Pepper, "The NIST Report On the Collapse of WTC Building 7 Challenged by 2,100 Architects and Engineers," January, 2014

(<u>http://www.journalof911studies.com/resources/2014JanLetterPepper.pdf</u>). Fraud is a possibility and the case is being investigated by attorney William Pepper on behalf of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth.

[38] Tour information at: http://www.rethink911.ca

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