

# “Debating” What Hit the Pentagon by Exaggeration, Namecalling, and Threats

## The *Rock Creek Free Press*’ Attack on Rationality in the 9/11 Truth Movement

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“The most perfidious way of harming a cause consists of defending it deliberately with faulty arguments.”

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 191

German philosopher (1844 - 1900)

This article is a response to “Is Leading 9/11 Truth Site Working For The Other Side?,” credited to “staff writers” at the *Rock Creek Free Press*, November 2010 edition, available at:

<http://www.rockcreekfreepress.com/CreekV4No11-Web.pdf>

The “leading 9/11 Truth site” being referred to is 911Blogger.com. The authors of the article critiqued here chose to remain anonymous, and the article’s title doesn’t lend itself to an easily pronounceable acronym. Therefore I will refer to the article’s authors, along with their vocal message board sympathizers and Barrie Zwicker, as The Complainers. We will abbreviate Citizen Investigation Team as “CIT” and their video *National Security Alert* as “NSA” (noting the irony).

I normally prefer the high ground when it comes to accusations regarding intentions. However, since the Complainers routinely impute sinister motives to their critics, the reader must consider whether that behavior is more consistent with an intention to support or subvert the overall agenda of the 9/11 Truth Movement.

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The Complainers’ article, like *NSA* itself, is fraught with logical fallacies and intellectual dishonesty. Examples are discussed in the following sections:

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## A Running Ad Hominem

Most of the article consists of a running *ad hominem* attack, accusing people who run one of the admittedly “leading” 9/11 Truth websites of wanting to cover up mass murder. The Complainers correctly state “it would be surprising if the perpetrators of 9/11 had not attempted to infiltrate and subvert the 9/11 truth movement,” but knowing this alone does not help to identify the infiltrators. Sorting out the cast of characters requires close examination of the devilish details in order to distinguish among knavish infiltrators, simple fools, and sincere truth-seekers who have been fitted into a well-designed “snitch jacket” in the spirit of COINTELPRO. The implicit assumption of the Complainers is that criticizing the investigative quality of CIT’s work is the same as working to cover up 9/11 – a manipulative appeal to emotion. The accusation of disloyalty echoes the McCarthyists and their modern-day brethren. It comes from the same playbook used by those who defend the illegal invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, for which 9/11 served as the pretext, by calling 9/11 activists “terrorist sympathizers.”

The Complainers drew warnings from 911Blogger moderators, for their vicious and divisive attacks on other researchers, the real cause of the banning of which the Complainers ... complain. A moderator told them that this was one of the reasons that they were banned. Yet this explanation brought no humility or lessened outrage to the Complainers. Is their reaction simply an inability to see their own misbehavior as others see it, or something more? Does it perhaps come from the idea that the best defense is a good offense? (Readers with a well-developed sense of consistency will understand my

indulgence in some questions regarding the Complainers' intentions, given that they "went there" first.)

Whatever the reason, many comments supportive or critical of CIT/NSA that violated 911Blogger rules were allowed to stand because of the overwork that is endemic to the 9/11 truth movement. Whatever inconsistencies there might have been, in terms of who was allowed to get away with what, say little or nothing about the moderators' intentions.

## **A Key Exaggeration**

The Complainers write as though the evidence against a large airliner having flown into the Pentagon were strongly in their favor, and they make vastly exaggerated claims for the power and the clarity of that evidence. Jim Hoffman's essay, [The Pentagon No-757-Crash Theory: Booby Trap for 9/11 Skeptics](#), published in October 2004, finds that much of the evidence regarding what hit the Pentagon is inconclusive, and is incapable of being made much better than it is. Since the 9/11 Truth movement is working to uncover the truth about 9/11, against a backdrop of blatant lies that constitute an orchestrated coverup, it is important to deal very cautiously with facts. Deviating from the official story carries a heavy burden of proof, especially in the mind of the public. Speculation lays us open to debunking. Speculation that appears outrageous, and is proved wrong, can paint the whole 9/11 Truth Movement with a broad brush as crazies. We could lose all the hard fought ground we have gained, rendering our solid accomplishments moot. On these grounds, the question of what hit the Pentagon is a self-defeating choice as the focus of any demand for a new investigation. In one of his [later analyses](#) Hoffman concludes that "[the] evidence comports with the crash of a Boeing 757." He added that while "the evidence does not conclusively prove that the aircraft was a 757, much less that it was Flight 77", "that lack of conclusiveness should not be surprising given the systematic suppression of evidence by authorities." We need to be willing to let the official story stand unless the proof to the contrary is extremely solid.

For critiques of the deceptive tactics used by CIT, see:

- Victoria Ashley, "[To Con A Movement: Exposing CIT's PentaCon 'Magic Show'](#)"
- Chris Sarns, "[Summary and Analysis of 'National Security Alert'](#)"
- [Shinki and Ed Paik Accounts vs. CIT Methods by Erik Larson](#)
- [Dawn Vignola's Account vs. CIT's Methods by Erik Larson](#)

Here are three essays and a shorter but very recent piece describing what the Pentagon evidence actually shows. They also contain explanations of the severe disadvantages of focusing publicly on the question of what hit the Pentagon, and the benefits of focusing on the evidence that many other key aspects of the official account of what happened at the Pentagon are demonstrably false:

- Jim Hoffman, "[The Pentagon Attack: What the Physical Evidence Shows](#)"
- Michael Green, "[How They Get Away With It.](#)"
- Frank Legge, "[What Hit the Pentagon? Misinformation and its Effect on the Credibility of 9/11 Truth](#)"
- Kevin Ryan, "[A dozen questions about Flight 77 and the Pentagon that might lead to justice, and one that won't](#)"

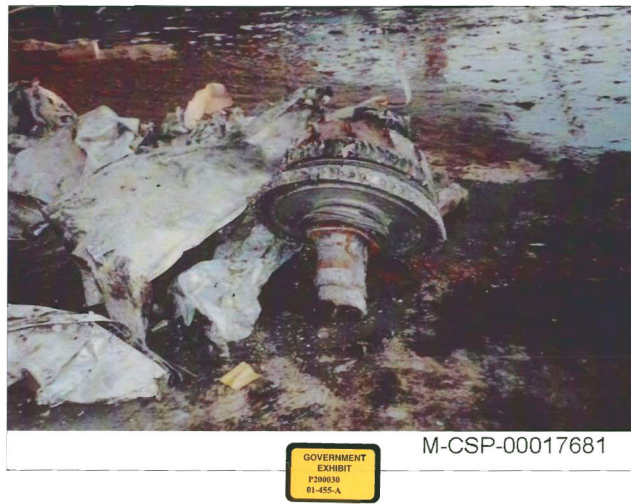
## False Statements and Exaggerations

### "There was no [plane] wreckage at the Pentagon"

It's amazing that people who apparently consider themselves investigative journalists could make a statement like this. There are many pictures of plane wreckage at the Pentagon from 9/11:



<http://911research.wtc7.net/pentagon/evidence/photos/rotor.html>



<http://911research.wtc7.net/pentagon/evidence/photos/compressor.html>









<http://911research.wtc7.net/pentagon/evidence/photos/yardparts.html> and <http://911review.com/errors/pentagon/crashdebris.html> [some photos cropped]

Some people have argued that some of this wreckage *did not come from a 757* (though that claim doesn't withstand scrutiny; see <http://911review.com/errors/pentagon/nodebris.html>). But to claim that *there was no plane wreckage* is simply false – and the Complainers obviously should know that it's false.

#### **“CIT came along and proved [that] the plane flew away”**

This is a laughably arrogant claim, considering the many trenchant criticisms of CIT's methods and reasoning that remain unaddressed, let alone rebutted, many months after such criticisms were published and made known to CIT. Contrary to CIT's marketing hype, only one witness, Roosevelt Roberts, claimed to have seen a plane fly away from the Pentagon soon after the explosion. CIT does not even describe Roberts' testimony accurately. ***Roberts is not a witness to Flight 77 flying over the Pentagon through the explosion.*** He is a witness to what he considered to be a second plane (and which CIT considers the same plane) flying back in the same general direction from which Flight 77 came from. It is only a presumption (and a poorly founded one at that) on the part of CIT and the Complainers that the plane Roberts saw was the same plane that all the other witnesses saw flying toward the Pentagon from the west or southwest.

What are the chances that that presumption is correct? Virtually nil:

1. There would be no reason for the perpetrators to give all the witnesses on the west side of the Pentagon a chance to see the same plane flying back toward them after the explosion. In fact there would be every reason for them not to do that. Any

flyover plane would have continued on, turning to the southeast toward Reagan National Airport, or otherwise remaining out of sight of witnesses who were intended to be fooled by the flight path and explosion.

2. If the perpetrators had made such a mistake in their plan, or in the execution of the plan, as to have the same plane fly back toward the west or southwest after the impact, many other witnesses besides Roberts would have reported it both to the mass media and to members of the 9/11 Truth movement. Obviously, even more people would have been paying attention to what was going on in the area – given that the Pentagon was in flames, for the first time in history – than were paying attention before the impact/explosion.
3. The interview with Roberts, of which CIT tries to make so much, was not conducted until many years after the highly politicized events of the day. Any investigator knows that witness statements are far less reliable under such conditions, regardless of whether there is any intent to deceive.

#### **“The leading 9/11 truth site is actively suppressing CIT’s evidence”**

It is somewhat bizarre for a successful DC-area alternative publication to complain that others are “suppressing evidence” that it has successfully been publishing to a substantial audience for more than a year. It is even more bizarre for the Complainers to choose as their target the managers of a website that provided extensive publicity to help get the *Rock Creek Free Press* off the ground, even though it allowed the new evidence regarding no-757 to be posted and discussed at length from the beginning.

Wikipedia defines “[suppression of evidence](#)” as a “term used in the United States legal system to describe the lawful or unlawful act of preventing evidence from being shown in a trial.” For the Complainers to accuse 911Blogger of “suppression of evidence” is another exaggeration, at best.

The Complainers’ article lauds the *NSA* DVD, which has surely been circulated to thousands of people. On top of that, thousands if not tens of thousands of comments have been published on various Internet message boards by the Complainers, ensuring that the 9/11 truth movement has had every opportunity to hear about their views.

To the extent that 911Blogger is now “suppressing” what CIT and its supporters submit as evidence, it is mostly because CIT and its supporters consistently violate the rules of civility at 911Blogger. A secondary reason is that most of the evidence and argument submitted in support of no-757 or flyover is poor and weak. No media outlet has any ethical obligation to publish material about which it holds these views.



**“Zwicker is an expert on the subject of infiltration of social movements.”**

There is nothing in Zwicker’s published works or his Wikipedia biography that would support this claim. Zwicker has written extensively about how the media shuts out alternative points of view, but not about infiltration of social movements. Even if he had written such works, the argument presented is merely an argument from authority.

Regardless of the question of whether Zwicker should be considered an expert, here is something posted three years ago on 911Blogger and attributed without evidence to Zwicker by “Doughnut”:

...[W]hat’s needed is politically relevant education. Education about agents of all kinds, especially agents provocateurs, their history, who employs them, their tactics... While educating ourselves and others we can simultaneously actively combat agents of the state by refraining from engaging in the types of behaviour they employ to sow dissention: name-calling, rumour-mongering, insinuation. Especially specific name-calling. Refraining from this does not stifle vigorous discussion and debate.... (<http://911blogger.com/node/11648>)

How unfortunate that Zwicker has now endorsed a group that so regularly and thoroughly disregards this excellent advice.

**“Many well respected 9/11 truth activists and scholars have been banned from 911 blogger without explanation or cause”**

There is no evidence to support this claim. The cause of any bannings has always been violation of the rules. It would be interesting to know who exactly “well respects” those who have been banned, besides their comrades who have also been banned or warned for the same reasons.

911Blogger has not violated anyone’s rights by warning, banning, or deleting posts. No one has the right to post there; membership and posting are privileges, not rights.

911Blogger’s admins do an excellent job of maintaining an environment of civil discussion. They have arguably defended the rights of those who have been defamed by aggressive members (whatever their position on the Pentagon).

People who refuse to behave themselves after several warnings or temporary bannings aren’t welcome at 911Blogger or at any moderated forum, no matter how much they may whine about it and blame others for the natural consequences of their incivility. If more forums rode herd on their members as 911Blogger’s admins do, the Internet would be a far more enjoyable and productive medium in which to engage in research and debate.

## Refusal to Acknowledge Rational Criticism and Respond to It Rationally

One of the hallmarks of crank science and propaganda is a refusal to engage in rational debate in response to rational criticism. The Complainers and CIT have mischaracterized criticisms of their methods and reasoning as “personal attacks,” while freely attacking the personal motives of their critics (snitch-jacketing them), and even threatening them. (It is easier to keep track of the different speakers in the passage below in the original, at (<http://arabesque911.blogspot.com/2007/11/cit-craig-ranke-aldo-marquis-and.html>.)

CIT research[er] Aldo Marquis describes “the ‘team’ that came out after to help reinforce [the ‘official story’]. ‘John Farmer’, ‘Arabesque’, and ‘Adam ‘Caustic Logic’ Larson’. There is not a doubt in my mind that we are dealing with ops here. I dare Adam Larson to provide a history and proof of his identity. I defy Arabesque to do the same. You can all laugh, but what they do is called ‘neutralization’. This is exactly what COINTEL, does...”

Craig Ranke has also insinuated that Caustic Logic “made a sad attempt to neutralize our info... and he's a bad writer too. It's like he is a cointelpro flunkie but he keeps trying!” While Ranke says “neither [Arabesque or Caustic Logic] are smart enough to be actual cointelpro,” he contradicted himself elsewhere when he called Caustic Logic “a brainwashed minion of the Pickering/Hoffman/Arabesque [sic] squad rather than a professional.” Ranke sums up his dismay that “people like the Frustrated Fraud have directed so much energy to spin and neutralization [sic] of the facts...”

...Aldo Marquis accused an entire online conspiracy theory forum of a conspiracy to manipulate their research:

“Craig, I told you. ATS [Above Top Secret Forum] is trying to control the information. This thread should not have been moved to our forum. Yet it was. I am not putting up with this spook operation at ATS.”...

... Eventually, the Loose Change Forum finally had enough of CIT:

“It has been deemed necessary by the bulk of active admins of [the Loose Change] forum that Aldo Marquis and Craig Ranke CIT are no longer welcome here. The reasons for banning are as follows:

- repeated behavior and threads/posts aimed at only causing trouble
- ignoring of repeated warnings and suspensions
- starting irrelevant threads in the pentagon section, even after previous ones were removed
- unnecessary character assassination i.e. “stop seducing married women, Russ” or “go smoke another blunt, Dylan”
- threatening Dylan that they were going to ‘expose’ him”...

... # Aldo Marquis: “People like you and Jim Hoffman are dangerous to the truth. You will calmly suggest irrational suggestions in order that you mold the mind of the reader.”

# Aldo Marquis: “... You are such a disgusting entity. Call him you coward. Call him... What does that have to do with all of them placing it on the north side, Disinfoesque? ... You are a joke and

we're coming for you... Does one actually need to, you crackpot? The plane was on the north side. THAT is the smoking gun. Do you understand anonymous disinfo op? ... You are pegged and a joke. You are a tool for the uninitiated [sic] and unresearched. You peddle day dreams for these idiots who bought into the honey pot theory or LIHOP. Yet, you are simply that, an anonymous blogger who has never interviewed witnesses, victims, rescuers, firefighters. You've never even set foot in Arlington, huh? You make me sick."

# Aldo Marquis: "You screwed everybody. You didn't do your homework. You made a movie that got heavily debunked and yet you CONTINUED TO SELL IT!!!! You should be ashamed of yourself. Now you are releasing watered down version which now makes you and everybody who supported you look like fools. I actually back up my accusations with facts, research, evidence, and logic Dylan. That's not your department."

For general background on how propagandists manipulate public opinion generally and with regard to 9/11, see:

### **Enforcing Mediocrity**

<http://911review.com/denial/bigtent.html>

### **Personal Attacks**

<http://911review.com/disinfo/intimidation.html>

### **Stigmatizing Critique**

<http://911research.wtc7.net/talks/911mysteries/conflating.html>

## **Appeal to Popular Opinion**

Another fallacy in which the Complainers indulge is the appeal to popular opinion:

In the 9/11 truth community, even among those who are not familiar with CIT, the general consensus is that no plane hit the Pentagon....

[Barrie Zwicker:] Most people in the truth movement that I talk to in the real world are agreed that no plane hit the Pentagon.

Even if these claims are true, *so what?* Most people in the 9/11 Truth movement are far from having the time and skill to be excellent researchers and to be able to draw reasonable conclusions from ambiguous, hotly contested and often incorrectly stated evidence. Even on far less contentious questions, majorities are often wrong about facts and the conclusions those facts support. Survey after survey show embarrassing levels of ignorance among Americans about history, geography, and especially science.

Note also Zwicker's swipe at the people who believe it's more likely that a plane did hit the Pentagon, implying that they are not living in the real world – another ad hominem attack.

## **“Authorities Would Blame Controlled Demolition on Al Qaeda”**

I credit the Complainers for explicitly stating why they think no-757 at the Pentagon “is in a class by itself”:

It may be possible to convince the American public that al Qaeda placed bombs in the World Trade Center towers, but the public will never believe, (nor should they) that al Qaeda planted bombs in the Pentagon.

How exactly is the first possibility any more reasonable than the second? What are the chances that the controlled demolition of the World Trade Center would ever be admitted by authorities, with the new detail of blaming that demolition on al Qaeda – *with broad success*?

There is no question of authorities ever blaming any major aspect of the 9/11 attack on anyone other than the official perpetrators. If this is really the Complainers’ reason for considering no-757 to be more valuable in our 9/11 truth efforts than the controlled demolition of the World Trade Center, this only provides another example of their poor skills in political analysis.

## **A Severe Non Sequitur: Poor Political Analysis**

*“Evidence of an elaborate deception at the Pentagon is iron clad proof of complicity at the highest levels of government”*

In itself, this statement is indisputably true. However, by no means does it follow that we must promote every claim of elaborate deception at the Pentagon regardless of how strongly it is supported by the evidence. It is easy to show that there has been “an elaborate deception involving the Pentagon” without engaging in the factually questionable and emotionally provocative denial that Flight 77 was the attack aircraft:

- That any plane was able to hit the Pentagon without even being intercepted by fighter jets (not the same as being shot down; but see the last point here).
- That the incompetent pilot Hani Hanjour executed a tight maneuver with military precision in a passenger jetliner.
- The failure to target the top brass’s offices in favor of the recently reinforced, barely occupied section. That section housed accountants who might have detected and exposed “off-the-books” spending of some of the missing \$2.3 trillion, and the Office of Naval Intelligence, which might have been “out of the loop” of responsibility for the attack while other government employees and contractors were in on it.



- Cheney's order not to shoot down the airliner approaching the Pentagon – the "order that still stood."

Wouldn't undisputed facts that undermine the official story – or elements of the official story that are inconsistent with each other – be the best evidence for generating a new investigation? Instead, the Complainers keep insisting that we all focus on the most hotly disputed question in the entire 9/11 Truth movement. If people who have already taken the Red Pill and agree that 9/11 was an inside job cannot agree on a specific major element of what really happened, what reason is there to expect this element of our alternative account to convince people who are still in the Matrix? What does the screeching emphasis by the Complainers on a hotly debated point indicate about their skills in political analysis, if not their intentions?

## **Deceptive Mentions of NSA "Endorsements" or Reviews**

The Complainers continue to refer to a brief review of CIT's *NSA* video by Richard Gage as an "endorsement," but they never (to my knowledge) mention that Gage subsequently clarified that he did not endorse the flyover theory, which is the entire point of the video:

<http://911blogger.com/node/22029>

In fact, neither Gage's original review nor his explicit clarification agree with any of the conclusions presented in the video. Gage is a naturally friendly person who does not always express disagreement.

Peter Dale Scott also explicitly clarified that he does not endorse "flyover":

<http://citwatch.blogspot.com/2009/08/peter-dale-scott-clarifies.html>

## **Conclusion**

The Complainers' fallacies, confusion of facts with conclusions, absurdly improper emphasis on a controversial issue, and various forms of emotional manipulation have gone on long enough. We call upon them all, one more time, to retract and stop their personal attacks, stop rehashing the same arguments, and start taking a scientific and legal approach. Until they do that, and much more conclusive evidence regarding the Pentagon is released than has been released so far, the evidence for the controlled demolition of World Trade Center Building 7 and the Twin Towers will remain the centerpieces of a rational call for a real 9/11 investigation.