

9-11-2001 - THE STORY

THE **EVENTS** OF AND THE **CONSPIRACES** ABOUT THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS

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On September 11, 2001, 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes flew into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Almost 3,000 people were killed during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which triggered major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism and *defined the presidency of George W. Bush*



WORLD TRADE CENTER

On September 11, 2001, at 8:45 a.m. on a clear Tuesday morning, an American Airlines Boeing 767 loaded with 20,000 gallons of jet fuel crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.

The impact left a gaping, burning hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more in higher floors.

As the evacuation of the tower and its twin got underway, television cameras broadcast live images of what initially appeared to be a freak accident. *Then, 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767—United Airlines Flight 175—appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the World Trade Center and sliced into the south tower near the 60th floor.*

The collision caused a massive explosion that showered burning debris over surrounding buildings and onto the streets below. It immediately became clear that America was under attack.

OSAMA BIN LADEN

The hijackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations.

Reportedly financed by the al Qaeda terrorist organization of Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, *they were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East.*

Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a year and had taken flying lessons at American commercial flight schools. Others had slipped into the country in the months before September 11 and acted as the "muscle" in the operation.

The 19 terrorists easily smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports and boarded four early-morning flights bound for California, chosen because the planes were loaded with fuel for the long transcontinental journey.

Soon after takeoff, the terrorists commandeered the four planes and took the controls, transforming ordinary passenger jets into guided missiles.



PENTAGON ATTACK

As millions watched the events unfolding in New York, American Airlines Flight 77 circled over downtown Washington, D.C., before crashing into the west side of the Pentagon military headquarters at 9:45 a.m.

Jet fuel from the Boeing 757 caused a devastating inferno that led *to the structural collapse of a portion of the giant concrete building*, which is the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense.

All told, 125 military personnel and civilians were killed in the Pentagon, along with all 64 people aboard the airliner.



TWIN TOWERS COLLAPSE

Less than 15 minutes after the terrorists struck the nerve center of the U.S. military, the horror in New York took a catastrophic turn when the south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed in a massive cloud of dust and smoke.

The structural steel of the skyscraper, built to withstand winds in excess of 200 miles per hour and a large conventional fire, could not withstand the tremendous heat generated by the burning jet fuel.

At 10:30 a.m., the north building of the twin towers collapsed. Only six people in the World Trade Center towers at the time of their collapse survived. Almost 10,000 others were treated for injuries, many severe.

FLIGHT 93

Meanwhile, a fourth California-bound plane—United Flight 93—was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey. Because the plane had been delayed in taking off, passengers on board learned of events in New York and Washington via cell phone and Airfone calls to the ground.

Knowing that the aircraft was not returning to an airport as the hijackers claimed, a group of passengers and flight attendants planned an insurrection.



One of the passengers, Thomas Burnett, Jr., told his wife over the phone that "I know we're all going to die. There's three of us who are going to do something about it. I love you, honey." Another passenger—Todd Beamer—was heard saying "Are you guys ready? Let's roll" over an open line.

Sandy Bradshaw, a flight attendant, called her husband and explained that she had slipped into a galley and was filling pitchers with boiling water. *Her last words to him were "Everyone's running to first class. I've got to go. Bye."*

The passengers fought the four hijackers and are suspected to have attacked the cockpit with a fire extinguisher. The plane then flipped over and sped toward the ground at upwards of 500 miles per hour, crashing in a rural field near Shanksville in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m.

All 44 people aboard were killed. *Its intended target is not known*, but theories include the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland or one of several nuclear power plants along the eastern seaboard.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED IN THE 9/11 ATTACKS?

A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks, including the 19 terrorist hijackers aboard the four airplanes. Citizens of 78 countries died in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

At the World Trade Center, 2,763 died after the two planes slammed into the twin towers. That figure includes 343 firefighters and paramedics, 23 New York City police officers and 37 Port Authority police officers who were struggling to complete an evacuation of the buildings and save the office workers trapped on higher floors.

At the Pentagon, 189 people were killed, including 64 on American Airlines Flight 77, the airliner that struck the building. On Flight 93, 44 people died when the plane crash-landed in Pennsylvania.



AMERICA RESPONDS TO THE ATTACKS

At 7 p.m., President George W. Bush, who was in Florida at the time of the attacks and had spent the day being shuttled around the country because of security concerns, returned to the White House.

At 9 p.m., he delivered a televised address from the Oval Office, declaring, "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."

In a reference to the eventual U.S. military response he declared, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."

Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden's terrorist network based there, began on October 7. Within two months, U.S. forces had effectively removed the Taliban from operational power, but the war continued, as U.S. and coalition forces attempted to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign based in neighboring Pakistan.

Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks, remained at large until May 2, 2011, when he was finally tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In June 2011, then-President Barack Obama announced the beginning of large-scale troop withdrawals from Afghanistan; it took until August 2021 for all U.S. forces to withdraw.



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IS CREATED

In the wake of security fears raised by 9/11 and the mailing of letters containing anthrax that killed two and infected 17, The Homeland Security Act of 2002 created the Department of Homeland Security. It was signed into law by President George W. Bush on November 25, 2002.

Today, the Department of Homeland Security is a cabinet responsible for preventing terror attacks, border security, immigrations and customs and disaster relief and prevention.

The act was followed two days later by the formation of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. The bipartisan “9/11 Commission,” as it came to be known, was charged with investigating the events that led up to September 11th. The 9/11 Commission Report was released on July 22, 2004. It named Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind behind 9/11, “the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks.”

Mohammed led propaganda operations for al Qaeda from 1999-2001. He was captured on March 1, 2003, by the Central Intelligence Agency and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence and interrogated before being imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay detention camp with four other accused terrorists charged with 9/11-related war crimes. The use of torture, including waterboarding, during Khalid Sheikh Mohammed’s interrogation has received international attention. In August 2019, a U.S. military court judge in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba set a trial date for Mohammed and the other four men charged with plotting the 9/11 terrorist attacks to begin in 2021; it was later postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF 9/11

The 9/11 attacks had an immediate negative effect on the U.S. economy. Many Wall Street institutions, including the New York Stock Exchange, were evacuated during the attacks. On the first day of trading after the attacks, the market fell 7.1 percent, or 684 points. New York City’s economy alone lost 143,000 jobs a month and \$2.8 billion wages in the first three months. The heaviest losses were in finance and air transportation, which accounted for 60 percent of lost jobs. The estimated cost of the World Trade Center damage is \$60 billion. *The cost to clean the debris at Ground Zero was \$750 million.*



9/11 VICTIM COMPENSATION

Thousands of first responders and people working and living in lower Manhattan near Ground Zero were exposed to toxic fumes and particles emanating from the towers as they burned and fell. By 2018, 10,000 people were diagnosed with 9/11-related cancer.

From 2001 to 2004, over \$7 billion dollars in compensation was given to families of the 9/11

victims and 2,680 people were injured in the attacks.

Funding was renewed on January 2, 2011, when President Barack Obama signed The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act into law. Named for James Zadroga, a New York City Police officer who died of respiratory disease he contracted after rescuing people from the rubble at Ground Zero, the law continued health monitoring and compensation for 9/11 first responders and survivors.

In 2015, funding for the treatment of 9/11-related illness was renewed for five more years at a total of \$7.4 billion. The Victim Compensation Fund was set to stop accepting claims in December 2020.

On July 29, 2019, then-President Trump signed a law authorizing support for the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund through 2092.

Previously, administrators had cut benefits by up to 70 percent as the \$7.4 billion fund depleted.

Vocal lobbyists for the fund included Jon Stewart, 9/11 first responder John Feal and retired New York Police Department detective and 9/11 responder Luis Alvarez, who died of cancer 18 days after testifying before Congress.

9/11 ANNIVERSARY AND MEMORIAL

On December 18, 2001, Congress approved naming September 11 "Patriot Day" to commemorate the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. In 2009, Congress named September 11 a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

The first memorials to September 11 came in the immediate wake of the attacks, with candlelight vigils and flower tributes at U.S. embassies around the world. In Great Britain, Queen Elizabeth sang the American national anthem during the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Rio de Janeiro put up billboards showing the city's Christ the Redeemer statue embracing the New York City skyline.

For the first anniversary of the attacks in New York City in 2002, two bright columns of light were shot up into the sky from where the Twin Towers once stood. The "Tribute in Light" then became an annual installation run by the Municipal Art Society of New York. On clear nights, the beams are visible from over 60 miles away.

A World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition was held to select an appropriate permanent memorial to the victims of 9/11. The winning design by Michael Arad, "*Reflecting Absence*," now sits outside the museum in an eight-acre park. It consists of two reflecting pools with waterfalls rushing down where the Twin Towers once rose into the sky.

The names of all 2,983 victims are engraved on the 152 bronze panels surrounding the pools, arranged by where individuals were on the day of the attacks, so coworkers and people on the same flight are memorialized together. The site was opened to the public on September 11, 2011, to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of 9/11. The National September 11 Memorial & Museum followed, opening on the original World Trade Center site in May 2014. The Freedom Tower, also on the original World Trade Center site, opened in November 2014.

PHOTO GALLERY

WORLD TRADE CENTER



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PENTAGON



FLIGHT 93



911 CONSPIRACY THEORIES THAT WON'T STOP



SEPT 11, 2011

On only this can the world agree: On Sept. 11, 2001, two planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. A short time later, both fell.

Nearly every other detail of the terrorist attacks - from the reasons the towers fell to the actual number of planes hijacked to the blame for the events - on that day has been incredibly fertile ground for the production of alternating theories about what actually happened.

On this ground, a loosely knit group with the semi-official title of **"truthers"** has been born, and their theories - or conspiracies, depending on your bent - range from the barely plausible to the laughable. Thanks in no small part to the then-burgeoning Internet, their ideas began to spread within minutes of the attacks, and have gained a permanent hold in the lore of 9/11, much like the assassination of JFK can't be spoken about without conjuring up thoughts of the Grassy Knoll.

It is impossible to quantify the number of people who subscribe to truther theories, but at least one poll taken five years after the attacks revealed that as many as **one out of three Americans believed the U.S. government was either behind the attacks, or knew about them in advance and purposefully did nothing.** That the truthers have gained sounding boards with popular athletes, celebrities, and at least one former governor, is a testament to their durability.

The widely-accepted (and here greatly summarized) account of what led up to and happened on 9/11 is as follows: Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, helped recruit, inspire, train, and bankroll 19 hijackers to take over four U.S. domestic flights and crash them into high-value targets in New York City and Washington, D.C., as part of their ever-expanding holy war. They managed to just barely slip past all intelligence and security services largely because of poor inter-agency communication. Two hijacked planes hit the Twin Towers, one hit the Pentagon, and the fourth - which crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania after passengers attacked their hijackers - was possibly intended for the U.S. Capitol building. The Twin Towers came down because jet fuel ignited incredibly hot fires inside that weakened their supports enough for their eventual collapse. Nearly 3,000 people died in New York and D.C.

To the truthers, that account is utter nonsense. While there is no one theory uniting them, it can generally be said they believe the U.S. government and/or the Jews and/or anyone other than unhinged terrorists orchestrated the events of 9/11 in order to further their own dark and secretive agenda.



No matter how much evidence is presented here and elsewhere, it's unlikely to dissuade most, if any, truthers, the psychological reasons for which will be explored in a bit.

In the meantime, let's take a look at five of the more popular truther theories, along with some brief rebuttals.

SOMEONE OR SOMETHING OTHER THAN AL QAEDA ORCHESTRATED THE EVENTS OF 9-11

Osama bin Laden publicly gloated about and repeatedly referred to al Qaeda's "success" on September 11, 2001. In an audiotape released on May 23, 2006, bin Laden stated, "I was responsible for entrusting the 19 brothers ... with those raids..."

Of course, that is not enough proof for many. The most popular alternating theory in America is that 9/11 happened - either on purpose or by passive allowance - because the Bush administration was itching to go to war in the Middle East. Any official government denial would, of course, not be enough for truthers, so perhaps the words of one of the world's biggest skeptics would help.

Noam Chomsky, the infamous "libertarian socialist" who had no fond feelings for George W. Bush nor America's global ambitions, thought truther theories to be utter nonsense, and not just because the science of their theories doesn't add up.

"(The Bush administration) would have had to have been insane to try anything like that," Chomsky said. "If they had, it almost certainly would have leaked."



ISRAEL'S SPY AGENCY KNEW ABOUT THE ATTACKS AND GOT 4,000 JEWS OUT OF THERE.

The blame-the-Jews theory is very popular in the Middle East. In a 2008 poll conducted in Egypt, as many as 43 percent of Egyptians thought Israel was somehow behind the 9/11 attacks. Among the most persistent post-9/11 rumors was that 4,000 Jews did not show up for work that September morning at the World Trade Center because Mossad, Israel's spy agency, warned them against it.

Although an exact tally doesn't exist, the consensus is that anywhere from 10 to 15 percent of the victims of the 9/11 attacks - up to 450 people - were Jewish religiously or had Judaism as their primary cultural affiliation. The U.S. Census has generally put the percentage of Americans who are Jewish at a maximum of 2 percent in recent years. It would be nonsensical of the Jews to leave hundreds behind as martyrs to cover their trail. Even if they had, it's not as if Israel has been made any "safer" by 9/11.

THE TWIN TOWERS COLLAPSED BECAUSE OF A CONTROLLED EXPLOSION

This theory generally gets explained via a question: How could an airplane possibly bring down a building as large as the World Trade Center without explosives?

Perhaps it's best to let engineers answer this one. Popular Mechanics magazine writes: "Jet fuel burns at 800° to 1500°F, not hot enough to melt steel (2750°F). However, experts agree that for the towers to collapse, their steel frames didn't need to melt, they just had to lose some of their structural strength--and that required exposure to much less heat. But jet fuel wasn't the only thing burning, notes Forman Williams, a professor of engineering at the University of California, San Diego, and one of seven structural engineers and fire experts that PM consulted. He says that while the jet fuel was the catalyst for the WTC fires, the resulting inferno was intensified by the combustible material inside the buildings, including rugs, curtains, furniture and paper. ... pockets of fire hit 1832°F."



THE PENTAGON WAS HIT BY A MISSILE, NOT A PLANE

There are two main reasons this theory exists: One, the high security levels required at and near the Pentagon limited outside reporting from the disaster site; Two, all the public really saw were some small-ish holes in the building itself.

Never mind the fact that hundreds of thousands of people live near the Pentagon and therefore at least a few of them would have seen an airborne missile, or the jet that fired it, this is another one best explained by an engineer.

Popular Mechanics magazine writes: "Why wasn't the hole as wide as a 757's 124-ft.-10-in. wingspan? A crashing jet doesn't punch a cartoon-like outline of itself into a reinforced concrete building, says (Pentagon inspection) team member Mete Sozen, a professor of structural engineering at Purdue University. *In this case, one wing hit the ground; the other was sheared off by the force of the impact with the Pentagon's load-bearing columns, explains Sozen, who specializes in the behavior of concrete buildings. What was left of the plane flowed into the structure in a state closer to a liquid than a solid mass.*"



FLIGHT 93 WAS SHOT DOWN OVER PENNSYLVANIA BY A MISSILE

This is among the most shameful and disrespectful of truther theories, because of the numerous family members who talked to their loved ones on board shortly before passengers stormed the cockpit and the plane went down. *To further debunk this theory, audiotapes revealed that the military didn't even know the plane had been hijacked until several minutes after the plane crashed.*

WHAT'S MOTIVATING TRUTHERS

The theories listed above and the brief attempts at debunking them are just small samples of the incredibly large amount of work that's been put into the fertile ground on which truthers play. The very fact that there are so many theories and people who believe in them raises another question: Amid so much evidence to the contrary, and so much visible heartbreak from victims' family members probably made worse by wallowing in conspiracy theories, why believe in them?

The most immediate and obvious answer is greed. Books and DVD movies by 9/11 truthers have sold millions of copies worldwide.

There are deeper reasons for their existence though. Tragedy is most often the result of a randomly cruel world. That, however, doesn't let people who were victimized by or who are afraid of tragedy blame someone or something.

In an article for Psychology Today, Ilan Shrira wrote: *"Conspiracy theories help us cope with distressing events and make sense out of them."* Conspiracies assure us that bad things don't just happen randomly. Conspiracies tell us that someone out there is accountable, however unwittingly or secretly or incomprehensibly, so it's possible to stop these people and punish them and in due course let everyone else re-establish control over their own lives.

Conspiracies also remind us that we shouldn't blame ourselves for our predicaments; it's not our fault, it's them! In these ways, believing in conspiracies serves many of the same self-protective functions as scapegoating."

By grasping at straws, and laying the blame on anything other than senseless, random violence - the very hallmark of al Qaeda's crusade - *truthers are trying to make order where there is none, and in the end, the only people they want to make feel better are themselves.*



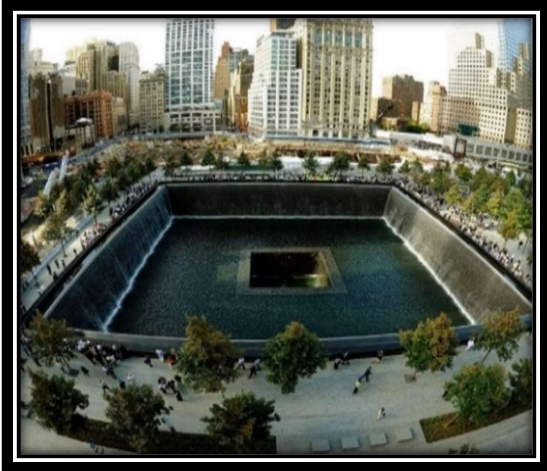
THE FALLING MAN
AN UNFORGETTABLE STORY



Sep 9, 2021

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AMERICA REBUILDS



THE 9-11 MEMORIAL NEAR SHANKSVILLE , PENNSLYVANIA



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