

## Tightening Up Loose Ends

Writing my third essay, “Loose Change or Feeble Reconstruction”, involved several revisions as I worked to make the changes recommended by my professor and class peers. I grouped these revisions into three categories: Organization, Diction and Evidence. In addressing the recommendations related to diction, I consulted an online thesaurus to help me figure out different options for words and phrases to use. To address many of the evidence-related suggestions, I first had to clarify my own thinking and do a better job of using details from the source material. In most cases, I needed to explain my position by including more examples and quotes to support the points I wanted to make.

In each of the three categories, I highlighted the suggested revisions in green. Each revision sample includes the original text highlighted in yellow and the revised text highlighted in blue. To improve readability, I removed the citation references. Also, in many cases, I added my own comment about my revision process.

**Green** indicates the suggested revision.

**Yellow** indicates the original text.

**Blue** indicates the revised text.

### Organization

Could put this paragraph after the opening scene paragraph (then no need to note previousness).

The sources could help explain some other arguments you make... more reason to re-think the placement of the paragraph.

Avery’s approach also takes advantage of the fact that our minds are naturally inclined to manufacture information to fill in blanks or find patterns where none actually exist. As

previously noted, the prologue presents a series of historical events. While the events appear to share the same conspiratorial theme, they do nothing to actually support Avery's argument... In addition, Avery allows the audience to reach a particular conclusion by exploiting the human tendency to make causal connections that do not actually exist.

[Revised the wording and moved this paragraph to immediately follow the paragraph describing the film's prologue]

Avery also presents an unrelated series of historical events to support his conspiratorial theme. These events do not actually prove his arguments, but Avery takes advantage of the audience's natural inclination to find patterns and manufacture information where none exists. Thus, he coaxes viewers to reach certain conclusions by exploiting the human tendency to assume cause and effect.

Comment: In making this revision, I needed to first clarify and then organize the points I needed to make in defending my thesis.

Avoid starting or ending a paragraph on a quote . . . always explain how the quote relates to your thesis and use a topic sentence or transition between paragraphs

...The accompanying footage clearly shows scattered pieces of debris within the smoldering crash site. This incomplete assessment is especially ironic given the narrator's earlier declaration that, "If the details of the events are proven to be a lie, then the authenticity... should be in question."

Revision: Another Avery tactic is to provide an incomplete assessment of the facts. In light of the narrator's declaration that, "If the details of the events are proven to be a lie, then the

authenticity [of the information] should be in question,” these partial assessments are especially ironic...

## Diction

### Vague diction

In presenting an apparently logical explanation for 9/11, the film employs different techniques in its attempts to manipulate the audience.

Revision: To explain these events, Avery employs several misleading tactics in attempting to manipulate the audience.

Comment: Making this change to the thesis helped me improve the essay’s organization and flow.

### Change "the claims" so the same word isn't used too much.

“Loose Change” selectively presents information to support the director’s agenda, and excludes any facts that would refute his claims. The claims made in “Loose Change” include the following...

Revision: The film claims that Hitler took advantage of the destruction of the Reichstag, the German parliament building, to silence his detractors, suspend civil liberties, and invade Poland. The prologue then presents allegations that the U.S. president along with high ranking U.S. officials successfully plotted, without the public’s knowledge, to engineer Pearl Harbor, the Manhattan Project, and U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. In doing so, the film leads the audience through a sequence of seemingly parallel events to suggest that President Bush conspired with others to carry out 9/11, also known as the “new Pearl Harbor”. However, Avery cleverly avoids assertions likely to prompt viewers to dismiss his message immediately. For

example, he never directly **states** that a U.S. president had similar conspiratorial motives to those of Adolf Hitler.

Comment: Even though this sample does not actually show that much overuse of the word, “claims”, I did have a tendency to use that word too often throughout my early drafts. In this particular paragraph, I was able to use several different words that are synonyms, or near-synonyms, for “claims”.

### Evidence

The paragraph shown above evolved even more based on the suggestion to expand my argument.

Could get into his 'compartmentalization' argument (like if they could keep the a-bomb a secret for a few years, then they could keep the 9/11plot secret forever).

However, Avery cleverly avoids assertions likely to prompt viewers to dismiss his message immediately. **For example, he never directly states that a U.S. president had similar conspiratorial motives to those of Adolf Hitler. Similarly, he never directly states that the U.S. government cannot be trusted.**

Revision: Nonetheless, Avery cleverly avoids assertions likely to prompt viewers to dismiss his message entirely. **For example, he never directly states that a U.S. president had similar conspiratorial motives to those of Adolf Hitler or that we cannot trust the U.S. government. Instead, Avery implies that U.S. leaders were able to hide their 9/11 plot. He explains that the government had been able to secretly develop an atom bomb during WWII by compartmentalizing information so that workers had only limited knowledge needed for conducting their specific tasks.**

Get more specific on the evidence.

Avery takes advantage of the typical viewer's lack of education and training in math and science.

Their relative ignorance makes it difficult for them to critically examine the information presented during the film.

Revision: Avery takes advantage of the average viewer's lack of technical knowledge, making it difficult for someone to critically examine the information presented in the film. After providing numerous details about building construction, the narrator suggests that the planes could not have caused the building collapses. He states, "...we are told that these massive structures were destroyed by 10,000 gallons of jet fuel, a perfectly symmetrical collapse resulting from asymmetrical damage, with the collapse following the path of greatest resistance." The narrator offers further supporting information from physics professor, Dr. Steven Jones, and data from a report issued by NIST, the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Comment: For this revision I needed to refer back to the source material to provide specific examples support my viewpoint.

Use a quote or two in the body.

Dispersed throughout the film are provocative statements and questions meant to influence the audience's perception of the truth.

Revision: The film questions the credibility of U.S. leaders by strongly implying that the Department of Defense mistranslated Bin Laden to support the accusation that he orchestrated the 9/11 attacks. In stating that "a number of international figures question the United States'

version of events”, the film identifies only two such figures: Egyptian President Mubarak and General Hamid Gul.

In one scene, the narrator states that responders found only ash and smoke, but no debris, at the Shanksville, Pennsylvania crash site. The accompanying footage clearly shows scattered pieces of debris within the smoldering crash site. This incomplete assessment is especially ironic given the narrator’s earlier declaration that, “If the details of the events are proven to be a lie, then the authenticity... should be in question.”

Comment: My initial drafts were often plagued with general, unsupported statements. This revision is a good example of using quotes and more specific information to back up my argument.

Integrate the quote. (Give it context in the original text and in your own writing.)

Explain more (begging the question).

“What could drive so many people to continue to question such a tragic event”? This quote best displays how Avery blurs the line between logic and emotion.

Revision: In asking “What could drive so many people to continue to question such a tragic event?” Avery blurs the line between emotion and logic by exploiting his flawed premise that many questions remain, even after publication of the 9/11 Commission findings.

Comment: The good news is that by this time, I had learned not to put a quote at the end of a paragraph.