

Introduction, to a Bad End or a New Beginning

It's an out-of-the-blue, in-your-face, screaming-horror surprise. A nuclear weapon blows up in the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. It's another 9/11. It's Nuclear Jihad. A repulsed and confused world shudders at the burning devastation. A radioactive cloud drifts off over the Atlantic. The death toll is unknown. Hundreds of thousands of survivors evacuate. This time the White House is in charge. No more Katrinas. The military is your friend. The president addresses the nation and the world: a "suitcase nuke" from the old Soviet arsenal has been obtained by Islamic terrorists, almost certainly Iranian, he intones. Iran must be neutralized. A nuclear strike on that country now is necessary, appropriate and just. Because some people, even in America, may oppose this action and "choose to side with the terrorists," new measures are required to "safeguard the homeland." An unknown number of Americans, and citizens abroad, are rounded up and transported to detention centers. Thousands on FBI and other "watch lists" are permanently denied internet access.

Or maybe the nuke is discovered aboard a freighter in Galveston harbor. As a team of bomb dismantlers works feverishly to defuse the device, a fixed video camera feeds the world's news organizations a close-up image of the inevitable red digits dramatically counting down to detonation time. The nation and the world are riveted in horror. Finally, to a planetary sigh of relief, they succeed! Or fail! Are blown up! The scenarios are as numerous as they are appalling.

All have one thing in common: all are fake. Whatever the unthinkable outrage, it is, in fact, a covert Western operation. Any of the scenarios advances the monopoly capitalist and neo-conservative agenda of seizing Iran's oil reserves, it is another notch in the belt of global resource theft and world domination. Fiction? Let us pray so. But make no mistake, nuclear — or biological or chemical — false flag-operations can be staged. If they are not, it won't be for a shortage of plans at the Pentagon, the CIA and MI6. False flag operations since 9/11 have been the basic engine of the "war on terror," for which the 9/11 false-flag operation is the linchpin. False-flag ops are key in hastening the desired destabilization and dismantling of Iraq, where one British false-flag op was discovered in the making and briefly reported upon (see Chapter 7).

The most effective rhetoric from the mouths of demagogues cannot compete with — but can reinforce — heart-wrenching images of bloodied schoolchildren, wedding guests dismembered, planes flying into buildings. These "flashbulb moments" bypass rational thought. They are informational atomic bombs compared to the regular gunplay of lies from governments. An actual atomic false-flag op is the perverted dream of the Dr. Strangeloves currently infesting the White House, Number 10 Downing Street, the Pentagon and Langley. The ones who brought us 9/11.

The American Empire's Weapon Number One in imposing "full spectrum dominance" is psychological warfare. Without brainwashed populations, the world domination project will unravel. The most indispensable ingredients of psychological warfare today are false flag bombings and assassinations. These inject a continuous supply of fuel for the fear campaign now targeting everyone on Earth. Where would George W. Bush be today without the word "terror?" asks Mike Adams of *Counter Think*. "That single word, it seems, is solely responsible for Bush's continued popularity among simple-minded Americans. Without the word 'terror,' Bush would have no war, no foreign policy, no justification for decimating the Constitution, and nothing to talk about in his speeches." In one of those speeches, on March 20, 2006 in Cleveland, reported Sidney Blumenthal in the *Guardian*, Bush used the word terror 54 times.

"For a long time," Norman Solomon wrote in 2005, for truthout.org, "the last refuge of scoundrels was patriotism. Now it's 'the war on terror.'

The ultimate demagogic weapon is to exploit the memory of September 11, 2001." *The New York Times* reported, regarding a May 17, 2006 speech by George W. Bush, "As he did in 2002 and 2004, he repeatedly invoked the memory of the attacks of Sept. 11."

"The news" consumed by most people in North America and Europe is a cocoon of manufactured facts, distractions and personalities forming an almost seamless web of invented reality — including invented history — obscuring the power of money and other resources in the hands of the few, even while cleverly masking its own unreality. Fake events are a key component of the illusion, a Truman Show writ large.

The mainstream media remain mute in the face of mounting evidence that Western covert operators were behind Bali, Madrid, London 7/7, mosque bombings in Iraq and elsewhere and, of course, 9/11. Because the mainstream media are integral to the Industrial Military Academic Intelligence Media complex (I MAIM), the cold-blooded technicians of death face no journalistic scrutiny. Without moral, legal, technical or financial constraints, the black operators range freely, executing the orders of the global oligarchies — what I call the Invisible Government.

It is those who profit from the arms industry globally — the merchants of death — who finally have the deepest stake in perpetual war. All the grandly wrought outpourings of that ultimate neo-con think tank, the Project for a New American Century, inevitably offer only one answer to every problem or alleged problem: more armaments.

Despite the media blackout, growing numbers of citizens have been developing well-grounded suspicions. In March 2006, when the program *Showbiz Tonight*, on the CNN Headline News channel, aired actor Charlie Sheen's opinions that 9/11 was an inside job, 83 per cent of the 54,000 people who emailed the program agreed. The mainstream media are not necessarily a 100 per cent hopeless cause. But such hope as there is for the mainstream to wake up rests on the shoulders of brave and effective individuals, most likely in unexpected places such as *Showbiz Tonight*.

In the meantime, the main hope for historic change is at the grassroots level. It's true that the mainstream media first ignored, then mocked, the resurgent women's movement and environmental movement. Remember "bra burners" and "tree huggers?" Over time, however, because those

grassroots grew into plants that could not be eradicated, the media were forced to discontinue marginalizing these movements.

It is at the grassroots level that the 9/11 Truth movement continues to make stubborn headway, aided by the growing evidence of government lies, corruption, and incipient fascism. Evidence that 9/11 was an inside job continues to accumulate in the *samizdat* of the new Millennium — the internet, DVDs, videos — and in books the mainstream media refuse to review. I take hundreds of direct phone orders for my DVDs from across the US. The most common phrases I hear from these callers: “They’re capable of anything” or “They’ll stop at nothing.”

All of us wrestling with our planet’s dire situation have a powerful ally. That ally is crisis. Crisis, more than anything else, forces individuals and organizations to learn and change quickly and profoundly. Once the ongoing synthetic crisis of “terrorism” is revealed for the sham that it is, it will boomerang on its authors. The over-the-top brazenness of the neo-cons who masterminded 9/11 is a gift, because of the mountain of telltale evidence they left behind, including the biggest lie in print, the report of the 9/11 Kean-Zelikow commission. With 9/11, the oligarchy has, with reckless hubris, fashioned the largest Achilles Heel in history.

Crisis is also the best friend of planets in distress. The current crisis is potent because it’s multi-dimensional. Each dimension is growing quickly or even exponentially: global warming, energy depletion, hyper-militarism, increasing pollution, human population overshoot, growing inequality, technologies out of control. And dinosaurs *in* control.

Many people will tell you they feel or detect a “growing awareness,” “growing consciousness,” or “a great awakening.” In her book *The Great Transformation*, Karen Armstrong writes that the founding of the great religions followed a period of terrible violence. Compassion — evidenced by the universality of The Golden Rule — lies at the heart of all these religions. We may be undergoing a tweaking of the survival instinct, experiencing the fear of worse to come. Surely there’s a weariness at the lies, the waste, the crime, the corruption. An inner stirring for peaceful transformation. As Victor Hugo wrote: “An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.”


The most powerful idea of all is a realistic, encompassing and inspiring new story, one that takes into account all we can grasp about the depths to

which our species can fall, and the heights to which it can rise. One that includes a full understanding of the powers arrayed against us and the powers at our command. One that incorporates — better than ever before — the learnings to be gleaned from the history of humankind and from the latest research on the inner workings of ourselves.

The story must forward track the inspiring and dangerous but realistic steps on the path to a world finally and permanently set free from the scourges of war, rampant greed and fatal short sightedness. A world in which the energy released by the lifting of fear and the release of goodwill exceeds that of all the nuclear weapons ever built by the blind technicians of death and their masters. A world in which it is recognized that we are all victims and all perpetrators, if not equally so. Such a world — not a utopia (belief in utopia has been one of our snares and delusions) — but a much better world, is possible.

The shortest and most exciting route to that world cuts directly through the Big Lie of 9/11, itself the culmination of centuries of deceit by greedy oligarchies bent on war for privilege, profit and power. Let's gather the number of people on that route into such a large and dedicated throng of the best and brightest, the meek and the fearful, those with nothing to lose and everything to lose, that it — that we — cannot be denied. And then let us be so wise as to deserve the challenge of saving the planet.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

How 9/11 Started for Me

Downtown Toronto, September 11, 2001 — Around 8:45 a.m., my wife calls on the intercom from the kitchen. I'm at my computer in my writing studio on the third floor. "Chris says something's going on in New York you'll probably be interested in," she says. Chris is our next door neighbour. She's been talking to him over the back fence. I thank her, click on the TV in my writing studio and start seeing what millions are seeing.

Shortly after the second plane hits I go downstairs. In our living room are my wife and Ken, the male half of the young couple to whom we

rent our basement apartment. He's Portuguese Canadian. His wife is American. By now I agree with TV commentators that this amounts to war on the USA. It seems obvious to me the impacts of the planes and the ensuing fires brought down both towers of the World Trade Center. I say: "Perhaps there's one silver lining to this horrible event. Perhaps now some percentage of people in the United States will finally look into their country's foreign policy, and into their hearts, and perhaps gain a little insight or humility. Maybe this could be a blessing in a big disguise."

"Nah," replies Ken. "All that's going to happen is that they're going to bomb the shit out of somebody." Of course, he turned out to be completely right and me almost completely wrong. Now I'm asking out loud: "Where the hell is the US Air Force? I can't believe this." There are reports of errant airliners all over the place, even heading toward Washington and presumably the White House.


I've always been interested in aviation. In the Royal Canadian Air Cadets I reached the rank of Flight Sergeant and was offered an RCAF scholarship to learn to fly Sabre jets in the Korean War. I turned it down, deciding I "didn't want to kill someone I didn't know." (It never occurred to me I might be killed.) Now I'm on my feet, jumping up and down and shouting: "C'mon US Air Force. C'mon you guys! Get going! Migawd, where the hell is the US Air Force? This is unbelievable." A few minutes later the penny drops. Something is *terribly* wrong in the lack of scrambled jet interceptors. The term "inside job" doesn't come to mind; what does is "Reichstag fire," the startling event of 1933 in Germany that was shown later to have been arranged by Hitler to boost his power, then declare war. I say: "This has gotta be Reichstag fire 2001."

At some point it occurs to me with a jolt that our friend (and former tenant) George Murray, an up-and-coming poet and author, works in a building directly across from the WTC south tower. Through the afternoon, with increasing concern, I try to reach him at his office and home. All lines are down. By suppertime I just stand by the phone and cry a little after not getting through for the seventh or eighth time.

Not entirely sure of my sanity on the enormity of what I think has happened, I talk with our son in the early evening. "I thought the same thing," he says. "Something's very fishy about all this."

Shortly before midnight George calls. He and his wife are okay; he spills out his full amazing story “for the 13th time; I know it’s therapy.” He says: “You know I’m a very peaceful person but I’m sorry, they should nuke the bastards that did this.” Months later he reconsiders.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

The Instant Myth That “Everything Has Changed.”

September 17, 2001 — Tonight, the first *MediaFile* program of the season on Canada’s Vision TV airs. It’s my first opportunity to comment on the events of six days ago. Looking back on this script, I recall that although I personally did not believe the official story about 9/11, I could not see how I could say that, on air, six days after the events. In retrospect, I think it was wise to stay my hand until later, enabling myself to break loose in January, with a seven-part series questioning the official 9/11 story, still perhaps earning a footnote in some history book as the first journalist in the world to go on national TV and do so. A slightly edited transcript:

* * *

A myth was born in the wake of last Tuesday’s events. It is this: “Everything has changed.” At first, I did agree. I was one of those for whom Tuesday’s shocking news was overlaid with personal dread and foreboding. A wonderful friend, Toronto poet George Murray, worked across from the World Trade Center. His wife is a Fulbright scholar at New York University uptown. It wasn’t until mid evening I learned they were both alive.

Upon reflection, it seems to me it may be closer to the truth to say not that “Everything has changed,” but that “Little has changed.” The same fuels for the world’s burning hatreds remain stockpiled. What’s changed is that they’re higher octane. Many fuels feed the fires. First, the word “terrorism” itself. It’s used by US political and military leaders and the media in a profoundly one-sided, hypocritical, way. Never with reference to violent, often illegal US actions past and present around the world. These actions are at the root of violent anti-Americanism. It so

8 TOWERS OF DECEPTION

happens that last Tuesday was the 28th anniversary of the American-engineered coup in Chile, on September 11, 1973. Masterminded by Henry Kissinger, it toppled a democratically elected government, assassinated its leader and left thousands “disappeared” to this day.

What the mainstream media have failed to put into context is that US forces have unilaterally bombed or invaded Libya, Panama, Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, the Sudan — 23 countries in all. For years the US has trained and supported death squads. Until last Tuesday, wanton destruction of innocent civilians had been the fate of the Iraqi, Yugoslav and other peoples, and on a larger scale. At least three million Vietnamese, mostly civilians, died when US planes dropped a greater tonnage of bombs on their tiny country than was dropped by all sides in the Second World War.

Now, none of this justifies the kind of retaliation we witnessed last Tuesday. But at White House press conferences you’ll hear no questions about US wrong-doing. The suicide bombers’ operation may well have been, in the minds of its planners, revenge for US policies and actions. Polls now show millions of Americans now will support almost any conceivable counter revenge.


Another example of how little the world has changed: the media fan the vengeance flames. One Washington press corps question was: “There are those who say the USA doesn’t have the belly for massive retaliation. What’s your reaction?” I dream — in technicolor, I grant you — of a day when reporters shout questions such as: “In the Middle East, retaliation upon retaliation has led to escalating violence that has undermined possibilities for true peace. Why do you think retaliation will work at the global level?”

Perhaps most important by far on the list of what hasn’t changed is that Western governments and media almost totally ignore the only really effective means to win the war against terrorism. In a truly changed world, governments and media would launch a sustained debate as to how to achieve lasting national security in the twenty-first century. In a truly changed world, they would listen, they would understand and they would address the roots of anger and despair in the third world. Media would urge governments to narrow the now-widening gap between rich

and poor on the planet, to pass fair wage laws, eradicate poverty, eliminate human rights violations, reduce racism, and fund health services. Some diseases can be healed for pennies a day.

Instead governments are focusing, as usual, on exterminating those at the demented end of despair. Through, possibly, a repeat of the death-dealing Gulf War coalition. And most media buy this focus. This is not a world in which “everything has changed.” This is the same world of selective amnesia and reliance on violence to solve problems that existed before September the 11. What is changing is that the old counter-productive ideas are hardening. Resources are being assembled for even more violent solutions. The fuel tanks of retaliation are being filled.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

Who's anti-American?

September 24, 2001 — Tonight my commentary about “anti-Americanism” aired on Canada’s Vision TV. An edited transcript:

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It seems to me an expanded debate is overdue about the term “anti-American.” Its use as a verbal club amounts to an attempt to suppress legitimate viewpoints. Some media commentators suggest it’s both wrong-headed and mean-spirited to be less than 100% supportive of George Bush. A *Globe & Mail* editorial says: “The anti-Americans” — a putdown in the context — “are always careful to hide their barbs in a cloak of sympathy.” I take deep offence. The sympathy police pontificate that anyone whose sympathy is encompassing enough to embrace victims of decades of US terror, or of man-made horrors in general, are insincere. How dare they!

Some suggest that being anti-American is against Canada’s interests. That to be anti-American is anti-Canadian. How weird! Let me first reflect personally. My life — like that of every Canadian — has been and continues to be, shaped in important ways by the US. I am enriched forever by the 18 months I studied, then worked, in the US. I studied American literature, history, politics, journalism and humour. I became

and remain inspired by giants of the American spirit. By Thomas Jefferson. By Abraham Lincoln. Were they anti-American? By Thomas Paine. By American journalists such as Benjamin Franklin, Mark Twain. Were they anti-American?

My heroes include crusading American TV newsman Edward R. Murrow, who dared to confront McCarthyism. Was he anti-American? Or was McCarthy, with his "Un-American Activities Committee?" Another hero of mine: the legendary I.F. Stone who with his little weekly exposed Washington lies and hypocrisy. And the likes of filmmaker Michael Moore, who, of September 11 charges: "I'm angry. I'm an American citizen, and my leaders have taken my money to fund mass murder. And now my friends have paid the price with their lives." Is he anti-American?

I'm nourished immensely by the American weekly *The Nation*, based in New York City. It's been questioning authority since 1865. It consistently opposes American militarism and abuse of US corporate power worldwide. Has it been anti-American for 126 years?


All these people and institutions — and indeed millions of like-minded Americans — are the most patriotic Americans. They uphold the founding principles of their country — legality and justice for all. Call that true Americanism. I am totally pro-American in that sense. What I call real Americans don't see George W. Bush and his oil billionaire and arms manufacturing backers as "a force for good in the world, a beacon of liberty," as *The Globe and Mail* does. Real Americans vehemently dissent from their government breaking international law, training and supporting death squads, practicing might-makes-right on so many fronts.

Count me as one media person who doesn't need any lessons from *The Globe and Mail* or anyone else about what America originally stood for, should stand for, and can stand for, to be true to its founding principles. That would include the rule of law, including international law. Not constantly flouting it, as the present US political leadership does. That would be siding with the oppressed, not adding to their oppression in so many ways — as a sequence of US administrations has done. Now the leadership is further betraying American principles by removing the prohibition on state-sanctioned assassinations.

Thank goodness Canada's tradition is to debate in the middle of cri-

sis. For many of us this is a source of pride in Canada. Which is not the same as anti-Americanism. A frightening tendency south of the border is to have everyone fall into line. It was an American, the late Justice Hugo Black of the US Supreme Court who said “the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public.” Especially in time of turmoil. That’s why my dissenting American friends need support at this time, in their grieving and in their sacred principles. To tell the truth I’m tired of being lectured by media barons or anyone else about anti-Americanism. The way I see it, the lecturers are the ones who are truly anti-American.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

In Which the Author Tries to Interest a Major Newspaper in a 9/11 Exposé

The Globe and Mail offices, the afternoon of November 6, 2001 — This morning I call Victor Malarek, head of *The Globe’s* team of investigative reporters. I say: “I think there’s a tremendously important story out there that no one’s covering yet. Would you be willing to meet me about this?” He says: “How about this afternoon?” Now I’m in his office.


In the almost two months since September 11 I’d believed — it seems incredible in retrospect that I could be so naïve — that teams of investigative reporters from major media outlets would be hard at work (but quietly, in light of the patriotic hysteria) chasing down the reason the US Air Force went AWOL and other huge anomalies of that day. I’d been waiting, first in excited anticipation, then with growing unease, for the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times* or one of the American TV networks to break the story wide open. Now I feel a responsibility to find out whether “Canada’s National Newspaper” is onto this and if not, to encourage it to go after this incredible story and get the world scoop that the American media are blowing. Victor and I know each other from the more than eight years I worked for *The Globe and Mail*.

I begin by saying: “I know I’m widely identified as a left winger, and that what I’m about to say may seem preposterous, but I hope you

respect my body of journalistic work and know I would not waste your time.” He assures me I have his full respect and attention. I tell him I’ve had suspicions about 9/11 from day one, and am seeing more and more evidence from sources I trust on the internet confirming my suspicions. I give him a few printouts from Stan Goff, Jared Israel and Michael Ruppert. He seems genuinely interested, gives me an hour and 20 minutes, and takes a few notes (I wondered later at how few). As I leave he says: “I think you’re onto something. We should be looking into this. I’m going to speak to our team about it.”

I had asked if I could send him limited amounts of additional material. He said he would welcome that. Subsequently I mailed him two packets of printouts of some of the most solid evidence about 9/11 anomalies. As I revisit this diary in January 2006, four years and two months later, I can report that I never heard another word from him. *The Globe and Mail*, along with every other mainstream medium in the world, has failed to “break” what is probably the most important story of our time.



Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

The Birth of the Leading 9/11 Truth Magazine and a National Movement

Toronto City Hall, the evening of November 20, 2001 — The city government’s “clamshell” central chamber, lying between the two semi-circular towers, is jammed. People line the walls. It’s a citizen-organized public meeting focused on the erosion of civil liberties endangered by new “anti-terrorism” laws being rushed through the Canadian Parliament (as well as most others in the “Western world”). I’ve been asked to moderate. The discussion is lively, impassioned and intelligent. Leading lawyers, civil libertarians, representatives of Muslim communities and others share their concerns.

From a 9/11 Truth point of view, two things stand out in my mind. One is that I’m sorely tempted to use the podium to ask for a show of hands as to who in attendance thinks there was something fishy about

the events of 9/11. I decide it wouldn't be fair to the organizers of the meeting, who had established a clear focus. I did not have a mandate to introduce a potentially explosive question. The other thing that stands out is that I meet others who already believe as I do. One is Ian Woods from Shanty Bay, Ontario (profiled on page 354). He hands out about 150 leaflets asking "Was September 11 an Inside Job?" On the reverse side are listed several contradictions about 9/11.

It was very reinforcing to find someone else whose take on 9/11 was identical to mine and who was already getting active about it. In autumn 2002, Ian founds *Global Outlook: The Magazine of 9/11 Truth*. This becomes an international journal with a circulation of 15,000. As of early 2006, it's going into its 11th issue. The 10th issue is 100 pages. In a doorway I encounter Jean Smith and John Valleau, longtime citizen activists. He's a chemistry professor emeritus, she a retired teacher. I ask them, a bit apologetically and quizzically, in the way that was required at that time, if they think there was "anything fishy about September 11." "Oh sure," they respond almost in unison. "The White House did it." (Later, they would become strong supporters of the six-day Toronto International




City Hall, Toronto, Canada

Citizens' Inquiry Into 9/11, not yet a gleam in anyone's eye. I proposed the Inquiry in October of 2003, became the director in December and it was held at The University of Toronto at the end of May 2004, with 40 presenters from three continents.)

Starting in late 2001, about a dozen like-minded individuals begin meeting informally to plan actions to reveal 9/11Truth. In addition to the Inquiry we mount several well-attended events at the Bloor Cinema. By the end of 2003, we have incorporated as Skeptics' Inquiry For Truth (SIFT), and at the time of writing, Ian remains president.

That evening at Toronto City Hall, we realized later, marked the birth of the Canadian 9/11Truth movement in Canada.



Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

A Television Series Questioning the Official 9/11 Story is Conceived

December 20, 2001 — Today, at the weekly *Vision TV* in-house producers' meeting, I blurt out my grave suspicions about the official story of 9/11 and that I want to do a series of six commentaries questioning that official story.

A few weeks ago I came to realize, very belatedly, that the mainstream media are dead in the water on this issue. Also belated was the realization I could launch such questioning myself, on my own half-hour weekly program, *Vision TV Insight: The MediaFile Edition*. Defending my own slowness, now, I think: why should I have dreamed this task should fall to a tiny crew on a Canadian specialty channel? This is the job of big newspapers and big networks with vast resources.


Vision TV is not a news channel. It is Canada's and the world's first and only multi-faith TV network, available in 8 million Canadian households on basic cable and DTH satellite. *Vision* has been unique in Canada, from its inception in September 1988, in featuring regular media criticism. I've been privileged to be the channel's media critic all that time.

Once it became clear to me that I have a responsibility to initiate something, I wonder how to pitch it to my fellow producers so as to min-

imize the risk of my proposal getting the kibosh. For a few weeks I planned my approach but failed to come up with one I was satisfied with. Today I think: blurt it out and take your chances.

The result is interesting, and soon, thank goodness, successful. One producer says the reason the US Air Force failed to respond on 9/11 was that “the pilots hadn’t had their coffee that morning.” She feels one commentary should be more than enough. But reaction is generally supportive. “Go for it, Barrie” is the consensus. The senior producer, a Muslim, decides: “Let’s agree to three and see how it goes.” I’m elated. The series begins in January and does go to six.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

“Important — If True”

December 24, 2001 — Say you’re back in the 1770s in the American colonies. You’re fighting a war of independence against Britain. The British Empire is *the* world empire of the day. But for news from Europe, your colonial newspapers rely on dispatches from untrustworthy London, seat of the empire. So your pro-independence colonial newspaper editors keep on hand a “standing line” of type that they place atop certain stories. It reads: “Important — If True.”

Fast forward to the Osama bin Laden videotape unleashed December 16 in Washington, DC, seat of *the* world empire of today. It consists of images stated to be bin Laden and his buddies, yukking it up semi-audibly about death and destruction, praise be to Allah, etc. Most media immediately accept the tape as authentic.

The *Toronto Sun*, that bastion of judicial restraint, accepts the evidence and pronounces the verdict in Second Coming of Christ-size type: “Guilty Bastard.” The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s polysyllabic contrarian Rex Murphy, a scourge of government duplicity, accepts the tape — hook, story line and sound track. Well, call me the Question Man here. Because I have lots of questions about that tape.

How can a man be videotaped for hours, yet we seldom see his lips move? Previous videotapes of him were quite different in this respect.

Some speculate bin Laden had the tape made to impress powerful clerics in Saudi Arabia. Considering he's a multi-millionaire with proven access to high-quality video gear, why would he rely on amateurs using low-grade equipment producing much inaudible audio? Are Muslim clerics impressed by bad audio and video?

If this is such a damning piece of evidence, why have the Pentagon and White House not produced the person who found it? Why have they not hosted a tour to the apartment in Jalalabad where that person could say: "I found it right here, in this drawer with the socks." Who did find it? When did the person realize it was the tape it's claimed to be? Why was the tape released just as George Bush announced he'll scrap the ABM treaty, which gets pushed off the front pages? For this.

No medium provides satisfying details. We're told details can't be revealed for security reasons. What are these reasons? The Pentagon and White House want everyone on Earth to know about the tape. Is the security to prevent Martians from finding out details? A true believer in the Boy Scout honesty of the Pentagon and White House may find no reason to be skeptical. But the media are not supposed to be true believers. They're supposed to be true skeptics.

So I have another question. Why did the mainstream media not perform their skeptical duties? Only one that I saw did. Thomas Walkom in the *Toronto Star* writes: "We are told that while some lunatic Muslims may think the tape was faked, anyone who is not a paranoid conspiracy theorist knows that it proves bin Laden's guilt. But is it inconceivable," Walkom continues, "that the bin Laden tape was doctored? Would a government that once contemplated blowing up Fidel Castro with an exploding cigar balk at faking a video? Would a government that during the Vietnam War concocted a fake attack on one of its [own] naval vessels in order to justify an escalated military campaign, be squeamish about doing a little digital wizardry? To ask these questions is to answer them."

Remember the Hollywood movie *Wag the Dog*? An American president orders the concoction of a whole illusory video war. One with high production values. A shoot involving a single murky interior is considerably less demanding. There are scores more questions. Those arising, for instance, from the long and close relationship of the bin Laden and Bush

families are now conveniently dispatched down the memory hole.

Let's go back to where we started. In this age of digital video manipulation you can make a dog say "It's History 101, remember?" Maybe something very low-tech might be brought back. News editors, when they decide to print or air stories about politically-potent tapes with murky origins, might position the reminder "Important — If True" at the top of the story or screen.

The foregoing is an unedited transcript of my Vision TV commentary of this date. I should have mentioned that in an initial, earlier, audio tape said by Al-Jazeera to be Osama bin Laden, the speaker insisted he had nothing to do with 9/11.

Osama bin Laden taped on the Sept. 11 attack:
'They were overjoyed when the first plane hit the building, so I said to them: Be patient'




NO DOUBT THAT he's the mastermind, Powell says

War on Terrorism

Washington Post, Sept. 11, 2001

Osama bin Laden, the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, is shown in a video recording of a meeting with his followers in a compound in Afghanistan, according to a report by the Washington Post. The video, which is the first of a series of recordings, shows bin Laden speaking to a group of men in a room with a thatched roof. He is wearing a dark jacket and a turban. The men are also wearing traditional Afghan clothing. Bin Laden is speaking into a microphone and gesturing with his hands. The video is a still image from a larger recording.

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Diary of 9/11 and the Media 

The TV Series is Born and Surprises Everyone

January 15, 2002 — The morning after first commentary. The senior producer tells me later she almost sick to her stomach with fear as she checks her e-mail for response from the previous evening's MediaFile program. "The first comment was positive," she said. "I thought to myself: 'Well, at least we will have one lone positive reaction.'" The surprise for her and everyone, including me, is that the reaction after this first commentary is overwhelmingly positive — in fact, of the nearly 100 initial e-mails, precisely *one* is derogatory.

This pattern continues through the 6 weeks of the series, which attracts the largest audience response in the 15-year history of the channel. (By the end of the series more than 1,000 e-mails were received; I have hard copies of them, which occupy a foot of space in a filing cabinet drawer. Although each and every one is different, this is typical: "Thank goodness for a TV channel that will tell it like it is. Keep up the good work.")

This pattern of viewer, listener and reader response to questioning of the official 9/11 story has been universal ever since 9/11, on those few occasions when media have raised questions. The huge questioning constituency among Joe and Jane Public has always been there.

But flying in the face of that, flying in the face of "giving what the readers, viewers and listeners want," the media have instead almost completely ignored or scorned the evidence the public sees or senses, rather than displaying editorial independence and courage.

As we move toward June 2006 there are signs around the edges of the mainstream media — a five-minute interview here, a few fugitive paragraphs there — that this questioning, and the existence of growing numbers of questioners, won't go away and could eventually become very big.

If it does, it will be interesting to see how these same media will explain (if they deign to do so) their five years of deadly slumber that enabled illegal wars, tens of thousands of deaths, stripping away of civil liberties, and squandering of obscene amounts on armaments — all done in the name of the so-called "war on terror" with 9/11 being the linchpin for it all, and the media by and large being spear carriers for the emperor.