

Tim Russert, Dick Cheney, and 9/11

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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While we are remembering Tim Russert and his years as moderator of “Meet the Press,” we would do well to recall his interview with Vice President Dick Cheney at Camp David on September 16, 2001, just five days after the 9/11 attacks.^{[1](#)} In fact, Cheney himself, during an interview with NBC’s Matt Lauer the morning after Russert died, reminded us of that Camp David interview, saying: “I always, when I think of Tim and think of ‘Meet the Press,’ that’s the show that always comes to mind. . . . It was a remarkable moment in American history.”^{[2](#)}

Commenting that he himself “remember[ed] that interview vividly,” Lauer asked: “Anything stand out from that interview?” In his reply, Cheney said: “We went back and reminisced to some extent about what had actually happened on the morning of 9/11. So it was—it was a remarkable moment in my career.”^{[3](#)}

It was indeed. In reminiscing about his movements that morning, Cheney contradicted what was to become a crucial element of the account that the 9/11 Commission would give of those movements.

In praising Russert’s tenure on “Meet the Press,” Cheney said: “He would ask you tough questions, he would remind you of quotes you made previously in other settings or on earlier shows, so you never got away with anything going up vis-à-vis Tim.”^{[4](#)}

Given Cheney’s appraisal of his interview with Russert as a “remarkable moment” in both American history and Cheney’s own career, we should apply Russert’s method to this interview, reminding ourselves of exactly what Cheney said, then comparing it with what was said about Cheney by the 9/11 Commission.

The Camp David Interview

After discussing with Cheney the US response to the 9/11 attacks, Russert turned to September 11 itself, asking Cheney where he was when he learned of the first attack on the World Trade Center. Replying that he was in his White House office, Cheney said that, after seeing the second attack on television, he convened a meeting in his office with Condoleezza Rice and others, then talked by telephone to President Bush (who was in Florida), discussing the public statement the latter might make. (This call would have needed to take place shortly after Bush left the classroom, which was reportedly at about 9:12,^{[5](#)} if it was to help him prepare his address to the nation, which was to be given at 9:30. The *New York Times* wrote: “[A]t 9:12, [Bush] abruptly retreated [from the classroom], speaking to Mr. Cheney and New York officials.”^{[6](#)}) Cheney then said:

“While I was there, over the next several minutes, watching developments on the television

and as we started to get organized to figure out what to do, my Secret Service agents came in and, under these circumstances, they just move. They don't say 'sir' or ask politely. They came in and said, 'Sir, we have to leave immediately, and grabbed me and. . ."7

Russert asked: "Literally grabbed you and moved you?" Cheney replied:

"Yeah. And, you know, your feet touch the floor periodically. But they're bigger than I am, and they hoisted me up and moved me very rapidly down the hallway, down some stairs, through some doors and down some more stairs into an underground facility under the White House, and, as a matter of fact, it's a corridor, locked at both ends, and they did that because they had received a report that an airplane was headed for the White House."

After confirming Russert's supposition that this was Flight 77, Cheney continued:

"And when it entered the danger zone and looked like it was headed for the White House was when they grabbed me and evacuated me to the basement. . . [O]nce I got down into the shelter, the first thing I did-there's a secure phone there. First thing I did was pick up the telephone and call the president again, who was still down in Florida, at that point, and strongly urged him to delay his return."

After discussing that advice in terms of the need to secure "presidential succession," Cheney continued the narrative about his own movements that day, saying:

"Once I left that immediate shelter, after I talked to the president, urged him to stay away for now, well, I went down into what's called PEOC,⁸ the Presidential Emergency Operations Center, and there, I had Norm Mineta . . . I had Condi Rice with me and several of my key staff people. We had access, secured communications with Air Force One, with the Secretary of Defense over in the Pentagon. We had also the secure videoconference that ties together the White House, CIA, State, Justice, Defense."

After giving still more details, Cheney said: "I was in a position to be able to see all the stuff coming in, receive reports and then make decisions in terms of acting with it." Cheney made clear, in other words, that he had everyone and everything he needed in the PEOC to take charge.

He then added: "But when I arrived there within a short order, we had word the Pentagon's been hit."

Summary of Cheney's Account to Russert

According to what Vice President Dick Cheney told Tim Russert, only five days after 9/11, the sequence of events went like this:

1. The Secret Service came into Cheney's office to take him downstairs after they "received a report that an airplane was headed for the White House." Although the plane "turned away and . . . flew a circle and came back in and then hit the Pentagon," it was "when it entered the danger zone and looked like it was headed for the White House," Cheney said, that "they grabbed me and evacuated me to the basement."

2. The Secret Service agents hustled Cheney down to the underground corridor (which he also called the “immediate shelter,” evidently meaning the part of the bomb shelter that one reaches first).
3. While in this corridor, he used the secure phone to talk to the president again, this time urging him to delay his return to Washington.
4. He went from this corridor to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center, or PEOC (which is also called the “shelter conference room”).
5. After he arrived in the PEOC, he learned that the Pentagon had been hit. Cheney’s statement here— “[W]hen I arrived there within a short order, we had word the Pentagon’s been hit”—is ambiguous. Did he mean that he arrived there within a short order? Or that, within a short order after arriving there, he learned that the Pentagon had been hit? The latter seems more likely. The main point, in any case, is clear: *Cheney learned about the Pentagon attack—which reportedly occurred at about 9:38—only after arriving in the PEOC.*

This is significant because it contradicts what the 9/11 Commission would state three years later.

The 9/11 Commission’s Account

According to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, the sequence of events was as follows.

1. At 9:33, the Secret Service learned that an unidentified aircraft was coming toward the White House, but “[n]o move was made to evacuate the Vice President at this time,” because the Secret Service learned at 9:34, just before sounding the alarm, “that the aircraft was turning south.”
2. Just before 9:36, the Secret Service, having learned that the plane had started circling back, “ordered the immediate evacuation of the Vice President.”
3. After being hustled downstairs, “The Vice President entered the underground tunnel leading to the shelter at 9:37. Once inside, Vice President Cheney and the agents paused in an area of the tunnel that had a secure phone, a bench, and television.”
4. While there, “[t]he Vice President [telephoned Florida] and asked to speak to the President, but it took time for the call to be connected.”
5. “He learned in the tunnel that the Pentagon had been hit, and he saw television coverage of the smoke coming from the building.”
6. Mrs. Cheney, having arrived at the White House at 9:52, “joined her husband in the tunnel.”
7. “[A]t 9:55, the Vice President was still on the phone with the President, advising that three planes were missing and one had hit the Pentagon.” (The Commissioners “believe this is the same call in which the Vice President urged the President not to return to Washington.”)
8. “After the call ended, Mrs. Cheney and the Vice President moved from the tunnel to the shelter conference room. . . . [T]he Vice president arrived in the room shortly before 10:00,

perhaps at 9:58.”[9](#)

As a comparison of these two timelines shows, the 9/11 Commission’s account differs significantly from the account that Cheney gave to Russert.

Contradictions between the Two Accounts

According to Cheney, he arrived in the PEOC, or shelter conference room, *before* he learned about the attack on the Pentagon. According to the 9/11 Commission, by contrast, he entered the PEOC *after* he learned about this attack (and, in fact, about 20 minutes after its occurrence at 9:38 AM).

This contrast leads to another: According to Cheney, the telephone call in which he urged the president to stay away from Washington occurred *before* he learned about the Pentagon strike. According to the Commission’s account, however, this call occurred *after* he had learned about the strike, so he was able to talk to Bush about it.

The two accounts appear, moreover, to contradict each other with regard to the time at which Cheney was taken downstairs to the underground corridor. According to what Cheney told Russert, this occurred as soon as the Secret Service agents heard that a plane was approaching the White House—they did not wait until the plane came that direction a second time—and this seems to have been shortly after Cheney called the president about the latter’s public statement—a call that, according to the *New York Times*, occurred at 9:12. If Cheney was taken down about five minutes later, his account would not conflict, at least not strongly, with the testimony of Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, who told the 9/11 Commission during an open hearing in 2003 that Cheney was already there when he got to the PEOC at 9:20.[10](#)

If Cheney meant something close to this, his account would, however, strongly contradict *The 9/11 Commission Report*, according to which he did not even head downstairs until 9:36 and did not enter the corridor until 9:37.

However, even if Cheney did not mean to imply that he had entered the PEOC before 9:20, the natural interpretation of his statement—“when I arrived there [in the PEOC] within a short order, we had word the Pentagon’s been hit”—would seem to be that the Pentagon attack occurred *after* he had entered the PEOC.

One can point out, to be sure, that Cheney did not actually say this. He said only that he *learned about* the Pentagon attack after he entered the PEOC. One who wanted to support the 9/11 Commission’s timeline might argue that, although the Pentagon was attacked at 9:38, Cheney did not *hear about* this attack until 20-some minutes later, after he, as the Commission says, entered the PEOC at 9:58. On that basis, one might argue, Cheney’s account and that of the Commission could be reconciled.

However, besides being extremely implausible (by suggesting that Vice President Cheney, who was formerly the secretary of defense and on 9/11 was the person in charge at the White House, would not have been notified about such an attack for over 20 minutes), this attempted reconciliation would also be ruled out by the Commission’s timeline, which says that *Cheney learned about the Pentagon attack while he was still in the corridor, before* he entered the PEOC. He told Russert that he learned about it *after* he entered the PEOC.

It is impossible, therefore, to reconcile the two accounts. If the story that Cheney told

Russert at Camp David, just five days after 9/11, was true, then the story told by the 9/11 Commission in July 2004, almost three years later, was false.

The Unique Source for the 9/11 Commission's Timeline

On what did the 9/11 Commission base its timeline? It claimed that the 9:37 time for Cheney's entry into the corridor, from which the 9:58 estimate for his entry into the PEOC followed, was based on a timeline in a Secret Service report. By the Commission's own admission, however, the Secret Service said that "the 9:37 entry time in their timeline was based on alarm data, which is no longer retrievable."¹¹ The claim that Cheney entered the corridor at 9:37, in other words, is based on no official documentation.

Could the Commission cite journalistic accounts to support its timeline? It appears that there was one journalistic account, and only one, that supported this timeline. This was an MSNBC-*Newsweek* article by Evan Thomas, which was dated December 31, 2001, at MSNBC and appeared in the January 7, 2002, issue of *Newsweek*. This article said: "Shortly before 10 a.m., the Cheneys were led into the PEOC conference room. . . . [T]hey looked up at the TV screens. It was 9:58 a.m."¹²

In saying this, Thomas disagreed not only with what Norman Mineta would later tell the 9/11 Commission, but also with what Richard Clarke would say in *Against All Enemies*, which became a best-selling book while the 9/11 Commission was still holding hearings.

According to Clarke, shortly after the meeting that Cheney had with Condoleezza Rice after the second attack on World Trade Center, which occurred at 9:03, the Secret Service wanted Rice as well as Cheney to go down to the PEOC. Rice, however, first went with Clarke to the White House's Video Teleconferencing Center, where Clarke was to set up a video conference. This conference, Clarke's statements suggest, began at about 9:10.¹³ After spending a few minutes there, Rice said, according to Clarke: "You're going to need some decisions quickly. I'm going to the PEOC to be with the Vice President. Tell us what you need." Clarke replied: "What I need is an open line to Cheney and you."¹⁴ Some minutes later, evidently at about 9:15, Norman Mineta arrived and Clarke, after receiving him in the Situation Room, "suggested he join the Vice President."¹⁵ Clarke thereby seemed to imply that Cheney was in the PEOC prior to 9:15.

In an ABC News program narrated by Peter Jennings on the first anniversary of 9/11, Condoleezza Rice is portrayed as supporting the early descent time. After describing Cheney's trip down to the PEOC with the Secret Service agents, ABC's Charles Gibson said: "Up above, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice is trying to find the rest of the President's team," after which Rice is shown saying: "As I was trying to find all of the principals, the Secret Service came in and said, 'You have to leave now for the bunker. The Vice President's already there. There may be a plane headed for the White House.'" Gibson then added: "In the bunker, the Vice President is joined by Rice and Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta."¹⁶ ABC agreed in advance, therefore, with Mineta's account, according to which Cheney was down there before he arrived.

According to another ABC News program that same week, Cheney's own White House photographer, David Bohrer, also supported the early descent time. Showing Bohrer describe the moment when the Secret Service agents told Cheney, "Sir, you have to come with us," ABC portrayed this event as happening "just after 9 a.m.," presumably because

that is what Bohrer himself had said.[17](#)

Mineta's account was also supported in advance by a *Wall Street Journal* article, published about a month after 9/11, which told the story of that morning from the perspective of American and United Airlines. Discussing the actions of Donald J. Carty and Jim Goodwin, top executives of AA and UA, respectively, this article said:

"Mr. Carty and Mr. Goodwin . . . were talking on the phone with Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, who was in a government command bunker with Vice President Dick Cheney. Mr. Carty told Mr. Mineta that American was ordering all 162 of its planes out of the sky; United already had ordered its 122 planes down. About five minutes later, the FAA shut down the skies over the U.S. completely to all but military aircraft. At [9:45 a.m.],[18](#) American lost contact with a third flight, . . . But . . . radio contact was restored in 10 minutes. . . . Soon, reports began pouring in that a plane had crashed into the Pentagon."[19](#)

Mineta had the FAA give two orders that morning. The first one, which was to prevent any more planes from taking off, was at 9:26. The second, which was for all planes to be brought down, occurred at 9:45, after the Pentagon was struck.[20](#) In describing the FAA order that occurred before the attack on the Pentagon, the *Journal* erroneously called it an order to bring all planes down (confusion between the two orders was quite common).[21](#) It is clear, in any case, that these two airline officials, as paraphrased by the *Journal*, reported that Cheney was present in the PEOC prior to the attack on the Pentagon.

The 9/11 Commission's timeline, according to which Cheney arrived much later, was based on a twofold claim: that Cheney did not enter the corridor until 9:37 and that his phone call to the president then took about 20 minutes.

As we saw above, the alleged Secret Service claim that Cheney did not enter the corridor until 9:37 was, by the Commission's own admission, undocumented. Surely this undocumented claim cannot trump the combined testimony of Norman Mineta, Richard Clarke, David Bohrer (as described by ABC News), American and United Airlines (as described by the *Wall Street Journal*), and even Dick Cheney himself (as given to Tim Russert five days after 9/11).

However, the claim that Cheney did not enter the corridor until 9:37 was mentioned by one journalistic account: the aforementioned MSNBC-*Newsweek* article by Evan Thomas. According to Thomas, it was 9:35 when the Secret Service entered Cheney's office—where the vice president, incidentally, was not in a take-charge mode but was simply "standing by his desk, looking at the TV in the corner." This article also has the other main elements later articulated in *The 9/11 Commission Report*: Cheney's time-consuming phone call to the president (who was "not easy to reach"), Cheney's being told about the Pentagon attack while he was still in the corridor, Lynne Cheney's arrival while the vice president was still on the phone, and then the conclusion: "Shortly before 10 a.m., the Cheneys were led into the PEOC conference room. . . . [T]hey looked up at the TV screens. It was 9:58 a.m."[22](#)

If the 9/11 Commission's timeline was derived from the Thomas article, or else the source(s) for that article, the question becomes: Where did Thomas get the information on which he based his account?

The note provided by the 9/11 Commission for its conclusion that the Cheneys arrived in the PEOC "shortly before 10:00, perhaps at 9:58," mentions three transcripts, all of which are

White House transcripts: “Lynne Cheney interview with *Newsweek*, Nov. 9, 2001”; “Vice President Cheney interview with *Newsweek*, Nov. 19, 2001”; and “Rice interview with Evan Thomas, Nov. 1, 2001.” Evidently, therefore, the Evan Thomas MSNBC-*Newsweek* article of December 31, 2001, was based significantly on interviews with Condoleezza Rice and the Cheneys.

It would appear, accordingly, that the account given by Cheney to *Newsweek* in November differed significantly from what he had told Russert on “Meet the Press” two months earlier. He told Russert that he learned about the Pentagon attack after he was already in the PEOC, thereby suggesting agreement with all the witnesses who would indicate that he was in the PEOC prior to the attack. But according to the story that he (along with his wife and Rice) apparently told *Newsweek*, which was later accepted by the 9/11 Commission, Cheney did not enter the PEOC, where he took charge of matters, until about 20 minutes after the attack on the Pentagon had already occurred.

Possible Motives for Changing the Timeline

What possible motives would there have been for Cheney to change the timeline? What possible motives might the 9/11 Commission have had for accepting Evan Thomas’s timeline, even though it was apparently the only journalistic account that depicted Cheney as not entering the PEOC until almost 10:00?

I mentioned above the fact that Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta reported to the 9/11 Commission in 2003 that, when he arrived in the PEOC at about 9:20, Cheney was already there. Mineta then gave the following account of a conversation he witnessed:

“During the time that the airplane was coming in to the Pentagon, there was a young man who would come in and say to the Vice President, ‘The plane is 50 miles out.’ ‘The plane is 30 miles out.’ And when it got down to ‘the plane is 10 miles out,’ the young man also said to the Vice President, ‘Do the orders still stand?’ And the Vice President turned and whipped his neck around and said, ‘Of course the orders still stand. Have you heard anything to the contrary?’[23](#)

When asked by Commissioner Timothy Roemer how long this conversation occurred after his arrival at 9:20, Mineta said, “Probably about five or six minutes.” That, as Roemer pointed out, would have been “about 9:25 or 9:26.”[24](#)

During an informal interview in 2007, incidentally, Mineta reaffirmed that Cheney was already there when he arrived in the PEOC, saying “absolutely.” When he was told that the Commission had said that Cheney did not arrive until 9:58, Mineta expressed surprise and said: “Oh no, no, no; I don’t know how that came about.” Although Mineta said he “might have been mistaken on the 9:25,” he said that Cheney was definitely there before the Pentagon was struck, and “so was Mrs. Cheney.”[25](#)

Mineta’s 2003 testimony at the 9/11 Commission hearing created two problems for the official story of the day’s events. For one thing, it implied that Cheney—who, as he told Russert, was in contact with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld—knew that an aircraft was approaching Washington about 12 minutes before the Pentagon was struck. This implication directly contradicted the official claim, according to which Pentagon officials did not know that an aircraft was approaching their building. This claim was essential for explaining why because the Pentagon had not been evacuated, with the result that 125 Pentagon

employees were killed. For example, one Pentagon spokesperson, having been asked why this evacuation did not occur, said: “The Pentagon was simply not aware that this aircraft was coming our way.”[26](#)

A second problem created by Mineta’s story involved the nature of “the orders.” Although Mineta assumed, he said, that they were orders to have the aircraft shot down, no aircraft approaching Washington was shot down. Mineta’s interpretation also made the young man’s question unintelligible. Given the threefold fact that the airspace over the Pentagon is categorized as “forbidden,” meaning that commercial aircraft are never permitted in it, that two hijacked planes had already crashed into the Twin Towers, and that still other planes had been reported hijacked, the expected orders, if an unidentified plane were approaching that airspace, would have been to shoot it down. Had Cheney given those orders, there would have been no reason for the young man to ask if the orders still stood. His question made sense only if the orders were to do something unexpected—*not* to shoot it down. The most natural interpretation of Mineta’s story, accordingly, was that he had inadvertently reported that he had heard Cheney confirm stand-down orders.

That Mineta’s testimony was perceived as a dangerous threat to the official account is suggested by several steps taken by the 9/11 Commission. The first step was the one on which we have focused: the claim, based on the White House-supplied *Newsweek* story, that Cheney did not enter the PEOC—at which time he first went into his take-charge mode (prior to that he was simply talking with the president and watching television)—until 20 minutes after the Pentagon had been struck.

A second step was to make no mention of this portion of Mineta’s testimony in *The 9/11 Commission Report*.

A third step is suggested by the fact that this portion of Mineta’s testimony is missing from the 9/11 Commission video archive.[27](#)

A fourth step was the creation of an alternative version of the story about an incoming aircraft. *The 9/11 Commission Report* wrote:

“At 10:02, the communicators in the shelter began receiving reports from the Secret Service of an inbound aircraft. . . . At some time between 10:10 and 10:15, a military aide told the Vice President and others that the aircraft was 80 miles out. Vice President Cheney was asked for authority to engage the aircraft. . . . The Vice President authorized fighter aircraft to engage the inbound plane. . . . The military aide returned a few minutes later, probably between 10:12 and 10:18, and said the aircraft was 60 miles out. He again asked for authorization to engage. The Vice President again said yes.”[28](#)

Although this story has some elements in common with Mineta’s story, it differs in two major respects. It makes clear that Cheney issued a shoot-down, not a stand-down, order. And it came far too late to have had any relevance to the Pentagon attack.

In fact, by coming so late, it also—and this provides a second possible motive for the revised timeline—could have had no relevance to another controversial issue: Whether the US military had shot down United Flight 93 over Pennsylvania (which, according to the 9/11 Commission, crashed at 10:03).

There were reports that this indeed had occurred. For example, Major Daniel Nash, one of

the F-15 pilots sent to fly over New York City that morning, reported that when he returned to base, he was told that a military F-16 had shot down an airliner in Pennsylvania.²⁹ This rumor became sufficiently widespread that it came up during General Richard Myers's confirmation hearing with the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 13. Chairman Carl Levin, saying that "there have been statements that the aircraft that crashed in Pennsylvania was shot down," added: "Those stories continue to exist."³⁰ Myers denied that it had occurred, but several other military officers would later state that their fighters were in position to do it.³¹ Richard Clarke would later state, moreover, that Cheney had given the authorization at approximately 9:50,³² which would have been early enough for the military to have shot it down at 10:03.

According to the Commission, the incoming flight, which elicited Cheney's shoot-down authorization at some time after 10:10, was indeed United 93. Unbeknownst to Cheney and the military, however, this flight had already crashed at 10:03.³³ Insofar as this story was accepted, therefore, the military could not have, under Cheney's orders, shot down United 93.

Conclusion

As we have seen, it would appear that the 9/11 Commission's timeline, which rules out the possibility that Cheney could have been responsible for the attack on the Pentagon or the downing of United 93, came from Cheney himself, via the account that he himself—along with Lynne Cheney and Condoleezza Rice—gave to *Newsweek*.

Arguably the strongest evidence against this timeline is the account that Cheney gave to Tim Russert on the September 16, 2001, edition of "Meet the Press." The 9/11 Commission's timeline is, of course, also strongly contradicted by Richard Clarke, Norman Mineta, and others. Ignoring those accounts has, however, proved easy. It will be much more difficult to continue to ignore the given to Russert on "Meet the Press." Besides the fact that this account was given by Cheney himself, it was also given just five days after 9/11, when the events of that day were still fresh in his mind.

Also, Russert's interview with Cheney is very well known. Matt Lauer, for example, said: "I remember that interview vividly. . . . I was glued to that."³⁴ Cheney's 2008 description of that interview as a "remarkable moment in American history," moreover, has probably encouraged many people, including many journalists to review it.

In describing Russert's typical method on "Meet the Press," Cheney rightly praised him, saying: "He would ask you tough questions, he would remind you of quotes you made previously in other settings or on earlier shows, so you never got away with anything going up vis-à-vis Tim." But Cheney has thus far gotten away with the contradiction between what he told Russert and what he apparently told *Newsweek*, which became the position of *The 9/11 Commission Report*. But perhaps that will not continue to be the case, especially now that Cheney has drawn the world's attention to his Camp David interview with Tim Russert.

The contradiction between the 9/11 Commission's report and Cheney's own words exists only because of the response elicited from him by Tim Russert. What better tribute could journalists around the world pay to Russert's life and work than to follow up on this contradiction, demanding answers to why it exists?

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Debunking: An Answer to Popular Mechanics and Other Defenders of the Official Conspiracy Theory (2007) and 9/11 Contradictions: An Open Letter to Congress and the Press (2008). He thanks Tod Fletcher and Elizabeth Woodworth for help with this essay.

¹ “The Vice President Appears on Meet the Press with Tim Russert,” MSNBC, 16 September 2001 (www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html).

² “Interview of the Vice President by Matt Lauer of NBC News,” 14 June 2008 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080614-3.html>).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ William Langley, “Revealed: What Really Went On During Bush’s ‘Missing Hours,’” *Telegraph*, 16 December 2001 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1365455/Revealed-what-really-went-on-during-Bush%27s-%27missing-hours%27.html>), says that Bush left at 9:12. However, Bill Sammon suggests that Bush lingered longer (*Fighting Back: The War on Terrorism: From Inside the Bush White House* [Washington: Regnery, 2002], 89-90).

⁶ David E. Sanger and Don Van Natta Jr., “After the Attacks: the Events; In Four Days, a National Crisis Changes Bush’s Presidency,” *New York Times*, 16 September 2001 (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0DE5D7163BF935A2575AC0A9679C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=print>).

⁷ “The Vice President Appears on Meet the Press with Tim Russert,” MSNBC, 16 September 2001 (www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html).

⁸ The transcript has “call a PEOC,” but this was surely a mistranscription for “called PEOC.”

⁹ *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, Authorized Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004) (<http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>), 39-40.

¹⁰ 9/11 Commission Hearing, 23 May 2003 (http://www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm). Mineta gave this account under questioning from 9/11 Commission Vice Chair Lee Hamilton and Commissioner Timothy Roemer. Mineta’s interchange with Hamilton can be viewed at <http://video.google.ca/videoplay?docid=-3722436852417384871>, his interchange with Roemer at <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20050724164122860>.

¹¹ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 464 n. 209.

¹² Evan Thomas, “The Story of September 11,” MSNBC, 31 December 2001. Although this article can no longer be accessed through the MSNBC URL, it is available as “The Day That Changed America,” *Jersey Shore Today* which states that it appeared in the January 7 issue of *Newsweek*. (http://jerseyshoretoday.com/archive/day_that_changed_america.htm),

13 Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 1-4.

14 Ibid., 2-4. Clarke a few pages later reported that he used this line to make requests shortly after 9:30 and was "amazed at the speed of the decisions coming from Cheney" (8).

15 Ibid., 5.

16 "9/11: Interviews by Peter Jennings," ABC News, 11 September 2002 (<http://s3.amazonaws.com/911timeline/2002/abcnews091102.html>).

17 "Sept. 11's Moments of Crisis: Part 2: Scramble," ABC News, 14 September 2002 (http://web.archive.org/web/20021003222152/http://abcnews.go.com/onair/DailyNews/sept11_moments_2.html).

18 The text has "8:45 a.m. CDT." I converted this to Eastern Daylight Time to correspond with all the other times mentioned.

19 Scott McCartney and Susan Carey, "American, United Watched and Worked In Horror as Sept. 11 Hijackings Unfolded," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 October 2001 (<http://s3.amazonaws.com/911timeline/2001/wallstreetjournal101501.html>).

20 Jane Garvey, the head of the FAA, said to the House Subcommittee on Aviation on 21 September 2001: "As soon as Secretary Mineta was aware of the nature and scale of the terrorist attack on New York and Washington . . . the Secretary ordered the air traffic system shut down for all civil operations. . . . At 9:26 a.m., before either American Airlines Flight 77 or United Airlines Flight 93 had crashed, a national ground stop was issued that prevented any aircraft from taking off. At 9:45 a.m. all airborne aircraft were told to land at the nearest airport" (http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept_11/garvey_001.htm).

21 See David Ray Griffin, *9/11 Contradictions: An Open Letter to Congress and the Press* (Northampton: Olive Branch, 2008), Chap. 4.

22 Thomas, "The Story of September 11."

23 9/11 Commission Hearing, 23 May 2003.

24 Ibid.

25 "9/11 Seattle Truth Meets Norm Mineta" (<http://www.youtube.com/v/u-5PKQTUz5o>).

26 "Air Attack on Pentagon Indicates Weaknesses," *Newsday*, 23 September 2001 (<http://s3.amazonaws.com/911timeline/2001/newsday092301.html>).

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