



Part 1: Preface and Introduction

Frances T. Shure, M.A., L.P.C.
November 24, 2013



Preface

The following essay is not meant to persuade anyone of the theory that elements within our government were responsible for the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001. Rather, this paper is addressed primarily to the 45% of Americans¹ — and those people in other parts of the world — who already believe a new investigation is needed, as well as those who simply have had their doubts about the official account of 9/11 but have not explored the issue further. This paper is also addressed to psychology professionals and social scientists who may wish to consider the question in the title in greater depth.

Furthermore, this essay should be helpful to anyone who encounters resistance to *any* paradigm-shifting idea about which he or she may be communicating, since the same dynamics and research would apply in most such cases.

This work was not crafted entirely alone. I am grateful to members of the Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth writing team who suggested I write an article in the first place — thus the seed was planted. Once the seed began germinating, it developed from an article to a very long essay. This work was nurtured by substantial suggestions from Marti Hopper, Ph.D.; Sheila Fabricant Linn, M.Div.; Dennis Linn, M.Div.; Daniel K. Sage, Ph.D.; Dorothy Lorig, M.A.; Earl Staelin, J.D.; Joseph Karuna; Gregg Roberts; John Freedom, C.E.H.P.; Danielle Duperret, Ph.D.; Paul W. Rea, Ph.D.; Tim Gale; Sonia Skakich-Scrima, M.A.; Barrie Zwicker; David Ray Griffin, Ph.D.; Kevin Barrett, Ph.D.; Barbara Honegger; James Braun, B.C.E.; Ken Jenkins; and Richard Forer. I also received invaluable editing help from Dennis McMahan, J.D., and journalist Susan Clay, as well as proofreading assistance from David Laing, M.A., and Nancy Hall. I am profoundly indebted and grateful for their enthusiastic help.

In addition, this work could not have been written without the contributions of numerous people named and quoted in these pages — specifically, their research and their in-depth thought. I have drawn from wherever I found research, credible observations, or inspiration that seemed to apply. Because September 11, 2001, was a major turning point in our nation and our world, with its aftermath resulting (as of this writing) in the murder of nearly two million innocent Muslims and over 9,000 U.S. troops, and the unprecedented loss of civil rights in the U.S. as well as in other countries, I hope others will become inspired to add to this synthesis of research and clinical observation with the aim of furthering awareness of ourselves and our human condition.

If we are alive to the adventure of life, we naturally open our minds while maintaining our ability to keenly discriminate. We learn more about ourselves, we change, we grow, and we become more aware. We gain the courage to say “no” to those who lie, who are deceptive, who would have us cower in fear, and who would have us remain silent on issues of great importance. We then do our part to raise consciousness in others, with the goal of helping further the human dream of creating more free, peaceful, sustainable, and equitable human communities on our beautiful planet.

I hope you enjoy the journey through the ensuing essay parts, a journey toward a heightened awareness of our human proclivities and toward a heightened awareness in answering the question, “Why Do Good People Become Silent — or Worse — About 9/11?”

Introduction

“If what you are saying is true, I don’t want to know!” exclaimed a young male visitor at our 9/11 Truth booth at the Denver People’s Fair. He was referring to the evidence of controlled demolition of the three World Trade Center (WTC) skyscrapers on September 11, 2001.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because if what you are saying is true, I would become very negative. Psychologically, I would go downhill.”

With gratitude, I responded, “Thank you!”

Surprised, he asked, “Why are you thanking me?”

“Because it’s rare to hear such raw truth. Thank you for being so honest.”

Softened by our exchange, the young man chatted with me a while longer before taking his leave. I have never forgotten him; he has likely never forgotten me. We both felt it. Paradoxically, deep truth had been shared.

We who work to educate the public about 9/11 — and about false flag operations,² — are puzzled by the often forceful resistance from our listeners. Yet, many of us in the 9/11 Truth Movement also once vigorously resisted this challenging evidence. We have our own stories to document this.

What drives these antagonistic reactions?

Before attempting to answer that question, I would like to clarify that people who balk at evidence pointing to 9/11 as a false flag are no more mentally healthy or unhealthy than those of us who question the official account. Both groups consist of individuals who span the mental health spectrum.

So, there is no need to pathologize those who currently do not see what is now so clear to us, just as those of us in the 9/11 Truth Movement should not be dismissed and maligned as “conspiracy theorists” — the latter being an obvious defense and a not-so-obvious offense.³

The psychology professionals interviewed in the documentary *9/11: Explosive Evidence — Experts Speak Out* (ESO) by Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth talk about the *human* tendency toward denial in order to avoid the discomfort of cognitive dissonance. They speak compassionately about *all* of us. They indulge in no sophisticated name-calling (a.k.a. diagnosing) — too often a common occurrence among members of this profession. This is indeed refreshing.

In this spirit, and in the spirit of *beginning* a conversation — for we humans are complicated creatures — I will share my thinking as to why many of us defend ourselves from information that is troubling.

History tells us that even scientists, whom we stereotypically view as persons who objectively and open-mindedly look at data rather than at belief to determine reality, often vigorously resist paradigm shifts. Gregor Mendel’s experiments and resulting theory of genetic inheritance, for example, was resisted by scientists from the time of its announcement in 1865, and was only rediscovered in 1900 by three other European scientists. In other words, resistance to information that substantially challenges our worldview is, we find, the rule rather than the exception.⁴ Fortunately, change *does* occur, consensus reality *does* shift, sometimes rapidly, sometimes excruciatingly slowly.

To reiterate what I said when interviewed for the film *9/11: Experts Speak Out*: Fear is the emotion that underlies most of the negative reactions toward the facts that 9/11 skeptics bring to light: Fear of receiving information that will turn our world upside down. Fear of being overwhelmed by our own emotions. Fear of psychological deterioration. Fear that our life will have to change. Fear that we’ll discover that the world is not a safe place. Fear that our professional reputation will be tarnished, which may cause us to lose our job or a promotion. Fear of being shunned, even banished, by friends and family. Fear that we can no longer trust our “leaders.” And fear of looking like a fool for having bought the official account so thoroughly.

This last reason may be true especially for intellectuals who identify strongly with their intellect. None of us, however, like to feel duped. Realizing we have been fooled often threatens our very identity and causes us to feel betrayed.

Carl Sagan knew this when he said,

One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.⁵

Social psychologist and scholar Laurie Manwell remembers a professor who summed up human behavior with this statement: "People liked to be liked, they like to be right, and they like to be free — in that order." Thus, most people will give up their need to be right or free if their need to be liked is threatened.⁶

Why is this?

The fear of banishment is surely among the greatest fears we humans harbor, albeit often unconsciously.⁷ We are social creatures. We need others in order to survive, and we need to have a sense of belonging. To have some sense of wholeness and well-being, we need to feel connected to others, to love and to be loved. This is the reason that ridicule and shaming are such potent strategies used — consciously or unconsciously — to censure those with views that diverge from a culture's sacred mythology.

A "sacred myth" is a special story, found in every culture that, whether true, untrue, or partially true, tells us who we are and why we are doing what we are doing.⁸ What is our American sacred mythology? Currently, it goes something like this:

We are a truly exceptional nation with exceptional forefathers. We rebelled against tyranny and established a democratic republic, a model that the world has largely accepted and imitated. Our country is the purveyor of individual rights and freedoms around the world and our interventions in other countries are benevolent actions. On September 11, 2001, we were caught off-guard when al Qaeda terrorists, in a sneak attack, similar to that at Pearl Harbor, succeeded in flying commercial airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the most significant wound to our homeland to date. However, true to the American spirit, we immediately rose to the challenge to militarily smite the terrorists, who hate us because of our freedoms. This is why we have an unending Global War on Terror.

Even if we manage to set aside this belief in our current sacred mythology, look at the evidence, and recognize that 9/11 was a false flag event, we may then have to face the fear that, if we dare speak out, we could be the target of severe repercussions from corrupt authorities. As one person told me, "I appreciate everything you all are doing with this 9/11 issue, but I hope you understand, I have children; I can't get involved with this."

Fear is an integral part of the human condition; and yet, if we are committed to psycho-spiritual growth, we do not let fear dictate what we do — or do not do. We can be aware of the fear while not letting it rule our lives.

Most of us were traumatized⁹ by watching the horrifying destruction of the Twin Towers, knowing there were thousands of our fellow humans beings killed in that moment. Some of us were deeply shaken once again when we discovered evidence suggesting that 9/11 might be a false flag operation.

Why do some of us embrace the evidence and its implications and become active, while others feel powerless or apathetic in the face of this evidence? And why do still others become defensive and stay defensive — sometimes vehemently?

Why, indeed, upon hearing the facts that contradict the official account of 9/11, do good people become silent, or worse?

What is the difference? How, for example, can some people watch World Trade Center Building 7 (WTC 7)¹⁰ implode and collapse into its own footprint and *not* see what is right in front of them — even when they learn about its near-free-fall acceleration and the other characteristics of controlled demolition? These people may feel compelled to intensify their resistance with intellectually contorted measures to convince themselves and others that this building was not rigged to implode.

Then there are those who content themselves with shaming anyone who dares investigate the data and look into the testimony that disproves the official sacred myth.

There is a worldview that is being seriously challenged here. What is it? In essence, it was described well by a journalist whom I met at a street action: “I am aware that our government does bad things, but not *this*! Not those towers! They would not be *that* evil.”

So we assume our government — which is supposed to protect us but sometimes does bad things — would never commit acts *this* heinous. A man said to me during a public presentation, “I find your statement that our government orchestrated 9/11 very disturbing and offensive.”

“I believe I said the evidence trail leads to *elements* within our government, not *the* government,” I replied. He retorted, with great seriousness, “It makes no difference. There is no way you can state this that is going to make me feel any better!”

Many of us unconsciously relate to our government leaders as parental figures on whom we project our (often unmet) needs for a protective parent. We even agree culturally to the term “our founding fathers.”

The disciplines of Western psychology and anthropology have much to offer toward understanding human behavior, but we must remember that these disciplines, as impressive as they are, are ultimately disciplines that belong to our Western culture only. In the East and in some tribal societies, for example, people may call upon the philosophy of the transmigration of souls to explain human behavior; and the Sufis, the mystical branch of Islam, use the nine personality types of the Enneagram to explain our disparate human propensities.

Remember the proverbial five blind men, each touching one part of an elephant? Each man draws a different conclusion as to what the object is, depending on which part he is touching. The result? Five partial and laughably inaccurate descriptions of reality.

The more lenses we look through, therefore, the greater is our capacity to see a clearer — and more multi-dimensional — picture of our human tendencies.

Nonetheless, within the overlapping viewpoints of the rich disciplines of Western psychology, anthropology, brain research, and history, we can find several lenses that shed much light on the conundrum of why information that contradicts our worldview is so difficult for us to accept.

Specifically, through the lenses of anthropology, literature, history, and social psychology we will find helpful information in the sections entitled “Diffusion of Innovations,” “Obeying and Believing Authority,” “Doublethink,” “Denial and Cognitive Dissonance,” “Conformity,” “Groupthink,” “Terror Management Theory,” “Systems Justification Theory,” “Signal Detection Theory,” and “Prior Knowledge of State Crimes Against Democracy and Deep Politics.”

Through the lens of clinical psychology we will explore viewpoints described in the sections entitled “Learned Helplessness,” “The Abuse Syndrome,” “Dissociation,” and “Excessive Identification with the U.S.A.”

The two sections on Brain Research provide us with astonishing insights into our human nature.

The sections entitled “American Exceptionalism and Nationalist Faith,” “Government Manipulation and the Big Lie,” “Those Who Lack Conscience and Empathy,” and “The Role of the Media” contain valuable information from an amalgam of the disciplines of history, social psychology, clinical psychology, and brain research.

The last few sections address how we can communicate about 9/11 evidence more effectively and how we can fulfill our human need for awareness and healing.

Finally, this essay ends with the lament and inspiration of poet Langston Hughes as he asks “Is America Possible?”

Let me emphasize that this paper will be a synthesis of reports on academic research as well as clinical observations. None of the sections will fall neatly into one category or another, but will overlap each other, as is often the case with any rich and complicated subject.

Let’s begin our journey with an anthropological study.

Endnotes

¹“Zogby Poll Finds Over 70 Million Voting Age Americans Support New 9/11 Investigation,” <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20060522022041421>; and “Less Than Half of Americans Satisfied with 9/11 Investigations,” http://www.rawstory.com/news/2006/Less_than_half_of_Americans_satisfied_0523.html.

²See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_flag_operation.

³Lance deHaven-Smith, *Conspiracy Theory in America* (University of Texas Press, 2013). DeHaven-Smith analyzes the history of the development of the derogatory nature of the term “conspiracy theory,” tracing it to a CIA memo known as “CIA Dispatch 1035-960,” a propaganda campaign designed to discredit doubters of the Warren Commission’s report. The use of the term “conspiracy theory” as a pejorative subsequently skyrocketed in the media as a way to defame, smear, and ridicule anyone who would dare speak of any crime allegedly committed by the state, intelligence or military services, or speak in contradiction of an official explanation of an important event. In this light, the use of this pejorative term is an offensive tactic to shame and censure, and thus censor the speech of, those who dare question official government accounts. Unfortunately, this propaganda campaign has been exceedingly successful.

⁴Earl Staelin, J.D., “Resistance to Scientific Innovation: Its Causes and How to Overcome It,” a paper delivered at the Intercept 2001 Conference, July 6–9, 2001, Laughlin, Nevada, sponsored by the Kronia Group. A further insight from Earl Staelin is that most of us also experience psychological inertia when presented with a new theory that we firmly believe is not true, and we must be convinced that it is worth our time to be open to the new theory.

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

See also <http://www.scribd.com/doc/13481854/Resistance-by-Scientists-to-Scientific-Discovery-Barber-1961>.

⁵Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* (Random House Publishing Group, 1996).

⁶From Laurie Manwell’s presentation at the Toronto Hearings, Ryerson University, 2011: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_5ZwCpN1jg.

⁷This is personal observation and interpretation, but is supported by historical accounts. See that even sages of long ago were warned to heed their words in the second paragraph of this article: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0003_0_01976.html.

⁸David Ray Griffin, Ph.D., “9/11: The Myth and the Reality,” <http://www.amazon.com/9-11-The-Myth-Reality/dp/B000O0YV7O> and <http://davidraygriffin.com/articles/911-the-myth-and-the-reality>.

⁹In this context “trauma” is defined as extreme upset or having one’s internal resources overwhelmed, at least temporarily.

¹⁰“Solving the Mystery of WTC7,” (with Ed Asner): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZEvA8BCoBw>.

Note: Electronic sources in the endnotes have been archived. If they can no longer be found by a search on the Internet, readers desiring a copy may contact Frances Shure [[here](#)].