

Unanswered Questions: What the September Eleventh Families Asked and the 9/11 Commission Ignored

A review of Ray McGinnis's book

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It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of this book. It is a tour de force that blows away twenty years of U.S. government lies and obfuscations about the mass murders of September 11, 2001, the foundational event of recent times that claimed thousands of victims whose relatives still cry out for truth and justice.

Reading [Unanswered Questions](#) will roil you to the depths of your soul and illuminate your mind as Ray McGinnis presents fact after fact backed up by almost one thousand endnotes and twelve years of meticulous research. There is nothing speculative about this book. It is not a “conspiracy theory.”

McGinnis ingeniously and brilliantly documents those murders through the eyes of victims’ relatives and their decades-long, agonizing efforts to seek honest answers from the U.S. government. To have their simple and obvious questions answered. To know the truth about why their loved ones died and who killed them.

Their struggles have been met with cruel indifference from four presidents (Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden), three New York City mayors (Giuliani, Bloomberg, and de Blasio), the 9/11 Commission, and so many others in positions of authority who have turned deaf ears to their *cris de coeur*. The corporate mass media have rubbed salt in their wounds as they have stage-managed the lies and coverups. And controlled opposition operatives have played slick games to direct attention away from the heart of the matter.

The families’ search for answers to their questions have been either ignored or answered with lies and dissimulation piled upon dissimulation to protect the guilty. McGinnis is their champion. He insists on answers.

He powerfully unfurls layer upon layer of facts and the government’s fictions in a timeline that brings us to the twentieth anniversary of these atrocities. While reading it, one cannot

help but think of the thousands of innocent victims of that terrible day and their suffering families, and the millions of innocent victims throughout the world who have been murdered by the U.S. government in the name of 9/11. The “war on terror” has been waged by a government that continues to refuse to tell the truth about who the “terrorists” were on September 11, 2001.

By refusing to answer the families’ questions and thereby hypothetically claiming the Fifth Amendment for fear of incriminating themselves, government officials have ironically incriminated themselves.

For McGinnis is like a prosecuting attorney who works not for the state but for the people. He forces the issue by asking the questions his clients want answered. Like them, he is persistent and requests answers to a litany of interrogations that are met with silence. The government’s stonewalling is deafening, and readers – who are the jury – are left to decide the case partially based on those non-answers, often justified under the sham of “national security” or just plain arrogance. When answers are forthcoming, they are incomplete and disingenuous.

Seventy per cent of the questions the Family Steering Committee asked the 9/11 Commission were left unanswered in *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Those that were answered raised more questions than they answered.

But the reason that this book is so powerful is because McGinnis answers the questions that the government does not. And so his title – *Unanswered Questions* – is ironically false while also being true.

This should in no way put off those who still cling to the official story. For McGinnis is exceedingly fair in assessing and presenting the facts and readily admits when there are disagreements.



While focusing on a core group of bereaved families called The Family Steering Committee who are insistent on answers, a group that includes four New Jersey widows known as “The Jersey Girls” whose husbands died in the Twin Towers, he includes many others and does not shy away from saying when they are at odds. The only way a fair-minded person can assess the book is to read it. And if you don’t read it and you have bought the government’s official fabrications or are still sitting on the fence, you are in flight from truth. This book demands attention.

As far as I know, while there have been many excellent books critiquing the government’s account of 9/11, led by about a dozen extraordinary works by David Ray Griffin, and many

books supporting the government's explanation led by *The 9/11 Commission Report*, *Unanswered Questions* is the first to approach the subject from the perspective of the questions asked by the relatives of the victims.

For many people, the murders of that day are abstract, although they naturally stir the human emotions of pity, fear, and terror. But from a distance, for they are now fading into history and are not personal. For some, there may have been a catharsis with *The 9/11 Commission Report* which they no doubt never read although it was said to be a "best-seller." That would be fake catharsis, for such fiction fails to tell the truth since it was written by people blind in mind and ears as well as in their eyes. But then again, who reads Sophocles or Aeschylus any longer? Better to read *The New York Times*, *Slate* magazine, *Time*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, etc., all of which effusively praised the *9/11 Commission Report* when it was released. As McGinnis reports, "*The New York Times* called the *Report* 'an uncommonly lucid, even riveting narrative' and an 'improbable literary triumph.'" This is simply propaganda.

But let us take a look inside *Unanswered Questions*, a genuine non-fiction book motivated by a deep compassion for the victims and a scholar's dedication to the truth. It is divided into four parts, each containing multiple chapters.

"Part One: From Grief to Advocacy" is the briefest and introduces the reader to firefighters, first responders, and family members who lost loved ones in the calamity. We learn how their grief turned to advocacy when they formed many groups to channel their energies. We learn how President Bush and his minions (or was Bush the minion and others like Cheney in charge?) opposed establishing a special commission to probe into the events of September Eleventh and how when his opposition was overcome he had the audacity to try to name Henry Kissinger to head the 9/11 Commission and how this was stopped. Finally, McGinnis tells us how the families' questions were greatly expanded after discovering Paul Thompson's extraordinary Internet timeline with its vast numbers of links to news reports that was later published as [The Terror Timeline](#).

"Part Two: Family Steering Committee Statements to the 9/11 Commission" examines how the 9/11 Commission was a setup from the start, not even close to being an impartial investigation. It began with the naming of Philip Zelikow as the Director. Zelikow had deep ties to the Bush administration and its neocons. He had been a member of Bush's transition team. Even "Richard Clarke, chairman of the 'Counterterrorism Security Group,' said 'the fix is in'" when Zelikow was appointed. Zelikow completely controlled the investigation and the final report despite many conflicts of interest. He essentially wrote the report before the hearings commenced. He had authored a book with Condoleezza Rice and was an advocate for preemptive war that was used to attack Iraq in early 2003, etc. His appointment was a sick joke, and the Family Steering Committee called for his immediate resignation but was rebuffed just as quickly by Chairman Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton. As a result, the final report ended being a fictional account authored by Zelikow (who has now been named to head a Covid-19 commission).

This section also covers the lies told by Mayor Rudy Giuliani when he testified. Three hundred and forty-three FDNY members were killed that day, heroes who didn't have to die. Giuliani's testimony so outraged the families of first responders that their fury was uncontained. McGinnis tells us:

They held up signs that read 'lies' and 'liar.' Family Steering Committee member Sally

Regenhard held up a sign that read 'FICTION.' She hollered, 'My son [Christian Regenhard, a probationary firefighter] was not told to get out! He would've gotten out! My son was murdered, murdered because of your incompetence and radios that didn't work!'

McGinnis captures the increasing anger felt by family members throughout this section as the final report was rammed through despite their protests.

"Part Three: The Family Steering Committee's Unanswered Questions" is the heart of the book. It contains eleven chapters devoted to questions addressed to NORAD, the FAA, the CIA/SEC/FBI, Mayor Giuliani, President Bush, the Port Authority/WTC/City of New York, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld but never answered. Over a thousand questions were posed to the 9/11 Commission to aid the investigation. McGinnis writes:

The questions were intended to direct the focus of the inquiry, and ask those most directly involved what led to the failures that day. They understood that it would not be the FSC members themselves asking the questions. Instead, they would be posed to witnesses by 9/11 commissioners in public hearings, or asked by Commission staff behind closed-door proceedings.

Some of these questions were directed at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). One question the FSC asked the 9/11 Commission was: 'Why weren't NORAD jets able to intercept the hijacked planes if they were airborne within eight minutes of notification?'

NORAD had an extremely successful history of intercepting errant aircraft, and a part of their mission was "surveillance and control of the [domestic] territorial airspace " in the U.S. and Canada. Nevertheless, on September 11, 2001 none of the hijacked aircraft were intercepted even though they were allegedly being flown by inexperienced and incompetent hijackers who, according to experts, could never fly such massive commercial airliners into the World Trade Towers or the Pentagon. Government witnesses either lied about the systemic failures to intercept the planes, omitted important details, or gave contradictory stories. Of course, they were then promoted. And although there was an unprecedented number of war games being "coincidentally" held on September 11, none of the 9/11 Commissioners asked any witnesses about them.

It was clear that all the questions about the failure to intercept the planes would not be answered, but McGinnis makes it obvious that their non-answers were indeed answers by omission, for in this section and all the others, he makes sure the questions are indeed answered and the cumulative effect is devastating. He does this not simply by expressing his own opinions but by quoting others and always giving sources.

In a similar vein, the FSC wished to know from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) why these hijacked planes were able to evade all of the highly sophisticated radar? McGinnis says, "The 9/11 Commission concluded that NORAD had failed to do its job on September Eleventh; NORAD's decisions impaired the FAA radar operator's conduct." Of course the radar questions were linked to the war games issue and since the war games questions were never asked, these massive failures were explained away in gobbledygook worthy of the Three Stooges.

Mindy Kleinberg, a FSC member whose husband Alan died in the North Tower, told the Commission that its theory of luck was bullshit, although she phrased it more diplomatically:

With regard to the 9/11 attacks, it has been said that the intelligence agencies have to be right 100% of the time and the terrorists only have to get lucky once. This explanation for the devastating attacks of September 11, simply on its face, is wrong in its value. Because the 9/11 terrorists were not just lucky once; they were lucky over and over again...Is it luck that aberrant stock trades were not monitored? Is it luck when 15 visas were awarded on incomplete forms? Is it luck when Airline Security screenings allow hijackers to board planes with box cutters and pepper spray? Is it luck when emergency FAA and NORAD protocols are not followed? Is it luck when a national emergency is not reported to top government officials on a timely basis? To me luck is something that happens once. When you have this repeated pattern of broken protocols, broken laws, broken communication, one cannot still call it luck.

Comically, *The 9/11 Commission Report* concluded that, as McGinnis notes, "The reason for the attacks was due simply to a [U.S. government] failure of imagination."

In regard to foreknowledge of the attacks, the families asked the CIA, the SEC, and the FBI for the names of the individuals and financial institutions who placed "put" orders on American and United Airlines in the three weeks prior to 9/11?

This involved the number three man at the CIA, CIA Executive Director Alvin "Buzzy" Krongard, former Vice Chairman of the board at Bankers Trust that had been acquired by Deutsche Bank through which many of these suspect stock trades passed. This insider trading that anticipated the 9/11 attacks was connected to a security firm named Stratesec that provided security to Dulles Airport, the World Trade Center, and United Airlines, and to Wirt Walker III, a business partner of the president's brother, Marvin Bush. Walker III was a board member of the Carlyle Group that was in turn connected to the bin Laden and Bush families.

Despite these and other highly suspect connections, the "9/11 Commission wasn't interested in exploring leads about possible foreknowledge of the attacks." Nor were they interested in the strange matter of Larry Silverstein, who had already owned World Trade Center Building 7, but who obtained a 99-year lease on the Twin Towers two months before the attack and who insisted that insurance cover a terrorist attack for \$3.5 billion dollars. Silverstein was later awarded \$4.55 billion when it was determined that there had been two suicide attacks.

Silverstein later claimed that there was agreement to "pull" (a controlled demolition term) Building 7, which happened at 5:20 PM that day despite never having been hit by a plane. Questions about the collapse of Building 7 were of course never answered, but the videos of its collapse are available for all to see with their own eyes. An excellent film about Building 7, [Seven](#) by Dylan Avery, should be seen by all. Seeing is believing, and what any objective observer can only conclude is that the building was taken down by controlled demolition, which the government denies.

Which brings us to other key questions that the FSC asked, McGinnis explores, and that went unanswered: Why did President Bush enter a Sarasota, Florida elementary classroom, stay there as the attacks unfolded, and not immediately return to Washington, D.C.? Why did he enter that classroom at 9:03 AM and remain there for fifteen minutes when it was

clear the U.S. was under a terrorist attack? Why was he, unlike Dick Cheney, not immediately taken out of the building by the Secret Service but was allowed to sit and read to children and not depart the building until 9:34 A.M.?

“The vice president was reported by President Bush’s personal secretary as being ‘seized by arms, legs, and his belt and physically’ carried out of his office at 9:03 A.M. Cheney was taken to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center below the White House, where Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta saw him prior to 9:25 A.M.” Yet Bush stayed to read a book when colleagues of the Secret Service agents protecting him had already been evacuated from the largest Secret Service Field Office in WTC 7.

“However,” writes McGinnis, “on December 4, 2001, President Bush made the following statement at a Town Hall meeting about the moment – 9:01 a.m. – that he said he learned about the attack. ‘And I was sitting outside the classroom waiting to go in, and I saw an airplane hit the tower – the television was obviously on, and I used to fly myself, and I said, “That’s one terrible pilot.” And I said, “It must have been a horrible accident.” But I was whisked off there – I didn’t have much time to think about it.’”

You can’t make this stuff up, yet it’s offered to the public and the victims’ families as acceptable. Bush was informed that a second plane had hit the South Tower by Andrew Card who came into the classroom and whispered in his ear. But three months later he claims he saw on television the first plane hit the North Tower when no one could have seen it since video of the first plane hitting the building at 8:46 A.M. was not available until much later.

These ridiculous discrepancies and other questions the FSC wished the 9/11 Commission to ask Bush under oath in sworn public testimony went unasked and unanswered. Instead, as McGinnis writes:

But, the meeting with Bush and Cheney took place in secret on April 29, 2004. It was not held under oath. No transcript was made available of their conversation with the commissioners. Nothing was learned about why the president remained at an elementary school during the attacks. Nothing was learned about what the president knew regarding foreign intelligence agencies forewarning the U.S. Nothing was learned about why the president had authorized America to prepare for war against Afghanistan in the days and weeks prior to the attacks of September 11.

Nor was anything learned about why Pentagon brass suddenly cancelled flights scheduled for September 11. Nothing about who warned them and why.

Essentially all the key questions the families asked were not answered. But McGinnis answers them, including those addressed to Cheney, Rumsfeld, Giuliani, the CIA, and the Port Authority/WTC/City of New York. By using the documented records against them, he does the job the 9/11 Commission refused to do. He unravels the lies, circumlocutions, and straightforward propaganda used to hide the truth, including the following:

- Cheney’s deceptions about when he got to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center and what he was doing there and his orders to his young assistant about the hijacked plane headed toward the capitol.
- Rumsfeld with his lies about not knowing anything about the World Trade Center attacks until fifteen minutes before the Pentagon was hit and why the Pentagon

was not defended.

- Giuliani and the obvious controlled demolition of Building 7 at 5:20 P.M. and the lies about the faulty telephones the firefighters carried.

Since this is not meant to be a book about a book but a book review, I will stop there. I would be remiss, however, if I failed to mention "Chapter 22: The Missing Accounts: FDNY."

It is part of Part Four: Acceptance And Dissent that leads to McGinnis's conclusion. Whatever one's position on the events of September 11, it is generally accepted that firefighters and first responders are objective and brave in the extreme. Of the emergency workers who responded to the call to help save the people in the Twin Towers, the vast majority who lost their lives in attempting to save their fellow human beings were firefighters - 343 of them perished that day. They were doing their duty. So their surviving colleagues' testimonies are priceless and beyond dispute. They had absolutely no reasons to lie. McGinnis tells us:

On September 11, 2001, Thomas Von Essen, the fire commissioner of New York City, ordered that oral histories be gathered from first responders, firefighters, and medical workers. He wanted to preserve the accounts of what they experienced at the World Trade Center. In the weeks and months following 9/11, 503 oral histories were taken. However, they were not released to the public. The 2002 mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, refused.

The Family Steering Committee asked the 9/11 Commission why, but the Commission refused to answer their question. After a law suit, the oral histories that run to 12,000 pages were released. They contain copious accounts of explosions going off in the Towers before the Towers collapsed.

FDNY firefighter John Coyne, who was in the South Tower, recalls how he had called his father and said:

I finally got through to my father and said 'I'm alive. I just wanted to tell you, go to church, I'm alive. I just so narrowly escaped this thing.' He said, 'Where were you? You were there?' I said, 'Yeh, I was right there when it blew up.' He said, 'You were there when the planes hit?' I said, 'No, I was there when it exploded, the building exploded.' He said, 'You mean when it fell down?' I said, 'No, when it exploded.' ... I totally thought it had been blown up. That's just the perspective of looking at it, it seemed to have exploded out.

Captain Karin DeShore, who was standing outside, said she saw a sequence of orange and red flashes coming from the North Tower:

Initially it was just one flash. Then this flash...kept popping all around the building and that building started to explode ... These popping sounds and the explosions were getting bigger, going up and down and the all around the building.

Keith Murphy: "There was tremendous damage in the lobby...like something had exploded out...a distant boom sounded like three explosions."

Assistant Commissioner Stephen Gregory: "I saw low-level flashes...[at] the lower level of the building. You know when they demolish a building?"

Explosions were being reported everywhere and by reporters as well. Researchers Graeme MacQueen and Ted Walter viewed 70 hours of television coverage and found that most reporters were saying the Towers came down as a result of explosions and demolition. Take a look [here](#).

There were explosions reported in the sub-basements before the planes hit. William Rodriguez, who was in the sub-basement of the North Tower and heard and felt very loud multiple explosions, told this to 9/11 Commission staff and this never appeared in *The 9/11 Commission Report*.

The evidence for explosives planted in the Towers and Building 7 is overwhelming but was completely discounted by the 9/11 Commission and the mass media complicit in its coverup. In fact, the demolition of Building 7 at 5:20 P.M was not worthy of a mention in the best-selling report. It should be obvious to any objective thinker that if these building were wired for explosives and were brought down via controlled demolition, then this could not have been done by Osama bin Laden or his followers but only by insiders who were granted secret access to these ultra-high security buildings.

Bob McIlvaine, whose son Bobby died in the North Tower, has persevered for twenty years to expose the lies surrounding September 11. McGinnis reports on his 2006 interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation host Evan Solomon:

I believe 100% that the US orchestrated 9/11 with the help of other agencies around the world...There's people within the US that knew it happened, that planned this to happen.

To Solomon's question "You think your son was therefore murdered by Americans?" McIlvaine replied, "absolutely."

He is joined by many others, including Matt Campbell, a British citizen and family member, whose brother Geoff Campbell died on the 106th floor of the North Tower. Matt Campbell and his family have recently demanded a new inquest based on a 3,000 page scientifically-backed dossier claiming the buildings were blown up from within.

After reading *Unanswered Questions*, you very well might believe it too.

Learning about the determination of such stalwart souls as McIlvaine, Campbell, the FSC, and so many others to extract truth and justice from a recalcitrant and guilty government is inspirational. They will never give up. Nor should we.

There is no doubt that this extraordinary book will answer many questions you may or may not have had about the mass murders of September 11, 2001.

So don't turn away.

It will break your heart but restore your faith in what a writer dedicated to the truth can do for those family members who have so long sought the bread of truth and were handed stones of silence.

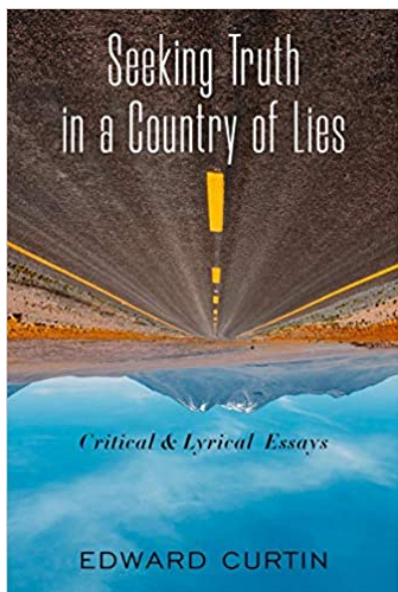
In their ongoing grief, Ray McGinnis has handed them the gift of a bitter solace. He has answered them.

He has also given the public an opportunity to see the truth and demand an independent investigation forthwith.

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Edward Curtin is the author of *Seeking the Truth in a Country of Lies*

To order his book [click the cover page](#).

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