

GUESTS OF THE NATION



MIKE PALECEK

Guests of the Nation pulls no punches ...

“I loved it! I think GOTN is a timely published 9/11 story, a quick and easy read for our too busy lives, and one that just might sink into the American people’s consciousness, finally. I wish it could be placed for sale on every store’s ‘impulse’ check-out counter across the USA.”

— **Elizabeth O. Metz**, *Summer of Truth*, 2008

“Once again, Palecek leads us sleepwalkers through Nightmerica, the twisted beyond corruption conspiracyland of a million fears. Our tour begins in the nooks, crannies, and crawl-spaces necessarily accessed to bring a building down in its footprint.

“Before George W. Bush’s bloody rampage across the world could commence there need be a ‘catalyzing’ event. Enter the crime of the century on the eleventh day of the ninth month of the first year. Palecek goes among the real 9/11 conspirators to prove fiction is no stranger to truth.

“Palecek chronicles better than anyone America’s legion nobodies, shocked, awed, and standing appalled as their president careens around the globe, death and hellfire marking his passage.

“From headless corpses bobbing down the Tigris, to Louisiana’s unidentified ‘floaters,’ Palecek reminds, we’re all little people in this not so brave Neo World; no more citizens, but merely ‘guests’ serving at the pleasure of the president.

— **Chris Cook**, Gorilla Radio, Vancouver, British Columbia

“Gripping, insightful character dialogue leading to that nagging suspicion that something doesn’t seem to add up within our currently accepted, mainstream media promoted worldview — finishing with the only possible solution of a totalitarian agenda. Great Read!”

— **Dan Nalven**, 911Truth.org

“Keep up the great work Seventh Street Press. You’re right up there with the muckrakers and truth tellers of that earlier Gilded Age in the finest American tradition of comforting the afflicted and inflicting the comfortable.”

— **Burnis E. (Gene) Tuck**, Fresno, CA

“Suspenseful, brisk, and infuriating. ”

— **Lynn Berg**, New York City



Michael Paul Miller

“I believe one hundred percent that the U.S. orchestrated 9/11 with the help of other agencies around the world. But my blame goes to the United States because it happened in the U.S. There’s people within the U.S. that knew it happened, that planned this to happen. ...”

— **Bob McIlvaine**, *father of Robert McIlvaine, Assistant Vice President, Merrill Lynch, WTC North Tower, 106th floor. Former school teacher. Interview by Evan Solomon, CBC News 8/30/06.*

GUESTS OF THE NATION

by Mike Palecek

Illustrations by
Russell Brutsche
Michael Paul Miller
Allison M. Healy



To Paul Wellstone, Sheila Wellstone, Marcia Wellstone, Will McLaughlin, Tom Lopic,
Mary McEvoy, Richard Conroy, Michael L. Guess.

Also murdered by George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell,
John Ashcroft et al., in order to start a war, in order to gain profit from war, from killing, from death.
(Oct. 25, 2002)

Also by Mike Palecek

Killing George Bush [KGB]

Joe Coffee's Revolution

Twins

The Truth

The Last Liberal Outlaw

Looking For Bigfoot

Terror Nation

The American Dream

Iowa Terror

Guests of the Nation

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Excerpt on page 7 "I asked them ... We're living in Zelikow's 'after.'" courtesy of Kevin Barrett,
www.truthjihad.com.

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ONE

“It was an interesting day.”
“Looks like I hit the trifecta.”
“That’s one bad pilot.”
“Today we had our Pearl Harbor.”

— George W. Bush

Boom.

Boom-boom.

In his sleep John saw flashes and explosions, and home movies of blowing on birthday candles, and then more rapid-fire bursts, and sitting in shop class in his underwear, and burned, stiff bodies.

All the components of an American dream.

Too many bodies.

The bodies were stacking up in the shop area of Mr. Shoemaker’s class, next to the “croschcut shaw,” the band shaw, the radial arm shaw, and the circular shaw.

Each year on the first day of class Mr. Shoemaker would name the saws by firing out the fingers

of one hand, the band saw and radial arm saw being half and three-quarters length because of an ancient band saw accident, or perhaps separate accidents.

Outside the class door John smelled the lunchroom and a whiff of Sue McCarthy's perfume.

He heard the rumble of the changing classes.

He saw Sue sitting in the next row, and since this was a dream he smiled wide and reached over to pull her hand to his crotch.

John's hand hit something before reaching Sue.

He opened his eyes and saw his own fingertips touching a knee wearing dark blue pants.

Some sort of tweed?

WTF *is* tweed?

John uncrossed his legs and sat up in the tight little blue airport seat.

Blood rushed through his body, filling his face and ears.

He looked up and saw three people looking down on him, shoulder to shoulder, all wearing varieties of dark and white, as if three stern Catholic playground monitors had showed up to haul him to time out.

"Are you a terrorist?" said the white-haired man in the middle.

What happened to "with Folgers in your cup"?

He was tall and successful looking, the same as the younger ones, the black-haired man on the right, and the blonde babe on the left.

The young man flipped open a wallet with an FBI identification.

Probably came with the cheap billfold.

John couldn't believe his eyes. They were really here. Like finally having an alien sighting.

All stern and serious and dark and white.

John sat next to his bag, in the waiting area to board his flight at Kennedy for home after attending the 9/11 Truth anniversary events.

He wore a red and white "Investigate 9/11" T-shirt with the letters and numbers in the shape of the smoking twin towers. He styled fairly new jeans and very new brown Skechers.

The woman agent held in her hands a green flyer that John recognized from the conference.

She pulled it to her waist, gripped it by the edges with her fingertips and held the front toward John.

He nodded.

He knew his name was there as a speaker. One of the first things you learn is you keep track most efficiently from the front of the crowd.

The younger man bent down and squinted to read the button on John's shirt.

The older man put his hand on his waist, pulling back his coat to reveal a black pistol.

Smooth move.

John still had not spoken.

He consciously noted.
He had heard their voices.

They had not heard mine.
Not that I knew of.
And so I thought that gave me a semblance of control.
“Sir,” said the woman in a deep, beautiful, tough woman voice that was not unnatural.
Her hair was coarse from too much swimming.
Well, too much, that’s not my judgment to make, maybe it was just right, for her.
Nice tits.
Very, very nice.

She stepped in and took me by my underarm in a grip that with just a small change in pressure points could have brought me to my knees.

So would the tits.

Black Haired Boy shook his mane back the way cool kids do and leaned to pick up my bag.

“What have I done?” I said as I rose to stand, trying to sound uninhibited, not perturbed, non-indignant, unafraid, truthful, trustworthy, brave.

Chief White Haired Guy stepped right in. I smelled the cherry Lifesaver in his cheek.

His eyebrows were white and bushy and his face worn.

In his killer cool brown eyes I saw all the way to Quantico and Fred Hampton and Wounded Knee and Dillinger and too many whiskies after golf, four successful kids, a retirement lake home.

“John,” he said. The voice underlined all my assumptions.

You cannot make this stuff up. These guys, when you actually meet them, they walk fully dressed right out of your midnight imagination.

“John.”

The four of us formed a huddle, surrounded by the eyes and ears now beginning to find us.

Again he showed me the gun, the persuader, a subtle aside.

“We need to visit with you,” said the voice of Marshal Dillon.

He took me by the other arm.

We fell in behind Blacky carrying my grayish bluish bag, uniquely designed for two purposes in life, same as ol’ Blonde’s ass, to look good and fit into a tight space.

Whitey and Blonde had me securely by the arms.

Blacky never got too far ahead.

We attracted plenty of stares, gawks, leers.

Scenarios developed instantly by those passing, milling, waiting: drugs being smuggled, terror being averted, security being maintained, threats being assuaged.

Assuaged?

Did I say that?

Secret Service. FBI. CIA. NSA. PTA. XYZ. ATT. NFL. ABC.

Saudi. Argentine. Italian. Israeli.

Wary eyes, cross looks, whispers.

Taps on shoulders.

Look at that.

I tried to match their pace, did match it, no choice. Keep my eyes ahead, not be embarrassed, afraid, angry, must not get angry.

Terrorists are angry people. I am American, happy, jovial, love to chat, eat burgers.

The ambient sound included a mix of pop music and announcements from omnipresent speakers.

We arrived at a grey door, not unlike a hundred other unmarked grey doors leading to supplies of Pine Sol and Windex.

We entered, now in single file, Blacky, Blonde, me, Whitey, down a white-tiled hall with grey block walls. Nothing on the walls.

To another grey metal door with silver knob.

We entered and stood in our group for a moment.

Maybe they had not worked together much, or had not used this room before, or they didn't really want to be here.

There was a long grey metal table and behind that a grey metal folding chair.

On this side of the small grey painted concrete block room with grey painted concrete floor were two grey metal folding chairs, and maybe that's what the deal was, they didn't know where to find another grey chair.

A silver metal ashtray, clean, sat on the table. A smell of 1970s cigarettes hung in the air like moldy, mildewed laundry, bell-bottoms.

We all walked around a bit, shuffled sideways and back, checked out the pattern of the blocks, head joints, bed joints, the dearth of dirt in the corners, until Whitey spoke.

"Ron. Have John sit over there," nodding toward the chair on the other side of the grey metal table.

So I walked around to sit over there as Ron tried to catch me to direct me and ended up coming around the other side and beating me to the chair.

I sat.

It was cold and not close at all to the table or to the wall, this particular chair.

The speakers hacked into the high corners came from the sound system of a '66 Mustang owned by a seventeen-year-old gearhead from Sandusky.

Not feeling I possessed sufficient cachet to move the chair, I sat where it was, out in the open, no-man's land, no-person's land, my hands on my knees, feeling my billfold, wondering if I turned off the stove, and whether it made any difference.

Perhaps sensing a possible security breach, Ron sidled around the table and hustled to the door. He fiddled with the big silver knob, trying to see if it would lock.

“Just leave it,” said Whitey. “If you fuck it up, how we gonna get out?”

Ron put his back to the door, his hands behind his back.

Whitey scraped up one of the chairs on their side and sat right up close, laying his elbows on the table like a full house.

He pushed the ashtray toward me.

“John,” he said.

“My name is Bill.”

“Cosby?” I said.

He did not smile.

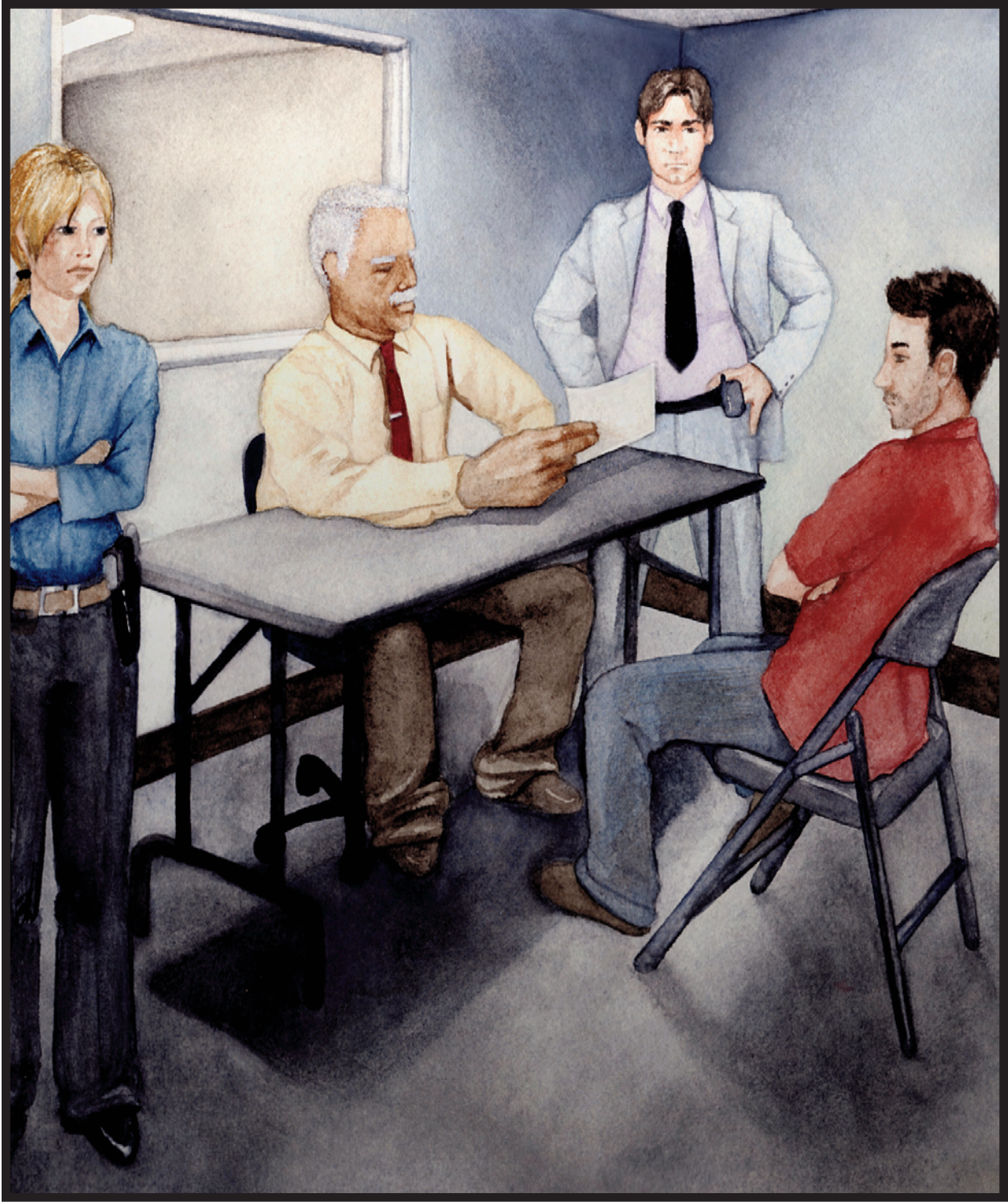
“This is Ron, Laura.” He fired thumbs over each shoulder.

Ron and Laura were not smiling.

I put both hands up to say I didn’t smoke.

“What do you have against the United States of America?” Laura asked.

Because she just had to.



Allison M. Healy



TWO

“Are you a terrorist?”

Are you an idiot?

To answer that, we have to agree first on what terrorism is. Freedom Fighter, Terrorist. Depends on who has the money to pay whom to sit in the news anchor chair, right?

“Do you belong to any terrorist group? Have you been to Iraq?”

I asked them what they thought of Osama’s fancy new beard, and they just sort of shook their heads.

Hitting my stride, I explained to them that Philip Zelikow, the main author of the preposterous 9/11 Commission Report, is a self-described expert in “the creation and maintenance of public myths.”

Good man.

I pointed out that Zelikow co-authored a 1998 *Foreign Affairs* article on the likely political and cultural effects of a massive Pearl Harbor style terrorist event such as the destruction of the World Trade Center. In that article, Zelikow noted that such a mythic event would split time into a before and an after. The after, of course, was the “whole new world” of post-9/11 terror hysteria.

“That’s why we’re here in this room right now,” I said. “We’re living in Zelikow’s ‘after’.”

Cozy, isn’t it?

“Are you a member of a terrorist group?” asked Laura.

I looked at her.

For some stupid reason I winked.

I've never been able to wink. Maybe it was a twitch. Maybe she thought it was a twitch. Myself, I'm not for certain.

"Who are the Citizens for 9/11 Truth?" asked Ron.

"Well," I began. I looked at my hands as a guilty person might.

I shook my head and counted my digits.

"If you know enough to ask that, then you already have your answer."

I looked up.

"Right?"

"Why do you wear that shirt?" asked Ron.

I feel naked without it, I grinned and winked.

"It is possible to create an incident which will demonstrate convincingly that a Cuban aircraft has attacked and shot down a chartered civil airliner enroute from the United States to Jamaica, Guatemala, Panama or Venezuela. ... The passengers could be a group of college students off on a holiday or any grouping of persons with a common interest to support chartering a non-scheduled flight.

"... We could sink a boatload of Cubans enroute to Florida (real or simulated). We could foster attempts on lives of Cuban refugees in the United States even to the extent of wounding in instances to be widely publicized."

A "Remember the Maine" incident could be arranged in several forms:

a. We could blow up a US ship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba."

Use of MIG type aircraft by US pilots could provide additional provocation. Harassment of civil air, attacks on surface shipping and destruction of US military drone aircraft by MIG type planes would be useful as complementary actions. An F-86 properly painted would convince air passengers that they saw a Cuban MIG, especially if the pilot of the transport were to announce such fact. The primary drawback to this suggestion appears to be the security risk inherent in obtaining or modifying an aircraft. However, reasonable copies of the MIG could be produced from U.S. resources in about three months."

— **Operations Northwoods plan**, *United States Joint Chiefs of Staff 1962*



THREE

“Your countrymen have been murdered and the more you delve into it the more it looks as though they were murdered by our government, who used it as an excuse to murder other people thousands of miles away.”

— Lt. Col. Shelton F. Lankford, USMC (Ret.) U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilot

- Hani Hanjour [Flight 77/Pentagon] paid a \$100 traffic ticket three weeks before 911.

Well, I said, it's because I know something most people don't, and maybe I want to talk about it. It's a cry for help, for understanding, for someone to pay some fucking attention to me. Maybe I'm bragging that I know what really happened. Or maybe it's something else. Maybe I'm just dazed and confused. You ever have days like that?

They kind of all pushed back, against the chair, against the door, into the corner.

Getting comfortable, getting away, seeking a better view of this fucking terrorist in their fucking midst.

Midst?

“Well, what really happened then?”

“I could tell you, but then I would have to kill you,” I said, making eye contact, looking for signs of connection, a commitment, an agreement to go on.

“Whatever,” said Ron.

“Okay, then, I’ll take that as a big yes,” I said.

Bill flipped his chair around backwards to be able to lean on the backrest.

Laura took the empty chair.

Ron stayed by the door, at attention.

I put my hands on the table, folded them and did the eye contact thing all around.

Cui bono ... means Sonny & Cher in Italian, right?

The whole thing was planned from the beginning.

The New World Order, the Project For The New American Century. Global Power for America.

That about says it.

Do I need to go on?

They stared, hard. Tough room. Tough mo-fo’s, these three.

Absurd conspiracy theory – nineteen brown young men with box cutters – how did they get through?

And their fearless leader is a man with a towel wrapped around his head like an old woman in Omaha just out of the tub on a Sunday night.

Dangerous Muslim.

Dang’rous Injun.

Dang’rous Negroes.

Criminals.

Russians.

Dragons.

Big Bees.



FOUR

“On 9/11 I was jogging. I heard about it on my headphones. I kept going. It was a day off, I told myself. But it didn’t take me long to sit down by a tree and start crying. I don’t know why. I just cried.” — **Laura**

“I was at my mother’s. She just had surgery. We watched it all day on the TV. My brothers and sisters came over.” — **Bill**

“My fucking brother went right down to the recruiting station the same day. My dad tried to talk him out of it. I didn’t. I think he’s a fucking hero.” — **Ron**

We, they, needed a new Pearl Harbor.

George Bush Jr. was governor of Texas. His father had all the contacts, all the inside information. Compassionate conservatism.

They just needed someone to put through with all the money in the world.

Well, Thomas “Bobby” Wooster ran down the steps of the dorm, eschewing the elevator as too slow. He could not wait to meet the men of the Miami-Dade Republican Club, maybe actually work

with them.

He had met some of them the past summer as organizer of the summer retreat on campus as president of the Miami University Republican Club.

Thomas jumped into his father's very grey Audi and squealed out.

He joined interstate traffic and quickly conquered it, on his way to the Wyndham Hotel.

Thomas pulled hard into the parking lot and took off chugging across the lot, touching his tie, breathing fairly hard.

He nodded to the tall black bellman in the maroon and gold uniform.

The man pointed toward Suite B.

Inside Bobby saw it, the rows of tables with blue table clothes and vases of fresh flowers.

Nerd Nirvana.

He shook hands and smiled, greeted, took his seat.

Bobby listened to the speaker and then accepted an invitation to the hotel bar.

He joined the others in the way back around another cloth table, away from the jazz band.

Bobby drank whiskey sours and accepted an assignment.

Or a couple of assignments.

He was to find and recruit "team members" to challenge the black voters in the district.

He was allowed to listen and make comments about the vote counting machines and heard the name Die-Bold a few times.

He was allowed to drink as many whiskey sours as he liked.

He was told to forget he ever spent the night in the Wyndham Hotel bar, which was not that difficult a task, for the most part.



FIVE

“Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event — like a new Pearl Harbor.”

— **Section V, Rebuilding America’s Defenses**, entitled *“Creating Tomorrow’s Dominant Force,”* by Project For The New American Century

Jose Sanchez, Robert Gordon and Darnell Brown.

They coulda been anybody.

They could have been the first three cells in D Block in the county jail. They could have been the double play combination on the local minor league team. They could be the dads in the three houses from the corner on down on Juniper Street.

Their coveralls said they worked for Alamo Elevator Company in New York City, which did not exist. They worked for the U.S. Army, which did exist.

They had come from California, Pennsylvania and Texas, along with special forces demolition



Michael Paul Miller

training at Camp Grafton, North Dakota.

They worked the summer of 2001 placing shaped charges up and down and up again in the north tower, along the elevator shafts.

They closed down one and then another, rode the tops of the elevators, with their equipment all spread out, having lunch break inside the elevator cars.

It was an adventure, ninety floors above the earth in this dark shaft and on this secret fucking mission or something.

While they were on break they talked about the elevators, the Yankees, the Mets. They were not to talk too loud about that which they were to know nothing about, but that they could not help but knowing.

Don't think there are bad folks in the United States?

Look at me. Look at me! I am not invisible!

Don't think we are capable of the very worst that lies in the soul of mankind, that has lived there since all the wars and massacres and murders we have committed by the millions?

Look at the maniac driving behind you or the idiot in front of you. Given the means at just the right moment wouldn't you hurt them badly or worse?

Think of your boss.

Think of the absolute asshole Mr. Perfect from high school who now owns homes in Vail, Jackson Hole, Manhattan and Paris.

How did he get his money? Did he kill? Or injure or let others go without, children die? I dunno, just askin'.

Would he kill to get some more?

He's here. He's real. He's now. He is happening.

Look at yourself.

What are your real feelings, the worst thoughts and desires you have, that you don't tell anyone about, even yourself.

They are there, and you are here, for real.

In America.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, an E-4B taxied for takeoff from Andrews Air Force Base. Three of them from Offutt Air Force Base were taking part in Operation Global Guardian.

Music played – everywhere ... Chopin ... Military Polonaise ... headphones, speakers, iTunes, cut out to hear commands, then cut back in ... even in WTC, Pentagon, target areas – on jets.

Ever hear that?

Dun-dun-dun ... dundundundundundun ... DUN-DUN-DUN.

Like that. Not real, not happening, boom, what was that? That happened?

The pilots, well, we don't know their names, but we do know they had a full crew on board that morning.

They sat and talked and prepared for the day's work. They thought about home and getting away.

Our boys took off and headed up into the blue yonder, circling, checking, listening.

While on the main deck, in the command work area, a special forces group that had been working together for over a year for this day began to sit down, get papers arranged, checking live images on the screens on the walls, opening up computers, throwing down last remnants of a quick coffee and rolls breakfast.

Getting ready for their big day.

Is this real world or exercise?



SIX

“It is not pleasant to think of them as consciously participating in an enormous lie.

“But we have no choice.”

— David Ray Griffin, *Debunking 911 Debunking*

“Shut the fuck-up,” growled Ron from the door as Laura scooted up to the edge of her chair.

“You don’t know all that,” said Bill.

“Do you?” asked Laura.

“How do you know that’s true?” said Ron.

Geezuz-god, so many excellent questions.

I pushed back in my chair, stretched out my legs and said, well, nothing.

I took the time to look each one of them in the eye.

“I read a lot ... on the Internet,” I said. “I take long walks. I’d be better off watching TV, I know.

“Do *you* believe me?”

They looked at me.

Laura and then Bill pulled out packs of cigarettes, matches. I pushed the ashtray toward them. Ron gritted his teeth. I could see his jaw bones through his zero body fat face. He had sunglasses in his shirt pocket, nice ones. I used to have some just like that. Bill sucked hard on his smoke and tilted his head back to exhale toward the ceiling. "And so," I crossed my legs and folded my arms. I felt like an old professor with former students who had stopped by the office to chat.

American Airlines Flight 77 takes off from Dulles headed to Los Angeles.

Early in the morning.

"Eight forty," says Ron. He puts weight on one leg.

Boeing 757.

And Flight 11 from Boston, headed to L.A.

And 175 from Boston to L.A.

And Flight 93 ...

"Newark to San Francisco," says Laura.

She scoots back into her hard metal chair, crosses her legs, puffs, then uncrosses her legs and leans forward to knock the ash off into the tray. Kind of that one movie thing, Sharon Stone. I forget the name. I never actually saw it.

Meanwhile, our two pilots, let's call them Bert and Ernie, they are also heading into the same gen-



Michael Paul Miller

eral air space, joining the morning commute on a beautiful almost-fall day. Behind them the plane is buzzing with activity, the hive fully engaged.

President Bush, who, whom, Bobby Wooster helped to put into office, is about to arrive at that elementary school in Florida.

And by the way, Bobby Wooster was promised, sort of, a spot in the White House.

You think he didn't feel uncomfortable, scared, on Inauguration Day and he hadn't heard anything?

Here he was, a guy, "the" guy, for all he knew, who had managed to place Bush in the White House.

He even organized that young Republican riot to stop the counting of the votes.

Go ahead and look for Thomas Wooster in the student body list at the University of Miami.

Look for him anywhere.

You're the FBI, right?

Well, anywho, we've got all this activity going on while Mom and Pop American are heading off to school with the kids and hurrying to work.

We've got four ... four fucking war games taking place involving ... attacks by planes, disasters, what have you.

We've got air traffic controllers asking each other what kind of a day it's going to be with all this shit on their screens.

Okay.

The four planes we're talking about, they are filled to less than fifty percent capacity. When's the last time you took a trip across the country with that kind of room to spread out?

And each one of our planes is the same thing.

Well, they wanted to kill some folks, but only some, not everybody, these guys and gals who were in charge of planning our day that day.

Some is less than many.

Right?

Or is it *fewer*?



SEVEN

“I knew within hours of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 that it was an inside job. Based on my eleven-year experience as an FAA air traffic controller in the busy northeast corridor, including hundreds of hours of training, briefings, air refuelings, low altitude bombing drills, being part of huge military exercises, daily military training exercises, interacting on a routine basis directly with NORAD radar personnel, and based on my own direct experience dealing with in-flight emergency situations, including two instances of hijacked commercial airliners, I state unequivocally: There is absolutely no way that four large commercial airliners could have flown around off-course for thirty to sixty minutes on 9/11 without being intercepted and shot completely out of the sky by our jet fighters unless very highly placed people in our government and our military wanted it to happen.”

— **Robin Hordon**, *former FAA air traffic controller at the Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center, located in Nashua, New Hampshire, 1970-1981. Former certified commercial pilot. Former certified flight instructor and certified ground instructor.*

Flight 11 from Boston's Logan, with captain John Ogonowski in charge, along with co-pilot Thomas McGuinness, as well as the now-famous Betty Ong, flight attendant, heads off for Los Angeles.

Takes off west, then veers north into upstate New York, turns sharp left, passes over Albany and then collides with the north tower.

Flight 175 with Michael Horrocks and Victor Saracini in the front chairs also takes off from Boston, also intended for Los Angeles, goes off course in northern New Jersey, banks north and crashes into the south tower.

Flight 77 embarks from Dulles in the nation's capital also California dreaming, turns around in West Virginia and hits the Pentagon a bit later.

You believe that?

Meanwhile, we've got Flight 93 from Newark on its way to San Francisco with Jason Dahl, 53, from Denver, the captain, and Leroy Homer, 36, of Marlton, New Jersey, its first officer. Along with future dead rock stars Todd Beamer, Mark Bingham, Thomas Barrett and Jeremy Glick on board as passengers.

It turns around just west of Cleveland and crashes southeast of Pittsburgh.

And there we have it.

Each plane was taken over by young Arab men and the Bush government had every right to bomb Afghanistan and invade Iraq.

"You don't believe that, do you?" asked Bill.

"Do you?" I said.

They sat in silence.

I daydreamed, which I don't like to do, anymore than night dream.

I almost don't like to sleep.

When I was young I could escape from the world by sleeping until noon if I didn't have a class.

Now there is no place to go.

I swear.

Laura tossed the butt at the ashtray.

In and out.

Ron strode over from his door to take a cigarette from Bill's pack.

He lit it and sat sidesaddle on the desk, staring down at me, blowing smoke into my face.

I love this Ron.



EIGHT

“The official story of 9/11 is a bunch of hogwash. It’s impossible. High levels of our government don’t want us to know what happened and who’s responsible.”

— **Colonel Bob Bowman** (USAF Ret.), Caltech Ph.D. in nuclear engineering and aeronautics, decorated combat fighter pilot (101 missions in Vietnam), and former head of Presidents Ford and Carter’s ‘Star Wars’ program

As President George W. Bush pulled up to Booker Elementary in Sarasota, Florida, Flight 11 plowed nose-first into the north tower of the World Trade Center, in Manhattan, on the edge of the water.

“Was that Flight 11 though?” said Laura.

I nodded, not yes, but just acknowledging our conundrum.

“And 175,” Bill pushed back into the hard chair and crossed his legs like he was asking his seventeen-year-old son if he knew what fucking time it was.

They took off, they went off-radar, they landed, at Stewart Air Force Base, Pennsylvania, the same place the hostages landed when they came back from Iran when Reagan had them wait to let 'em go until he took over.

Right?

The military drones took off.

We've got Bert & Ernie up there keeping everything copacetic.

I put a finger into the air like I was sticking it up some fuckin' Congressman's ass.

And, we've got vice-president Cheney in the bunker under the White House, doubly making sure the nation is safe.

Plane 93 heads off west from Washington, D.C.

USA Today says it turned around in West Virginia.

Who believes that? I raised my hand.

Ron raised a finger as high as his slim waist.

It headed north, to Cleveland, landed.

President Bush goes into the classroom, says howdy to the Negro children and sits down in a little chair not unlike our own here.

Plane ... what's the number? I looked at Ron and he turned his head like the quizzical cat.

"South Tower?" said Laura. "175."

I pointed a finger at her. Would I ever stop looking at women like Laura and not noticing her face, her hair, her bosom. I kind of wished I could.

Yep, it careened around New York like a drunk bus driver around a tight corner, barely hitting the tower, boom!

Andrew Card waits for a break in the action and walks across the front of the room, in front of the children, all those cameras, and whispers into Bush's right ear, away from scrutiny, and tells him something.

"America is under attack," said Bill, lacing his fingers over his belly.

One would presume.

He actually said, the second plane hit.

And the look on Bush's face. It is one of amazement, disbelief. He is lost, out in front of the world, needing to take a leak and he can't find a tree.

One might think.

I rammed the Congressman's posterior another time, harder.

In the weeks leading up to 9/11 Bush and Cheney were at Bush's ranch.

They were doing the final stages of planning.

Bush is not a genius, but if he has lines to rehearse, the dumb fuck can act.

He knew what was going on.

He was performing in a play produced by his father and his father's friends, also his friends, by



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now.

Plausible deniability, don't they call it?

Cheney is in the bunker talking to him and her, directing this and that. If he gets caught there, they don't all get caught.

George Senior spent the night before in the White House, talking about fishing and golf.

He then had a meeting the next day with Bin Laden's brother Wally. No, really, that's what they call him.

Warren Buffet has a meeting that morning at Offutt with a bunch of executives from the World Trade Center who would have died that morning otherwise, and then George Junior ends up there later in the day, obviously by wild coincidence.

This day was in the works for years, while Clinton was in office. They worked and planned every day for years.

Nothing about it was random.

You believe that?

“Why didn’t anyone talk?”

Bill sat up in his chair, uncrossed his legs, now laced his big, basketball-palming hands behind his ol’ nappy white head.

How do you explain it?

You know that I can only guess, don’t you, I said.

You understand we’re just talking here, before all this ends unfortunately.

Some know, some don’t, some are following orders, duty, honor, all that crap.

The big boys.

Well, they are focused, on the target, like a laser, have been their whole lives.

What would you do if you had the actual chance to rule the world?

What if that apple was right before your eyes and all you had to do was pick it?

Would you?

How do you understand it?

If honesty and righteousness and piety had not ruined these guys’ careers by now, it was not going to at this point.

They made their peace with whomever long ago.

Just like every body.

What keeps you from walking down to the bank and taking out all the money in savings and giving it to the guy begging on the corner that you see every morning?

Try to grasp it.

You can’t.

Just like trying to understand heaven and forever and ever and ever.

I don’t know.

But you don’t do it.

You didn’t do it yesterday morning, or this morning, and you won’t do it tomorrow morning.

You won’t ever.

Understand.

Now Ron crossed his arms across his chest.

I could feel his thoughts pressing on my chest like my personal thirty-pound dumbbell.

I pointed a finger at him, put the thumb up, cocked and fired, twice.

The killing.



Michael Paul Miller



NINE

“The U.S. military, not al-Qaeda, had the sustained access weeks before 9/11 to also plant controlled demolition charges throughout the superstructures of WTC 1 and WTC 2, and in WTC 7, which brought down all three buildings on 9/11 ... A U.S. military plane, not one piloted by al-Qaeda, performed the highly skilled, high-speed, 270-degree dive towards the Pentagon that air traffic controllers on 9/11 were sure was a military plane as they watched it on their screens. Only a military aircraft, not a civilian plane flown by al-Qaeda, would have given off the “friendly” signal needed to disable the Pentagon’s anti-aircraft missile batteries as it approached the building. Only the US military, not al-Qaeda, had the ability to break all of its Standard Operating Procedures to paralyze its own emergency response system.”

— **Barbara Honegger**, M.S., *senior military affairs journalist at the Naval Postgraduate School, the U.S. Navy’s advanced science, technology and national security affairs university (1995-present). White House policy analyst and special assistant to the assistant to President Ronald Reagan (1981-1983).*

Sooo.

I slapped my legs with my open hands.

You guys kill, right?

Bodies, falling bodies, trying to fly. People cannot fly. They can try. But they cannot fly. They can fall.



Michael Paul Miller

I looked around the room and collected the blank stares, shoved them, wadded up, into my back pocket.

What?

What's wrong? What did I say?

For the right reason, right?

Can I get an Amen?

How about a Thou Shalt Not Kilt?

Who believes that these days, not even the churches.

You don't scratch yourself on the way to the bathroom in the morning and then gag at yourself in the mirror because you are so evil, not Hitler, not Cheney, not nobody.

You think you are a swell guy and at least you know the good reasons why you do things, even if

nobody else does.

It all makes sense, others will know better some day, why you had to do the things you have done.

And in the meantime, you have more shit than God.

You have influence, people return your calls, clap, cheer as you drive by.

Not everyone gets that.

If those around you say it's not only okay, but a good thing, to kill this person or these people, how long would you be able to hold a dissenting view in your head and still enjoy your day?

Same with spouses.

They have to come to some sort of agreement, spoken or otherwise, in order to live together, to make it work, to be able to enjoy pressing their feet together in last year's Christmas socks during the onset of fall.

Right?

I'm not getting much feedback here.

Laura got up and walked right up to Ron before he moved aside.

She left, I assume to go to the bathroom, somewhere, a secret FBI bathroom, or more likely the public one in the hall, pushing past, around people on their way to grandma's house or an exciting work week, or talking about the price of Turtle Wax in Alabama, or their grass, or whatever these people talk about.

But Laura just looked sad.

Ron wanted to kill me right there.

He could have drawn that handgun from his underarm and shoved it into the side of my head without much trouble.

Bill just stared at me.

Ron would have pulled the trigger twice, just for kicks. So would I.

Bill Cosby. Maybe Denzel Washington.

I needed to pee.

I thought I didn't dare ask.

Then we've got me and Ron and Bill, walking almost hand in hand into the public restroom and I hate that shit.

And they have to watch me piss, while they are pissing, their dicks in their hands, and they have to watch me over there, trying to piss, and I see them out of the side of both eyes, and it's just something I would rather not go through, if it could be avoided, and ol' Laura would wonder where we were.

Maybe this will all be over soon anyway.



TEN

“Only secret services and their current chiefs – or those retired but still having influence inside the state organizations – have the ability to plan, organize and conduct an operation of such magnitude ... Osama bin Laden and ‘Al Qaeda’ cannot be the organizers nor the performers of the September 11 attacks. They do not have the necessary organization, resources or leaders.”

— **General Leonid Ivashov**, *former chief of staff of the Russian armed forces on Sept. 11, 2001, and department chief for general affairs in the Soviet Union’s Ministry of Defense*

How to get them to do it?

You ever see the movie where that one guy is stuffing the other guy into the wood chipper?

True. Just a flick.

Look at fans and ballplayers standing with their hats over their hearts in the middle of the seventh in the Indians-Yankees playoff series.

They will stand for whatever you want — believe anything you want — as long as it only lasts a short time and there is promise of sex or beer or comfort or warm fuzzies somewhere in the distance that they can focus on — that is all they want.

Believe me. They don't want trouble.

Just get me outa here. I wish this were over. Are we done yet? Are we having fun yet? TGIF. Can we go now? How many more miles. When will this be over? Let's go home.

Home. The American Dream.

Think of Nazis.

Think of training young, nice people, to kill, to stab through the heart, to burn, to blow the fuck out of.

Abu Ghraib, smiling photos of young women with dead guys with their hands and legs tied.

How did we get them to do that?

How about keeping a bank account for a comfortable retirement while thousands starve to death every freaking day, their last breath a wheezing death rattle gasp.

How's that for "why would anyone do that?"

Okay, we've got the planes hitting the towers, people jumping out from seventy-eighty-ninety stories, landing on the pavement, shit like that.

Chopin. Military Polonaise, playing in the E-4B, in the Pentagon before it was struck, on Air Force One, in the bunker, in Tower One and Two, World Trade Center Seven, and probably everywhere else that had anything connected.

It was a rhythm, a sense of continuity, knowing you are a part of the whole.

Or not knowing.

Still, the band played on.

I know a guy who was locked in a cold, damp cell in fucking Romania for seven months. He was an agent, too, something like you guys. Navy to your Army.

And when he got out and got back to some fucking Ohio farm, for a whole summer he got up just before dawn, took his car out to the dirt road and sat on the hood, with that music playing, *Cho-fucking-pan*, watching the sun rise, watching the clouds up so close he could almost touch them.

Well.

Anyway.

Splat.

Protoplasm wad of gum on the sidewalk, stuck to the concrete.

Hey! *Don't step over there.*

Don't look.

And because our Alamo demo team and probably a hundred others had all summer to work and



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all weekend before to run around the whole building by themselves and thirty-six hours, they say, before, the bomb sniffing Nazi shepherds are pulled off the complex.

Bush begins reading the goat story along with the children and Cheney is taking a dump in the command center toilet under the White House, with secret service agents outside, talking with our boys in the E-4B way up in the sky, and NORAD out in Colorado.

It's really a lot to keep track of, don't you see?

Plane 93 from D.C. lands in Cleveland.

"You said that," said Bill.

"There was a plan," said Ron.

Laura and Bill turned toward him.

"Some guys, back in, I don't know ... they planned the whole thing out ... how terrorists might attack ... so we knew how to defend against it."

Laura and Ron turned back to me.

"And Amalgam Virgo."

They turned back to Ron.

"They did the whole same damn thing that same summer, just a few months before."

I stared at Ron.

"You done?"

"And the drone thing," he continued. "Is launched from"

“What about the passengers?” said Bill.

“Either an Air Force base or an aircraft, battleship ... headed for ...,” said Ron.

“Pentagon,” whispered Laura.

“Why even involve Flight 77. Why not just launch the drone?” she said.

“Because that would be stupid,” said Ron.

“Shut the fuck-up,” said Bill.

Yep, I said. They need the hijacked plane scenario, don't they?

There are no stupid questions, are there, class?

I winked at Laura and she stared back like the most lovely Holstein in the field.

“What about the passengers?” said Ron.

Did they volunteer?

Were they murdered?

Are they still alive?

Like that? I said.

What about the Raytheon employees on board, a defense contractor standing to gain big-time from the coming war.

What about Kavolcin, how do you say that? His anxiousness the night before, saying he was going to miss his family? Was that all about being gone until Friday, living on Rice-a-Roni, the San Francisco treat?

Why would Raytheon employees need to die or go missing at all? Now, that's an excellent mystery book question, right?

Were all the passengers volunteers, with payoffs to influence them?

“There were kids on board,” said Ron.

Did they think they were taking part in the war games, and it was important to not tell anyone to make it realistic?

Or was it just like the official conspiracy theory says and they died in four plane crashes.

Where were the bodies from the crash in Pennsylvania or at the Pentagon?

How about Israeli influence? Mossad?

Daniel Lewin?

“The dancing Israelis?” said Bill.

To mention dancing Israelis, I said. Is that anti-Semitic, and does that matter?

Dancing Israelis.

I laughed. Hava Nagila.

Have two. On me, I said.

Bill smiled and I nearly pissed myself in gratitude.

And I smiled wide, which seemed to put out Bill's smile.

Mossad, they were the ones who were Darnell and Jose's and ...

“Robert’s,” said Bill.

Robert’s supervisors.

Somebody who didn’t give a shit about dead Americans, about 3,000 dead Americans, who thought those rich Americans in those towers working for those wealthy companies while the world starves had it coming.

And besides, not only did they have it coming, it helps out our side.

Israelis.

The Dancing Israelis in the white van, they were like mid-managers. They had been in the towers, setting charges, eating matzo soup out of Tupperware at noon on the top of an elevator car, telling Jose and ...

“Darnell.”

To put the fucking thing here, not there.

Like this.

And then it worked. It worked perfectly.

And there would be war and our country gets some fucking help and we get a fucking unleavened bread party just as soon as we get out of this g.d. heathen country and back to Canaan.

Farm out.

Can we get an Amen? How about a yumpin’ Jehosophat?

*Total number killed in attacks (official figure as of 9/5/02): **2,819***

*Number of firefighters and paramedics killed: **343***

*Number of NYPD officers: **23***

*Number of Port Authority police officers: **37***

*Number of WTC companies that lost people: **60***

*Number of employees who died in Tower One: **1,402***

*Number of employees who died in Tower Two: **614***

*Number of employees lost at Cantor Fitzgerald: **658***

*Number of nations whose citizens were killed in attacks: **115***

*Ratio of men to women who died: **3:1***

*Age of the greatest number who died: between **35** and **39***

*Bodies found “intact”: **289***

*Body parts found: **19,858***

*Number of families who got no remains: **1,717***

*Estimated units of blood donated to the New York Blood Center: **36,000***

*Total units of donated blood actually used: **258***

*Number of people who lost a spouse or partner in the attacks: **1,609***

*Estimated number of children who lost a parent: **3,051***

*Percentage of Americans who knew someone hurt or killed in the attacks: **20***

— New York Magazine



ELEVEN

- June 1, 2001 – NORAD conducts *Amalgam Virgo 01*, an exercise involving a cruise missile attack scenario in which their presentation manual has a photo of Osama bin Laden on the cover and a picture of an explosion in a skyscraper inside.

The passengers on plane eleven.

I mean, uhh ... shee-it, I stuffed my yawn with a fist ... ninety-three.

How did they get the pilots to land, in order to kill them?

Is it the whole previous-scenario-Amalgam-Virgo exercise thing?

The pilots believe it's part of an annoying, important, nationwide, mandatory exercise.

Or, they have been told there is an actual bomb on board. That's what the mayor of Cleveland said.

That's what was reported on a local Cleveland TV news website, that Flight 93 landed in Cleveland because of a bomb scare.

“Please proceed to the ramp, down the yellow tape corridor. The crew will direct you to the hospitality area.

“Take any carry-on luggage with you.

“There should be only a slight delay.”

You believe that, said one of the passengers to her traveling friend.

And as they processed slowly out, they saw beside their plane an identical plane, which they assumed to be their transfer.



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This happened to be a plane specially fitted with remote control, a drone plane 93.

Right?

As they squirmed in a roped-off isolated waiting area they saw the drone warming up, revving.

They were then directed by the flight crew to a military bus, through a tiny glass door, one by one. The smokers outside had to wait for everyone else to get past before they went back inside for their things.

“Where we going?”

“Why is the crew getting on with us?”

The windows were covered with black plastic.

The faces of the soldiers were smeared with war paint. Some wore face shields, Kevlar vests, fancy, new automatic weapons at their chest. The women soldiers had short hair.

So did the men, but the passengers did not notice that, did they.

Military jeeps and assorted vehicles surrounded the bus.

The armed soldiers made a fuss, getting nervous when they didn't think all the passengers would fit on one bus. They didn't think they had another bus available.

“One bus! One bus! Everyone on one bus!” a large black voice stood above the others.

“Move down the aisle, ma'am. Fill the aisle.”

One of the soldiers pushed one of the crew members when she did not move, sending her to one knee.

The large black officer, his face shield up, sweat pustules covering his face, stepped in, holding a black baton high above his head in a large, powerful grip.

His fingernails glowed in the low light of the bus.

The airline captain stepped in, now wondering why this exercise needed to be taken exactly *this* seriously.

“Hey! Hey! What the hell is going on here?”

“Stand down, soldier.”

He helped the woman up.

“My God, man.”

“Please,” said the large black officer from behind.

He nodded toward the back of the bus.

The aisle filled in.

Some passengers complained about their accommodations.

They sat with luggage on their laps, between their knees and feet and the chair ahead of them, pressed between their head and the window.

Many worried out loud about things to do.

They asked each other why their cell phones had been taken — and by such unnecessary frisking as well, as if they were prisoners.

The driver switched on the interior lights and tuned the radio to country.

Passengers tried to see outside, around, through the black plastic.

Two women started to sing.

“We all live in a yellow submarine, a yellow submarine, yellow submarine.”

They laughed and somehow their own laughter made them a little afraid.

They felt movement and tried to judge which direction.

Backing.

Those standing grabbed for something, a seat, a silver tube, a stranger's shoulder.

"Sorry."

They moved away, surrounded by the military vehicles.

"Why the soldiers?"

"The captain says it's a drill."

"A drill? What kind of drill?"

"What is this?"

"This is not right. Something is not right."

They heard the roar of a plane taking off, headed for ...

"We've got, you've got, a problem here," said Ron.

"Flight 93 was not headed for NYC. It's the Shanksville aircraft."

Oh, you're right. Well, you get the picture anyway. Glad you're paying attention, Ronald.

You're a good man.

I do not care what Bill says about you.

The bus pulled up to a lonely grey Quonset hut on a far side of the airport.

An older, white man in full battle dress squeezed on board, climbing up the steps.

He stood at the top step on one leg, the other out in mid-air, and spoke loudly over the chatter and complaints and scattered epithets.

"Quiet!"

He waited.

"All will disembark at this point."

"We must be in Frisco," one of the singing women joked nervously to her traveling friend.

"You will then proceed in orderly fashion into this building."

"What is this?"

"What's the meaning of this?" shouted the captain.

"We've been taken over," someone whispered.

The grumbling passengers filed out of the bus and down a gauntlet of silent, stone-faced soldiers, men, women, in riot gear.

The passengers saw their own reflections in the plastic face shields.

As the captain reached the front of the bus the large black man waited for him as if he had a message.

As the captain approached, moving forward hand by hand on each seat back, the soldier took one step forward with a large black boot.

He took his baton in both hands at his side and swung backward then forward, ramming full force into the captain's stomach as if he were trying to put a hole through his back.

“Ooof!”

Every square inch of air whooshed from the captain’s nose and mouth. He sat on his hands and knees on the hard, ridged floor for a long moment, seeing only flashing red, then the black combat boots.

The black officer nodded and two soldiers slung their weapons over their backs and picked the captain up by the underarms.

They dragged him down the steps, his feet bouncing.

They hoisted him up for a better grip and forced him to clumsily walk down the gauntlet and into the spare, chilled building, which looked like an empty National Guard armory with its grey linoleum floor and basketball hoops with old-fashioned, round, white backboards.

They set the captain carefully against the tin shed wall at about the mid-court line.

The passengers and crew filled in around the captain.

Some stood, some tried to walk around the building, but were limited by the sentry soldiers.

“What have we done?”

“What should we do?”

“I need to make a phone call?”

“I have to use the restroom!”

“Please. You’ll have to sit down, ma’am, against the wall.”

“We have nothing to eat.”

“There are no chairs.”

“Who is in charge here?”

“Please.

“Now.”

Bugliosi Would Seek Death Penalty for Bush

by Russell Mokhiber

Published on Saturday, May 31, 2008 by Corporate Crime Reporter

If Vincent Bugliosi were prosecuting George W. Bush for the murder of the more than 4,000 American soldiers who have died in Iraq, he would seek the death penalty.

“If I were the prosecutor, there is no question I would seek the death penalty ...”

“The least I can do is put that thought in his mind until he goes to his grave,” Bugliosi said. “That’s the least I can do for the thousands of American soldiers who came back in an aluminum box or came back as a jar of ashes. And the parents are told — don’t open the box, it is unviewable. They are getting back limbs and body parts. And this — I don’t want to use a cuss word here — this small, horrible human being — while young men who never had a chance to live out their dreams, being blown to pieces by roadside bombs — and this guy is having a ball dancing. I want to put the thought in his mind that in any time in the future, five years from now, ten years from now, some aide is going to tap him on the shoulder and say — Mr. President, there is this prosecutor, I don’t know how to pronounce his name, he’s up in Fargo, and he’s charging you with murder sir, and we are due for an arraignment next Wednesday in Fargo, sir ...”

“Bush will never know whether that will happen. They went after Pinochet for murder 33 years later. I want to put that thought in Bush’s mind. This guy has been enjoying himself throughout this entire war. And the suffering and the horror and blood is unbelievable. And he has enjoyed himself throughout this whole thing ...”



TWELVE

“The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly — it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over.”

— Joseph Goebbels

Thirty, thirty-five minutes later a string of white vans pulled up outside, accompanied by two cars and one SUV.

Two men, four men, in suits, six, eight, looks like ten now, and two women, exited the vehicles. A couple wore sunglasses.

By two's, passengers were called by name to come to the door.

Each was then asked to come outside, where they were commanded to step over to a white van, spread their legs and put their hands against the side.

They were frisked again, handcuffed to a tarnished gold chain around their waists, and fitted with ankle bracelets.

Each van held six passengers, three in each of the two middle seats, with two agents in a cage in back and two in front, also separated from the passenger prisoners by wire mesh.

The shackles were fastened to worn gold U-bolts in the floor.

Dead children. Dead heads like jujubes. Like a busted bag of marbles across the street. Y'ever see a dead child? Ever imagined killing a child? Running one over in the street?

The last van for the last four prisoners pulled up outside the Quonset-type building at 11:20 a.m.

By now the towers were down, the Pentagon was smoking, as was the hole in the field near Shanksville.

The passenger prisoners were unaware. Their thoughts remained on the improbability of getting to appointments on time.

A helicopter trailed above each vehicle like a kite.

The passengers inhaled the scenery along Interstate 480 to 80, headed southeast to Youngstown. They saw the signs and tried to interpret the mileage and the exits and the whatever enters your brain at a time like that.

Who could we ask about that?

The leaves of some of the trees were just starting to turn. Sugar maples, if I remember correctly.

“How would you know?” asked Ron.

I did not deign to answer, only turned my head and told Blacky with my eyes that I shit bigger turds than him ... he.

“He’s from Ohio,” said Laura, annoyed with Ron’s interruption.

As I was saying.

The trip took about an hour and a half.

One van had to stop for a train, another two stopped for a bathroom break for the agent guards. One had to return to the air base to double-check the identity of one of the passenger prisoners, who turned out to be the right one, in any case.

Each van pulled up to the northeast gate of Northeast Ohio Correctional Center, operated by Corrections Corp.

The white, unmarked vans drove slowly onto the grounds, down a rock drive, between the rec hall and industry.

The agents took the prisoners inside, into B Unit, down a long, shiny, silent hall.

The crack and snap and suck and squeak of their footsteps echoed.

Each group of prisoners was taken to a white cement block cell, like a holding tank in a city jail, with a grey metal bench attached to one wall.

“Please, have a seat.”

They sat in a row, asking with wide eyes a hundred questions that they knew by now would go begging.

An agent appeared at the door and each prisoner longed for the word, the good news, the smile,

that the exercise was over, all was well, the apology, the reprieve, the message that they would now be quickly returned with all good wishes to home, to children, to routines, to lunch, laundry, life.

I've got so much to do today!

The new agent stepped in with a handful of white somethings, sacks, thick, rough, like little laundry bags.

He pulled a bag over the head of each man, woman, or child.

Then each of the agents left the room.



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The prisoners talked to each other in whispers, put their heads down to try to breath, to try to push their shoulders up and get out of the bag.

They cried.

They prayed.

“Oh, God, please, if only you can ...”

“Hey! Let us out of here!”

“Please!”

They hissed.

“This is a prison. We are going to *priison!*”

“For what?”

“Why?”

Someone got caught with something ... in their bags.

“Why are we all in trouble?”

“How long?”

“I can't. My husband.”

“Oh my Gooooo!”

The door clicked to open, then to shut.

With wide eyes and mouths inside the hoods, they followed the shoe clicks like bear paws outside the tent.

The person held a pistol at his side, with silencer.

He grabbed the top of the bag and the hair of the first in line, one of the singing women, yellow submarine.

He shoved the barrel into her temple and fired twice before she drooped and fell to the floor, her head thumping like a melon.

The silent stalker hurried down the line, letting the bodies fall and flop as they might, then turned to snap across the hard floor.

The door clicked twice. Open. Closed.

The bodies twitched, bled, kicked and died.

They lay alone for minutes or hours, until another team with gloves and masks and coveralls and mops and body bags had some time.

“What good fortune for those in power that the people do not think.”

— Adolf Hitler



THIRTEEN

“The official story could not possibly have happened ... It’s not possible. It’s not operationally feasible. The Commission was a whitewash.”

— **Catherine Austin Fitts**, *Assistant Secretary of Housing under George H.W. Bush. Former managing director and member of the board of Wall Street investment bank Dillon, Read & Co.*

At Booker Elementary, one secret service agent, when he heard the news about the towers said, we’re outa here!

Karl Rove grabbed him by the arm and pulled him aside.

Ari Fleischer found a black Magic Marker and white typing paper in the principal’s office and made a sign for President Bush: Don’t Say Anything Yet.

Andrew Card went out to whisper in the President’s ear, “the second plane has hit.”

That Dan Bartlett dude sat on a grey folding chair in the hall, with his legs crossed, writing notes on a clipboard.

Why didn't the secret service agent have his copy of the script?

Why did he get so bent out of shape? Nobody else did.

One can only say that it's a monumental job of coordination, even with months and years and last-minute all night sessions and what have you, and the resources of the White House at hand.

One can only guess that this agent acted on impulse, his training, and that he had to be reminded, re-directed, made to focus, stay on-task.

But he still had to wonder, how did everyone else know how the President was not a target.

How did everyone else know that airplanes were not now heading toward Booker Elementary.

How could they be certain they were not putting these children at risk by the presence of the President.

Surely they cared deeply about these children, like all the children of the world, different colors, sizes, shapes, personalities – just like all the children of the United States and the world, for these were basically good men, of course, moral men, Americans.

- *A remote-control model aircraft field in Tewksbury, Massachusetts is named after Captain John A. Ogonowski, pilot of Flight 11.*



FOURTEEN

“I normally don’t smoke.” — **Laura**

“Who brought the cigarettes?” — **Ron**

“I thought we might need them today.” — **Bill**

“Toss me one. Please.” — **John**

“How about the soldiers at the airport?”

“Did they kill them?”

“All?”

“God.”

How would they keep them quiet?

Well, tell them they would be fired, no job, no health insurance, their wives would be angry and their children would not have food.

Stacked like cordwood.

That’s enough for most people.

Or imply they would be killed.

That takes care of a whole bunch more.

And for some more, have them believe in what you are doing.

Tell them the people are dangerous, bad, socialists, communists, evil, irregulars.

Like they told the peasant soldiers in El Salvador and elsewhere to get them to kill their neighbors.

And by the way, the ones who told them that are the same ones. They go all the way back to Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon. That era has not ended.

Or maybe the way they told the Chicago policemen to kill Black Panthers or FBI agents and soldiers to shoot at American Indians, men, women, children at Wounded Knee I or II.

And then kill the holdouts, dissenters. There won't be that many, if any.

"Phone calls?"

Excellent question, point, you know.

Well, they were made, but by actors, on the ground.

Remember the bunker in the White House, and Bert and Ernie in our white command plane, circling, checking up here and there, NORAD, Bush out of the way until we need him for a scripted speech — and by the way, isn't he too stupid to have pulled all this off?

That's already complicated enough.

Can't afford to get any crazier.

So the studio is also in the bunker. Well, it's not a bunker, more like an underground resort, lake home, with wires, lots of wires.

"Hello, Mom. This is Mark Bingham."

The mom says something. The signal goes dead.

One line and he blew it. Oh, well.

The show must go on.



FIFTEEN

“The planning of the attacks was technically and organizationally a master achievement. To hijack four huge airplanes within a few minutes and within one hour to drive them into their targets, with complicated flight maneuvers! This is unthinkable, without years-long support from secret apparatuses of the state and industry.”

– **The Hon. Andreas von Buelow**, *Ph.D., former Minister of Research and Technology, West Germany, and former State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Defense, member of Bundestag 1969-1994*

- *Marsh & McClennan, North Tower, Tower One, 95th Floor hit at 8:46 – collapsed at 10:28.*

You’ve heard, read the survivor stories, how they climbed down the steps, passing the firemen on their way up, somehow made it outside to the street, found a subway car or bus or some sort of guardian angel to get home to hugs and handshakes.

Cold beer. My God.

Whiskey.

Well, I've got one for you.

How about the people who died up there.

Now, there would be some stories.

Stephen King. Emily Dickinson. Edgar Allan Poe stuff.

The tell tale heart, beating, under the rubble, inside the debris, beating, beating, and it knows what killed it, even as it still beats.

Boom.

Boom.

Boom.

It beats.

Loud. Louder. Loud enough for all to hear. The beating, like the music to a symphony or whatever you call it, there are no words, but everyone knows what the words are, even though there are no fucking goddamn words.

I stopped for a moment, and if there would have been a window, I would have been staring out it.

The three FBI agents studied me, let me be me, be all I could be.

Sometimes I just feel depressed. It hits me like a truck. I take Prozac, of course, and I jog. Sometimes twice a day. I swim when I can, that will give you a good feeling for a while.

I drink, but I don't want to get fat, because then I would get even more depressed.

I suppose you get the picture.

You can see me now, as clearly as I see the colors of an Ohio fall in that concrete wall.

What I'm a guessin', it's those darned ol' post-9/11, steadily depressin,' workin' at the car wash blues.

Well, actually, there was this young woman, putting on her shoe.

She walked to work in comfortable tennies and then put on these things that she kept under her desk.

She had graduated from Holyoke College, Mount, in, uh, Massachusetts.

All these people up there had interesting lives, went places, knew people, read, movies, all that stuff.

Our girl was not a lifer in this job, but it was a pretty good start, she thought. She told her parents she could see the world from her office window and would find where she really wanted to go from there.

They were on the cutting edge, shall we say?

Pushing the envelope, huh?

The hope of the world, the best, the brightest, the lightest? I'll bet there were workout rooms in

those towers. Anybody know? Laura?

Laura scowled visibly. No, no. Not scowled. She thought I might be crazy. Definitely.

Well, our Lady Guinevere of the North Tower had spent the first week of June with her grandmother in Newfoundland, then three weeks with her college roommate in Madrid, Paris, Berlin, Prague.

She then started to work at Marsh & McClennan on the 95th Floor of One World Trade Center.

She sat at her desk, in her cubical, waiting for her friends to arrive.

Some guys were standing around talking, but she didn't feel comfortable with them yet, so she checked her email, her news websites, liberal.

She found out what her little sister was going to have for lunch that day.

Our promising young woman was leaning low, putting on her last shoe while studying the screen, when without warning the room exploded, erupted, caught fire.

She was thrown against a far wall, tossed like a rag young woman.

The men talking were now flaming or extinguished.

She awakened in seconds. Her eyes burned. She tried to understand if she was dreaming.



Michael Paul Miller

For some reason she stared at the tilted, scorched thing in the office. It was a plane, without windows.

A plane had wandered off course and hit the building.

No one was trying to get off the plane. The cockpit was bursting with flames, but nobody was inside.

She heard cries and shouts from elsewhere, but on her floor she saw only burning and smoke, and stupid guys on fire.

Dumb jocks in flames.

This might turn out to be an interesting day, after all.

1,434 die in North Tower

599 in South Tower

North - 78 died per floor

South - 19 died per floor

Two-thirds evacuated from south tower after first hit north tower.

North - at crash level and above - 1,360 died - none survived

Below crash line - 72 died - 4,000 survived

— USA Today



SIXTEEN

“The hijackers were U.S. undercover agents. They were double agents, paid by the FBI and the CIA to spy on Arab groups in this country. They were controlled. Their landlord was an FBI informant in San Diego and other places. And this was a direct, covert operation ordered, personally ordered by George W. Bush. Personally ordered. We have incriminating evidence, documents as well as witnesses, to this effect. It's not just incompetence — in spite of the fact that he is incompetent. The fact is he personally ordered this, knew about it. He, at one point, there were rehearsals of this. The reason why he appeared to be uninterested and nonchalant on September 11th — when those videos showed that Andrew Card whispered in his ear the words about this as he listened to kids reading the pet goat story, is that he thought this was another rehearsal.”

— **Stanley Hilton**, *former chief of staff for Sen. Bob Dole [R-Kansas]*

“Jump!”

We'll help.

She jumped, or let herself fall, through the 94th floor to the 93rd or 92nd maybe.

They held up arms and tried to catch, cushion maybe, something, but still they all crashed and rolled, and it felt like they would fall off the earth.

How high up were they?

And we are going to fall from this high?

What will *that* be like.

Oh God.

But they were together, arms around each other for a moment. They took that split-second, less, to hug and almost smile.

And in the next moment ... for to waste moments was sinful, there were only so many moments in a life, left in a life, save your breaths, conserve, breath fast, get the most out of each split-moment.

So the next instant was used up scrambling, helping each other up, lurching toward a door, maybe, over there, the stairs?

Head down, down.

They needed to get down.

Now.

Yesterday.

Last moment.

Boom.

Boom-boom-boom.



Michael Paul Miller

Bam!

The pops above became thuds.

The ceiling and remaining beams above exploded, down, out, up, every-fucking-where.

Then their floor exploded.

The world erupted.

They were shot out of a cannon that was a volcano.

The whole world roared, and time would now stop, be over.

We had had our chance.

God says he's had enough of our shit.

The young girl in her first job was blown apart, neck, ears, fingers, toes, heart, lungs, whatever you can make yourself imagine, is how it was.

The parts which once had comprised the whole, the brain and lungs and eyes and being, shot out, in all directions.

How would they ever find each other again for eternity?

Becoming dust, joining the dust of all the others.

Boom-boom-boom.



SEVENTEEN

“It’s hard for us to come to any other conclusion than that the 9/11 Commission was a political cover-up from the word go.”

— **Patty Casazza**, wife of John F. Casazza, a government bond trader at Cantor Fitzgerald, WTC North Tower, 104th floor. One of the four Jersey Girls, New Jersey residents who were widowed by 9/11. Member of the Family Steering Committee for the 9/11 Commission. Board member of September 11th Advocates. Instrumental in the eventual creation of the 9/11 Commission. Selected as one of Ms. Magazine’s 2004 Women of the Year.

• *It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding.* — **Upton Sinclair**

Did you know that Mohamed Atta received money from a fellow from Pakistan who was meeting with Karl Rove on September 11 in Washington?

“George Bush.”

“He was meeting with the President’s father.”

That’s right.

And all that stuff about seeing pictures of Atta and another guy coming through customs in Portland.



Michael Paul Miller

“Portland?”

“Maine.”

But ... there aren’t any surveillance camera shots of them getting on in Boston. Or any photos of any of the hijackers getting on the airplanes. And their names do not appear on the passenger lists.

They were paid, or at least Atta was.

They take flight lessons in Florida to create a story.

Oswald went to Russia, handed out flyers supporting Cuba.

They do business on military bases. Oswald had FBI and CIA contacts.

Some have told us they are alive.

The magic photo I.D. found on the street.

Atta’s fucking last will and testament found in his car in the airport parking lot, with a list of hijackers, a Koran, a terrorist manual.

You believe that shit?

Remember that Colonel Prouty was in New Fucking Zealand when Kennedy was killed?

And he sees a photo of Oswald in the newspaper box as the guy who did it? On November 23, 1963 a newspaper in New Zealand, which is eighteen hours ahead of Texas time, printed facts about the assassination before they were known in the United States.

And on American TV with 9/11, within a half an hour of the first plane hitting, the newscasters, they know who did it and why and what our response should be.

And the British TV journalist tells us on camera that WTC 7 has come down, when in the background of the shot you can see the building is still standing.

Ooops.

Ever hear of Operation Mockingbird? Coo-coo.

Anyway, they've got it all figured out. Got it going on.

It's Ahab ... Bin Fucking ... Laden ... Al Queda.

We need to invade Afghanistan and put in a new pipeline, and then invade Iraq.

Simple as that.

Anyone who isn't with us is a dumb fucker.

It was the same with Oswald.

But we didn't have the Internet then. People weren't able to talk to each other. They just sat in their isolated living rooms and watched the military and CIA tell us what to believe, with sports and weight loss dreams and Coco Puffs, and sexual fantasies, to take our mind off it as quickly as possible.

Oswald was the one within minutes, hours at the most.

George Bush Sr. was there, too.

It wasn't that long ago.

On the timeline of world history it's still today.

George says he wasn't there, that he didn't work for the CIA then, but he was and he did. He was photographed standing outside the school book building after it happened.

On *nine-one-one*. Catchy isn't it? He stays at the White House the night before and meets with Bin Laden's brother and the guy who sent money to Atta the next morning, as well as the Carlyle group, investors in the new American century.

The hijackers got on board with the Bin Ladens, the only plane in the sky, plenty of room, all aboard.

Drinks all around.

Allah rocks.

God is great.

He takes care of those who ... take care of themselves.

You believe that?



EIGHTEEN

“George W. Bush's grandfather had his assets seized by Congress on Oct. 20, 1942 due to his decade of money laundering for Hitler. ... There were actually a number of American ruling families who outright admired the Master Race idea and corporate control of society, and they frankly hoped this elitist-traitorous agenda would take hold in America. ...

“They actually attempted a coup, a takeover of FDR and the White House, in the early 1930s. Most of their names, these American ruling families, were kept out of the media in exchange for their agreement to stop obstructing legislation for programs such as Social Security for the elderly, the poor, and the sick.

“Copious evidence further indicates these evil ones and their 'proud descendants' have given shadow support for, and have experienced benefits from, the assassinations of key anti-war figures — JFK, MLK, RFK, John Lennon, and others.

“And the general public's failure to grasp the nature of evil further explains why most of the American population still cannot, and will not, comprehend the copious and obvious evidence of September 11th — that the attacks were planned and carried out by traitors high in our government — that they did this.”

— **Connie Cook Smith**, *Speculations On The Nature of Evil*, May 14, 2008

Well, at that point, Bill called for a little break.

We did the team bathroom thing.

Laura went by herself. She's used to it I would imagine.

She came back with a tray of coffees, sodas, vegetarian burrito, hamburgers, fries.

I guess the burrito was for me.

Bill ended up eating it.

He said it wasn't so bad.

Not in so many words.

Ron sat on the floor by the door to eat.

The rest of us scattered our junk on the table.

Afterward we all smoked.

In silence like soldiers in the field.

"Oooh!" I jumped at a buzz of Bee Gees bolting from the corner speakers.

"Anybody play cards?" I asked, only half kidding.

"Nobody plays cards anymore, do they?" Ron asked as if he really wondered.

"Nursing homes, prison," said Bill.

Firehouse, I blurted, proud of myself.

"My folks used to have card night," said Laura.

She smiled and then took almost a whole hamburger into her mouth.

I looked away, at the lovely concrete block wall, to chase naughty thoughts.

"Where you from?" Bill asked.

I turned and saw that he was asking Laura.

I thought he knew.

She smiled with a full mouth and stuck a pointer finger into the air, hunched her shoulders.

We waited until she swallowed.

"Boulder."

She smiled again.

"Boulder?" said Ron.

She nodded with her whole body while she wiped her mouth with both hands with a napkin.

"Yupper."

"Interesting," said Bill.

"I'm from Ohio," I said. "But I guess you all already knew that."

Bill took the hint.

"The city," he said. "New York. Brooklyn."

"Ronald?" I said.

He stared at me as if he might be about to charge.

First he would have to stand up though, and nobody could move very fast from that position. And

he looked tired for some reason.

I thought Boulder was this liberal mecca, I said.

"It might be. It's a great place. I love it," said Laura.

The FBI? I said.

"Nothing wrong with the bureau," she said, brushing crumbs from her pants.

She spoke without irony, sarcasm, defensiveness, or onomatopoeia.

You have a big family, Ron? I asked.

He stared.

"I have four sisters," Laura smiled.

"I've got six boys," smiled Bill.

"My brother is in Afghanistan," said Ron.

My parents still have the farm, I offered. No livestock anymore. Several cats.

Just as we were about to bond and group hug and hum Halloween songs and shit, this veil of silence descended, like we all discovered we didn't really want to get to know each other. Did not want to expend the energy.

Which was fine by me.

"What's the matter, John?" said Laura.

I'm under arrest, locked in seclusion, by the FBI, and you wonder, what's the matter?

Nothing.

"No, really, I want to know," she said.

I looked up from the floor and into her eyes, to the fourth grade playground, the volleyball team, the homecoming court, Quantico, and hanging in there day in day out in a man's world with looks like that.

Wow, I said out loud.

Nothing.

She pushed back in her shitty chair, crossed her arms, then her legs, and looked at me like I had wet the bed and she honestly wondered why.

"How about Bert?" said Bill.

I must have looked puzzled because Ron added, "and Ernie."

What about them? I said.

... Well, they were joined by a white, unmarked fighter plane.

Pretty clever, actually.

We saw a white plane.

It was big.

It was small.

Well, which was it?



Michael Paul Miller

But, it was also functional.

The cruise missile that hit the Pentagon was launched from the little white plane at about the time that an airliner was landing at Reagan — more confusion, deniability.

It doesn't take that much.

A little goes a long ways, like peppermint raspberry ice cream.

The little white plane was fast — whoosh!

And busy — boom!

Boom.

It also made the little hole in the soft dirt in Pennsylvania.

“What about the scattered debris?” said Bill. “Some of it was human remains.”

“We shot that aircraft down. It was headed for the White House,” Ron said.

Perhaps, or WTC 7. Maybe Camp David, right?

But where are the bodies if it was shot down?

I actually think that Bert & Ernie dumped bogus debris, remains, to make it seem like a hit. A hit to save the White House is one hell of a lot easier to swallow than what really happened.

“You think?” said Ron.

“You *think*?” said Bill.

“I thought you knew,” said Laura, dusting herself again, then wiping her hands with a crushed napkin, as Bill began to gather up the trash like we were getting ready to be done here.

Laura, I thought at least you understood.

Well, I said, trying to scramble without appearing to stall ... extend the moment.

Who would really know ... *besides someone on the inside, right?*

I leaned over to unzip my bag. I shoved both hands inside and felt all over.

I sat up and saw three big faces: Ol' Laura, Ol' Bill, Ol' Ron.

All with their hands on the table, waiting to find out what I had found in my bag.

I held my hands up to say nothing.



NINETEEN

“John O’Neil was a friend of mine,” said Bill.

Bill recounted portions of O’Neil’s career as it intersected with his own and Bin Laden, Al Queda, all that jazz.

He became increasingly angry, standing up even, at one point and pacing.

I covered a yawn with a fist.

Ron did an amazing thing.

He hopped up from an almost-supine position, from his ass to his feet, without using his hands.

Laura knew all about John O’Neil. You could just tell.

S.S. agent, I said, right in the middle, or maybe it was toward the end of Bill’s monologue. I guess we’ll never know.

Secret Service.

WTC 7.

One guy died.

“O’Neil was in the towers,” scowled Bill.

I know, I said. I’m talking about something else now.

“This building is going down!”

“You need to exit immediately.”

Don’t you suppose that probably was how it went?

“Ever since that day, I believed the official story for all about two minutes. I always had my questions. My family had their questions.

“The government sent us the 9/11 Commission or I should say omissions, really. They sent us that. I read the whole thing. As I’m reading the whole thing; it was just incredible; the lies in this book. ... It hurt me to read this book.

“I researched it on the Internet and I seen — I noticed the little squibs coming out of the building as they’re coming down, ‘cause I seen it a million times, as everybody else did. And I said, “Gee what’s that?” I’m wondering what’s going on.

“A friend of mine actually gave me *Loose Change*. And I seen that and I was amazed. I was so amazed. When I seen it, seriously I broke down. I didn’t sleep that night. I was just insanely distraught about it. So I joined this group; 9/11 Truth. ...

“The truth: to actually be out there knowing that I’m fighting for something that’s right and something that’s American. That’s the American way. ... My father was a true patriot and I will follow in his footsteps. I’m gonna try so hard. I’m gonna try to the death of me to get him justice. Not only him, but the three thousand others that died, too. ...

“My father was a patriot. I’m a patriot and everybody in this room that believes in truth and wants to find justice is a patriot. Because this is America. It is of the people; for the people; and by the people. And that’s the America I know and that’s the America that I’m gonna defend, no matter what.”

— **Daniel Wallace**, son of Lt. Robert Wallace, Engine 205, Ladder 118, FDNY
[Died Jan. 29. 2007, age 23]

He had all fucking day to get out of that building, yet he died in there.

Why?

Why. Why.

Why you suppose he died in there?

He knew.

You see the headline of the front page of the *Post* after 9/11?

Bush Knew.

Well this guy, he knew too.

He knew there was a command center in there, too.

You ask why don't more people talk, come forward, do the right thing.

This guy did.

He knew Giuliani's command center in WTC 7 was talking to Cheney in the resort lake home bunker and Bert & Ernie, guiding those planes in, with Silverstein and Pataki and the chief of police, can't think of his name.

"There were only a couple of small fires," said Laura. She adjusted her light blue blouse and I saw the gun in its holster under her arm.

Yupper.

I think this is where things don't go exactly according to plan, even with Osama's photo on the Amalgam Virgo logo way back in June — before Bush gets the nomination — Cheney and Rumsfeld with Reagan and Shultz and Casey — all that time.

Still, we've got a mixup over Pennsylvania.

I'm not sure what. Maybe it's supposed to hit WTC 7 after all the President's men are out.

But they still have that building wired, prepped, primed, and all that incriminating shit in there: emails, notes, computers — that need to not be there at the end of the day, as they say.

And so this one guy — well, John O'Neil's already dead — but then he didn't really know what hit him.

So we've still got our one guy, one good cop.

Serpico.

Matt Dillon saying you boys are not going to lynch my prisoner, not while I'm sheriff of this town, you're not.

And they shot him.

First they tied him up, to a chair, hands behind his back, like mine here, not that I'm tied up, the chair I mean.

And they beat him, maybe his friends, maybe they were from another agency.

They beat the holy shit out of him and there was no going back. He wasn't going home for supper once they laid hands on him.

They put a white bag or paper bag or shirt or jacket, over his head.
And pretty quick there was a hole in that hood with deep, dark stains.

Boom-boom-boom.

They untied him and let him drop to the floor.

This sorry son of a bitch, this snitch.

They took back their hood and left him in there as they blew up that building, and it came down, and he felt the weight of the world upon his shoulders.

Giuliani, as he had been told, made certain the rubble and remains were scooped up and hauled to Fresh Kills.

Fresh Kills.

And the victors write the history books.

Fighter jets, white ones, fly over the Super Bowl.

What's for lunch? For supper?

What's on? What're you doin' tonight.

Not much.

That's how it works.



Michael Paul Miller



TWENTY

“I never could make out what duty was myself ... but I think you're all good lads, if that's what you mean. I'm not complaining.”

— **Belcher**, *Guests of the Nation*, Frank O'Connor, 1931

- “*We were there to record the event.*” — one of the Dancing Israeli Mossad members from the white van seen filming the crashes into the WTC, being interviewed on an Israeli talk show.

Oh, yeah.

I dropped my head to smile and pick at the rubber on my shoe.

Remember our man Thomas Bobby ...

“Wooster,” said Bill in a growl like your next-cave-neighbor bear.

Wooster.

And our demo team?

Well, anyway.

He never got the call.

Never got the appointment to the White House.

He graduated in May, same as our young lady of the north tower.

Spent the summer waiting, emailing, writing letters, trying to remind Karl Rove about their little tryst, get him to return a call.

He takes a job in August as a fucking bank teller.

That day he's watching TV in the break room, listening on the radio at his station, just like everyone else.

And he begins to think.

He starts to connect the dots.

He doesn't say a word to nobody.

He's still got the Audi. Dad signed it over without being asked.

He goes home.

He lives alone.

Nice neighborhood, apartment. Trees, kids and shit.

He parks on the curb, goes inside, opens a beer, bottle, pops some fat-free popcorn, kicks off his shoes against the kitchen wall, walks into the living room, clicks on the TV, leans way back to put the footrest up.

And shoots himself.

You believe that?

"The demo team, WTC," said Bill.

Yes, actually, I was getting to them.

Darnell, I believe it was, well, he went to Iraq, got blown up almost right away by a roadside whatever.

Jose had a car accident.

The other guy we, I don't know what happened to.

"Fender-bender?" asked Bill. "You know, car accident, c'mon."

Oh, no, I explained.

He's dead.



TWENTY-ONE

“I just embrace people that understand that four airplanes an hour and half between the first impact and the second impact with zero military response in the United States. It didn’t happen that way. It couldn’t have happened that way. You’re talking about the most intelligent agencies that we have on the face of the earth. State of the art agencies ... And there was zero military response? ...

“It’s very transparent that our own president did not want to investigate this tragedy. And I’m standing before you today for one reason. The only thing that I can give my brother is the truth. That’s it.”

— **Barry Zelman**, *brother of Kenneth Zelman, Oracle Corp., on assignment at Marsh & McLennan, WTC North Tower, 99th floor*

Ron walked over to the table, placed both palms flat and leaned low to look me right in the eyes. One hand was smearing a dab of ketchup around, but I didn’t mention.

“I don’t believe a word of it,” he snarled.

“You are a liar, and un-American. I served so fucks like you could protest.”

Thanks, I thought.

He must have seen something in the smirk on my face that he didn't like.

O! Ron reached back and slapped at me with an open hand.

I lurched back.

He missed me, but he threw dots of ketchup across my cheek and into my mouth.

I tipped over in my chair, flat on my back, feet in the air.

Well, I wiped the ketchup across my nose and looked at it on my hand and maybe I wasn't thinking clearly.

I jumped up, tasting, and I should know that blood is not sweet, but I went into a tizzy.

And I smiled.

I winked at Laura and fucking jumped over that grey table with the hamburger bags mostly picked up by now.

With both arms out I literally flew.

I dived over and we smacked shoulder to shoulder.

I knocked him onto his back.

I wrapped my legs around his legs, and pressed his head to the floor with a little well-placed direct pressure on his throat with my forearm.

Pressing down with my whole body, and my nose almost touching him Eskimo-style, I looked deep into Ron's eyes and he discovered fear I believe.

O! Ron ceased struggling.

I stood. I did not hop. More that I got to my knees then used the wall with both hands to drag myself up.

Laura and Bill were standing right there.

They silently advised me to go back to my chair, please, and O! Ron to lie there or stand, or whatever.

With my back to them I squeezed around the table, tucking here and straightening there.

I sat.

The two remained standing.

Ron sat up and pushed back against the door, as he was wont to do.

Laura and Bill did not appear to want to sit and talk any longer.

What happens now, I asked, thinking maybe I did not want to know. Maybe I do ask too many questions.

You now know everything I know, I reminded them of our previous agreement.

Ron got to one knee to begin to stand.

Laura came forward, leaving Bill in the middle of the room. Again he began to pick up here and there. The man is amazing.

She placed ten fingertips, clear polish, sort of a clam shell color, maybe, I dunno.

She looked me straight in the eyes.

She had really blue eyes. Maybe contacts.

“We believe you.

“At least, I do,” she looked around to Bill.

Bill now looked me straight in the eyes and nodded, sending a tingle down my spine in a way only Bill Cosby could.

I stood.

Laura looked at the bulge in my pants. I put a hand down to cover.

“I believe we need to ...”

“Hey!” shouted Ron.

He hopped up the way he does and started patting like he was on fire but not sure where.

“My gun,” he said.

Chopin began to play in the speakers up in the corners.

I winked at Laura and stuck my hand down my pants.

I’m just so glad to be able to tell someone.

I pulled out Ron’s black Glock 22.

Is this what you’re looking for?

I held it up.

Fondling the piece with both hands, I spread my feet to the recommended shoulder width, pointed at Bill and Laura to remove their hands from their weapons.

“Over there,” I commanded Ron.

“Por favor.”

They shuffled over, together.

They kind of looked like calves in the corner of the corral for the first time, wondering what was expected of them.

“Now, you know,” I said.

The music reached a crescendo, I think that’s what they call it.

This is my favorite part, I said.

And we waited.

I’m not sure who was playing the piece, what band or group or whatever they call it.

But they were pretty good.

Orchestra.

There was a rhythm, and I felt a part of the whole, and it was all kind of unreal because of the music and I kind of wondered if it was really happening.

But there were these three frightened people, real folks, standing in this corner of this forgotten room of this American airport.

And here I was with this gun, in my own hands, pointed at them.

Wait.

And it really is such a beautiful country, just a gorgeous time of year. We love where we are, great town, nice people.

Except somebody. Some gi-normous asshole Goober!

Keeps running his power saw at night and stacking bodies next to my garage.

All night long.

And just before light he takes them away.

I'm just glad to have a job, something interesting to do. My wife loves me and my kids go to a good school.

As long as I go to work every day, everything stays on track.

Do ... Do-Do-Do-Do-Do-DO-DO!

We've got nice neighbors and this weekend should be fun, with the ball game and well, I've got a fix-up project in the upstairs bathroom that I'm actually looking forward to.

Here it comes.

And I have my part to play.

The show must go on.

Boom!

Boom-boom.

Oh, Ron.

Boom.

AUTHOR & ARTISTS

MIKE PALECEK — *Author*

I would normally say don't explain too much. That ruins everything. But in the case of *Guests of the Nation*, we thought it might be all right to try to spell out our vision.

I wrote GOTN because I wanted to "show" what happened on that day, behind the scenes, scenes we've only imagined. I wanted to borrow Frank O'Connor's title, from his famous short story about Irish soldiers and British prisoners who become friends before the heartbreaking ending.

Who are the guests? Who is the nation? You tell me.

Well, I guess I'm not going to say as much as I thought I was. I think trusting the reader is a sacred vow of the writer.

It is a collaboration.

I trust you.

Mike is a writer living in northwest Iowa. He has written several novels. He is a former federal prisoner for peace, small-town newspaper reporter, and Iowa congressional candidate. Visit www.mikepalecek.com to learn more about Mike and his books.

RUSSELL BRUTSCHE — *Cover Artist*

Art is said to be where the values of a culture are held. In these times of increasing commodification, art is often relegated to the role of sophisticated decoration, but it can do more: it can witness, it can inform. I try to do that with my paintings.

I observe that when world trade systems result in extreme imbalances, of power, wealth, and for some even the basic needs of life, all levels eventually become vulnerable to attack, whether from within or without.

Russell has been painting since early childhood. He attended San Jose State University, studying under Eric Oback, Robert Freimark (student of Henri Matisse) and Sam Richardson, graduating with scholarship honors in 1968. Since then he has been in numerous one-person and group shows throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, and in Colorado, Arizona and Japan. In 2001 he had a one-person exhibit at the Museum of Northeast Nevada, as featured in VIA magazine. Russell currently participates each October in Santa Cruz Open Studios, and other shows throughout the year. His work can be seen at www.russellbrutsche.com.

MICHAEL PAUL MILLER — *Story Illustrations*

We are visually guided through Mike's book from the descriptions of tragic events given by the character known only by his first name, "John". Interested by John's words and the obscurity of smoke and fire associated with the destruction of 9/11, I sought a pictorial space that not only combined both of these elements, but that also kept an enigmatic quality to ensure room for open interpretation and independent resolution of the visual narrative. The paintings are oil on canvas and are layered both by direct and indirect painting methods. I believe oil paint on canvas was the necessary medium to use in order to capture visual depth as well as the narrative depths that are also often multi-layered. Through means of glazing and transparent washes of paint, smoke has obscured truth, the atmosphere has become dirty and distressed, and the loss of life is foreshadowed. In some instances a painting has become so dark that the only light is revealed by deceit. The deceived are depicted in a state of doubt, sadness, or fear while the others remain calm, confident, and emotionless. At times bright cadmium colors exist to heed caution and add a sense of aesthetic beauty.

Other symbolism may be found in military presence (that is either hidden or in full command), in key political figure portraits, and in the recurrence of linear patterns that offer a nostalgic point of reference to the glass and aluminum facade of the twin towers. In regards to those who have lost or sacrificed for the good with relation to the events of 9/11, please keep in mind that it is not my intention to exploit the sorrows or hardships of this tragedy. These images are meant to evoke thought, emotion, and visually support the alternative perspective presented in Mike's book.

Michael is an emerging artist and art instructor from central Wisconsin. In 2003, He received a B.F.A. degree in Painting and Graphic Communications from the University of WI - Oshkosh. In 2006 and 2007, he received a M.A. and M.F.A. degree in Painting from the University of WI - Madison. Since then his paintings have been selected for solo exhibitions at The Museum of Wisconsin Art, The University of Northern Iowa, The Port Angeles Fine Arts Center in Port Angeles, WA, and a group exhibition at Denise Bibro Fine Art Gallery in Manhattan, NY. To view his art and find a current exhibition schedule visit www.mpmart.net.

ALLISON M. HEALY — *Story Illustrations*

One should take every opportunity to speak out against the injustices of the world. With my art, I am always trying to look at things in a new way and hopefully, I will encourage others to think about something they hadn't thought about before. In the pursuit of truth, there are still many unanswered questions, and art has the ability to ask that which is difficult to ask.

Allison was born in St. Claire, Michigan and raised in the Northwoods of Minnesota. She studied illustration at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and University of Brighton, England. Currently, she is living in Boston, Massachusetts. To see more of Allison's work visit www.ah-creative.com.

"ASTOUNDING, ASTONISHING, AND HAUNTING ..."

"*Guests of the Nation* offers an intriguing alternative to what the late George Carlin called the 9/11 'consensus reality.' Philip K. Dick would love how this deft American novel captures our imagination and never lets go. Mike Palecek has graced us with a sparkling gem you'll read non-stop and more than once."

— Karen Kwiatkowski, retired Lt. Col., USAF, Ph.D., and working at the Pentagon on 9/11

"ONCE AGAIN, MIKE PALECEK DEFTLY CONNECTS THE DOTS with *Guests of the Nation*. The picture that emerges is horrifyingly clear for those who have eyes to see."

— David Mathison, publisher, *Be The Media*

"MIKE PALECEK HAS THE UNCANNY ABILITY to convey an understanding of real events through the medium of fiction. No one who reads this book will ever feel the same way about our government and will burn to learn how close he has come to revealing the truth about the events of 9/11. The answer, alas, is, all too close!"

— James H. Fetzer, Ph.D., founder, Scholars for 9/11 Truth



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