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EVENT CONSPIRACIES & ASSASSINATIONS

CONSPIRACY THEORIES ARE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD. Events that are meaningless to the average person take on high importance when analyzed through a conspiratorial lens. There is no such thing as coincidence to the conspiracy theorist, so even the most mundane details of life can become portents of something sinister.

Given the importance placed on minutiae in conspiracism, major historical events are considered positively Earth-shattering. A terrorist attack, a war, or an assassination must therefore be scrutinized in the greatest detail possible, lest some otherwise ignored clue slip past.

This chapter contains reviews of Conspiracy Cinema dedicated to analyzing a single event. The films selected are narrower in focus and shorter than is the standard for the genre, and tend to rely more heavily on recontextualizing footage from other media.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

THE FACTS

AT 8:46 AM ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, AMERICAN AIRLINES Flight 11 (Boston to Los Angeles) collides with the north face of the World Trade Center North Tower. Less than twenty minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175 (Boston to Los Angeles) crashes into the south face of the South Tower. American Airlines Flight 77 (Washington, DC to Los Angeles) crashes into the western side of the Pentagon just thirty minutes later. Just after 10:00 AM, United Airlines Flight 93 (New Jersey to San Francisco) crashes into a field in rural Pennsylvania. By 10:30 AM, both towers of the World Trade Center have collapsed and the twenty-first century has had its defining moment just nine months after it had begun.

THE OFFICIAL VERSION

THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS WERE THE WORK OF NINETEEN TERRORISTS affiliated with al-Qaeda, a multinational organization of Islamic fundamentalists led by Osama Bin Laden. The assumed goal of the attacks was a symbolic strike at American financial influence (the World Trade Center) and military power (the Pentagon), as well as a direct response to the American presence in the Middle East and its continued support of Israel. Released in November 2002, the 9-11 Commission Report cited multiple instances of American intelligence failures leading up to the attacks and solely attributed the planning, funding, and execution of the attacks to al-Qaeda and its operatives.

THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES

THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES SURROUNDING 9-11 ARE NUMEROUS AND DEAL with every facet of the event. Some theorists offer comprehensive theories while others choose to focus on a single aspect on which to build

*The attacks on the
World Trade Center towers.*



their case. Conspiracy cinema on 9-11 is just as varied in the theories it presents, although the nature of the format is such that most deal with comprehensive theories that offer alternative views on not only what happened but also those responsible and their motivations.

The most common comprehensive theory presented in these films is that 9-11 was a "False Flag" event. A False Flag or False Colors event is one designed to deceive the public into believing that an external enemy is responsible, when in reality it has been perpetrated by their own government. This approach to 9-11 takes the view that the attacks were either orchestrated or allowed to take place by a faction of the US government to promote their agenda. These films will often cite members of the Bush administration's involvement with the neo-conservative group The Project for a New American Century, whose literature calls for "a new Pearl Harbor" to usher in a period of perpetual war (Iraq-Afghanistan) and tighter social controls (the Patriot Act). False Flag theory proponents also cite Operation Northwoods, a proposed 1962 False Flag event in which terrorist activities in American cities would be blamed on Cuba in order to gain public support for a war, a conspiracy whose existence has been acknowledged by the US government. Other comprehensive theories often include the involvement of the agents of the New World Order in an effort to destabilize the United States in order to facilitate their one-world government agenda.

Individual 9-11 conspiracy theories, especially when removed from the context of a comprehensive theory, can be more diverse and imaginative. The most popular individual theory is that the collapse of the World Trade Center was the result of a controlled, pre-arranged demolition and not caused by the impact of the planes and the subsequent fires. Footage of the event plays a key role in this conspiracy theory, as

does the fact that the World Trade Center 7 building collapsed despite not being struck by planes. Other common individual theories include the “no-planes theory” (that holograms and missiles were used to fell the towers), the “drone theory” (that a remote-controlled drone aircraft was flown into the Pentagon), and the “plane-swap theory” (that the passengers and crew of any or all of the four hijacked flights were safely unloaded and replacement aircraft were used). Existing on the fringe are theories that involve UFOs, demonic or angelic intervention during the attacks, and even the use of a nuclear bomb under the World Trade Center.

Note: Films about September 11, 2001 abbreviate the date in a variety of ways: 9/11, 9-11, or 911 being the most common. For the sake of clarity, the titles of the film contain the style used by the filmmaker; all other references are written as 9-11.

REVIEWS

2001: THE YEAR WE MADE CONTACT (2010)

Filmmaker/Director: Glenn Zarmanov

Production Company: We Are Change New Jersey

2001: THE YEAR WE MADE CONTACT BEGINS WITH OUR NARRATOR (DIRECTOR Zarmanov) defining some key terms for the audience. He reads the definitions of “legend” and “myth” straight from their respective Wikipedia pages before digressing on a more esoteric topic, the concept of the axis mundi, or a connection between Earth and the heavens. Zarmanov doesn’t state it directly, but it is clear that he is identifying the World Trade Center towers as a type of axis mundi, imbuing their existence—and their destruction—as deeply symbolic.

After several more minutes of Wikipedia definitions, *2001: The Year We Made Contact* shifts focus rather abruptly into the world of predictive programming, the concept that 9-11 was foretold in various media and other events. This disjointedness continues as the film segues into footage from other Conspiracy Cinema films, news footage, and Jesse Ventura’s TruTV television show *Conspiracy Theory*. Most of this information has been presented elsewhere, with the notable exception of the short-lived sci-fi series *Seven Days*. This is the only instance

of which I'm aware that the show is referred to, and *2001: The Year We Made Contact* uses a collection of clips from the episode "Pinball Wizard" (airdate October 6, 1999), the plot of which involves the Pentagon being struck by a remote control missile. Its inclusion here is compelling proof of the predictive programming theory, and the filmmakers were wise to devote so much time to it. Less inspired are several minutes of the cartoon *Gargoyles*, the plot in question involving a group calling themselves "the Illuminati," a name and concept that would have been commonplace by time of the show's airing.

More effective is the use of an animated retelling of Plato's allegory of the cave, albeit more for its own merits than as proof of the film's claims. The final thirty minutes of the film consist of interview footage of attendees at a We Are Change New Jersey event, and footage of Zarmanov exploring a 9-11 memorial, Ground Zero, and the surrounding area. It is only at this point that we are presented with his theory on the true motives behind 9-11, which is that the towers were destroyed in a ritual designed to create a "stargate" between two universes. Though his claims may be on the fringe of 9-11 conspiracy thinking, the personal tone of this footage and the conviction with which Zarmanov relates this belief is compelling filmmaking. Were the entirety of *2001: The Year We Made Contact* structured similarly it would be both more entertaining and convincing. As it is, the amount of recycled footage and information makes these final moments scarcely worth the wait.

911: BIRTH OF TREASON (2007)

Filmmaker/Director: Elliot Nesch

Production Company: Beitshalomministries.org

911: BIRTH OF TREASON HAS LITTLE TO OFFER IN THE WAY OF NEW INFORMATION or perspectives that aren't already available in a host of other 9-11 Conspiracy Cinema films. We are treated to interviews with theorists filmed specifically for the documentary and footage of others that are appropriated wholesale from other sources, notably a lecture by Dr David Ray Griffin. The film more or less stays in line with Griffin's theory of a controlled demolition using thermite and the other interviews are merely there to build the case that the US government isn't being forthright in their explanation of the events on that day. In short, *911: Birth of Treason* consists mostly of arguments—and footage—that have

been presented more effectively elsewhere.

What distinguishes the film is the dramatic shift in tone that occurs for the film's final half hour. *911: Birth of Treason* is produced by the Christian pacifist organization Beit Shalom Ministries and the film concludes with a look at their beliefs and a solicitation for the viewer to become a born again Christian. While many Conspiracy Cinema films are made from a Christian perspective, it is rare for a film to dedicate such a large amount of time strictly to religious education. Those that do are typically far less tactful about it than *911: Birth of Treason*. This sermonizing, though unexpected, won't be offensive to viewers of any faith and, since it is relegated to the conclusion, those not inclined to listen can simply choose to turn the film off.

The Conspiracy Cinema film *Was 911 a Prophetic Warning?* is a forty minute interview with filmmaker Nesch in which he connects 9-11 conspiracy theory and Biblical prophecy to a greater degree than in *911: Birth of Treason*.

9-11: BLUEPRINT FOR TRUTH (2005)

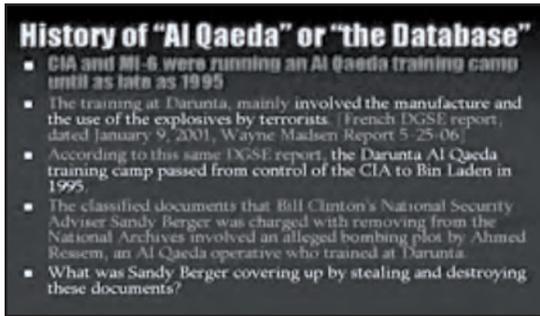
Filmmaker/Director: Unaccredited

Production Company: Architects & Engineers for 9-11 Truth

AMONG THE DRIEST FILMS IN THE CONSPIRACY CINEMA CANON, *9-11: Blueprint for Truth* was created by the group Architects & Engineers for 9-11 Truth and consists primarily of a lecture given by architect Richard Gage. Gage's position is that the towers were felled by pre-planted thermite explosives and maintains that this is the only event that could adequately explain melted steel and the free-fall speed of the towers' collapse. His lecture is intercut with footage from newscasts and other Conspiracy Cinema films, all of which are used as proof of the controlled demolition theory presented in the film.

The work of several physicists and other PhDs is used and the bulk of the film is dedicated to charts, graphs, and chemical analysis. It is all very intriguing material but *9-11: Blueprint for Truth* never gets to the conspiratorial heart of the matter: namely, the "who" and the "why" of its theory. The lack of this overshadows a lot of the film's thorough research and makes it appear as if it was done in a vacuum or simply for the sake of doing the analysis. *9-11: Blueprint for Truth* is an example of a film that attempts to be taken more seriously by not veering into the

9-11 Coincidence
Theory's presentation.



world of speculation. A commendable approach, but one that sacrifices much in the way of entertainment value.

9-11 COINCIDENCE THEORY (2006)

Filmmaker/Director: Spencer Morgan

Production Company: Utah911Truth.com

THE LEVEL OF DETAIL IN SPENCER MORGAN'S *9-11 COINCIDENCE THEORY* goes far beyond that of its peers and, indeed, well beyond the tolerance level of the average viewer. The film is simply a slide show presentation narrated by Morgan and feels more akin to a university lecture than the typically bombastic world of Conspiracy Cinema. That being said, anyone in search of a carefully researched and fully annotated examination of the conspiracy theories on 9-11 need look no further.

Morgan begins with a listing of notable names who question 9-11's official story, sticking primarily to journalists and politicians, and avoiding mention of any of the more popular conspiracy theorists. For Morgan, one's feelings about 9-11 boil down to whether or not they choose to believe in coincidences or conspiracies, and the first thirty minutes of the film is used to establish how many coincidences one would need to believe to accept the official version of events. Rather than using the remainder of the film to establish proof of a conspiracy, Morgan takes the opposite approach and begins dissecting the official version and what he and other theorists see as the problems with it.

Most of *9-11 Coincidence Theory* is highly analytical and things like air velocity, melting temperatures, and descent speeds are explained in exacting detail. Morgan at no point tries to use any persuasive techniques, but manages to be persuasive through overkill. The viewer will

be so overloaded with facts and figures that they're likely to believe him simply because mounting a counterargument would be too arduous. That certainly isn't to discount the strength of the information presented. If anything, Morgan should be commended for adding hard data to a niche of Conspiracy Cinema that is rife with baseless speculation. Dull and sometimes impossibly dense, *9-11 Coincidence Theory* is an invaluable resource for the hardcore 9-11 conspiracy theorist but too daunting a work for anyone else.

911: THE EXPLOSIVE REALITY (2007)

Filmmaker/Director: Unaccredited

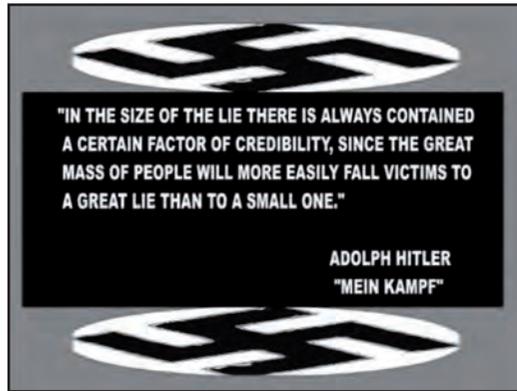
Production Company: None listed

THE OPENING CRAWL OF *911: THE EXPLOSIVE REALITY* BOLDLY STATES, "THIS film was not made for entertainment." Most conspiracy theorists would disagree, however, as the film presents a plethora of clips dealing with September 11, including several that are typically omitted by other films. As with many 9-11 Conspiracy Cinema films, it consists exclusively of footage from other sources, but where *911: the Explosive Reality* distinguishes itself is in its production quality. Many familiar clips are shown here in dramatically higher quality than in other films and *the Explosive Reality* has exceptional clarity, even when enlarging parts of the frame for detail. For most viewers, it will be like seeing this footage for the first time.

The film contains no narration, only on-screen titles, and leans heavily towards the controlled demolition theory. While other films rely on experts, statistics, and schematics to debunk the official version, *911: the Explosive Reality* only uses the footage of the collapse as proof. It is a surprisingly effective technique. Absent of any external guidance by a narrator, the viewers are left to play the role of investigators themselves; therefore they study the images far closer than they would under other circumstances. Every flash of light and every speck of debris then takes on a far greater importance to them regardless of whether they are trying to prove or debunk the official version. *911: the Explosive Reality* was obviously made with a conspiratorial agenda, but its subtle approach will prevent viewers from feeling as if they are being led towards any one conclusion.

Over the course of its two hours, *911: the Explosive Reality* applies

*The introductory screen to
Hilder's 911: the Greatest
Lie Ever Sold.*



the same level of detail to footage from Shanksville and the Pentagon as it does to the World Trade Center attacks, making it one of the few films to treat all four incidents equally. A closing title card confesses that the anonymous filmmaker(s) included subliminal red flashes in some scenes to induce fear and anger in the viewer, presumably to be directed towards the government and the media. After viewing the film a second time, I was unable to spot any instance of this occurring, however. If it is true, it is regrettable. It would be disingenuous towards those viewers who aren't conspiracy theorists and unnecessary for those who are.

911: THE GREATEST LIE EVER SOLD (2004)

Filmmaker/Director: Anthony J Hilder

Production Company: Free World Film Works

CONSPIRACY THEORIST ANTHONY J HILDER HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN CONSPIRACY circles since the late sixties and has worked as a bit part actor on television, a record company owner, and a film studio executive. Hilder was also one of the earliest theorists to make the leap into Conspiracy Cinema (in the early nineties) and several of his other films appear elsewhere in this book.

A passing familiarity with Hilder's body of work is needed to understand why he would choose to begin his *911: the Greatest Lie Ever Sold* with an image as jarring as a quote from *Mein Kampf* letterboxed by Nazi swastikas. The lengthy film (over two hours) is a continuation of Hilder's theories of a Luciferian/Nazi society aiming to control the

world. He posits that George W Bush and other members of the US government are part of a global “Brotherhood of Death,” that 9-11 was a ritual sacrifice, and that the ultimate goal is the total enslavement of humanity.

Over the course of *911: the Greatest Lie Ever Sold*, Hilder attempts to prove his claims via repetition but offers little in the way of proof or original research. The familiar footage of that day culled from news broadcasts appears often but Hilder, who appears onscreen as the “host” of the documentary throughout, never directly addresses any of it, nor does he ever clearly define his own theory of the events. *911: the Greatest Lie Ever Sold* appears to have been intended for an audience who already shares Hilder’s views as at no time does he attempt to persuade viewers and rarely are sources given for the ideas he presents as accepted facts.

911: the Greatest Lie Ever Sold fails as a persuasive work but does manage to be one of the more entertaining entries in the Conspiracy Cinema canon. Hilder is an eccentric character and the fact that he is onscreen for the majority of the film is a huge boon to its entertainment value. He’s prone to use such colorful phrases as “Hollywood is the cancer on the hemorrhoid on the ass of the whore of America”—complete with reverb effect—and other *bon mots* like “FB-Lie” with great frequency and liberally uses the sudden zoom when he’s making a point.

Ultimately, the undoing of *911: the Greatest Lie Ever Sold* as an effective piece of Conspiracy Cinema lies more in its erratic structure than anything else. The film changes topics frequently and without warning, the subjects interviewed are included for their name recognition rather than their ability to contribute to the work, and the film does not remain focused solely on 9-11 or Hilder’s theories about the event. Hilder successfully proves that he and others are convinced in the existence of an evil cult bent on world domination, but it is unlikely that you will be after watching this film.

Other Hilder films on 9-11 include *IllumiNAZI 911* and a filmed lecture, *Thieves in the Temple & the 911 Lies*.

911 MISSING LINKS (2005)

Filmmaker/Director: John Allen Martinson Jr

Production Company: 911MissingLinks.com

BILLING ITSELF AS "THE DEFINITIVE TRUTH ABOUT 9-11," *911 MISSING Links* is a filmic representation of the prevalent theory of Jewish responsibility for the attacks. Not only does it purport to have the truth about the event, but it states that all other conspiracy theorists are wrong, having been misled by Israeli intelligence to throw them off the trail. For *911 Missing Links*, 9-11 is the culmination of centuries of Jewish atrocities against the gentile world and anyone who doesn't believe this is part of the conspiracy.

The film begins by giving a brief summary of Jewish aggression against the United States in the twentieth century, spending most of its time on the Israeli bombing of the *USS Liberty* during the Six Day War. The incident is seen as a tragic accident by both countries, but the filmmakers view it as a cover-up between Israel and closet Jews in the US government. In the world of *911 Missing Links*, everyone is Jewish, so instead of exculpating the Bush administration of wrongdoing, it accuses them of disguising their Jewish origins.

The anti-Semitism in the film may be too pronounced for most viewers to get past the first twenty minutes, but those that do will see examinations of several 9-11 fringe events that are typically ignored by other Conspiracy Cinema film. First among these is the report that five "Middle Eastern" men were seen dancing and videotaping the attacks on the World Trade Center. The actual ethnicity of these men is in dispute, as are the reports that they were detained and released by authorities. More widely reported was an incident where a white van was stopped near the George Washington Bridge on suspicions it may have been carrying a truck bomb. The three Israeli citizens inside were detained for several months but ultimately released without being charged. Per *911 Missing Links*, their release was a direct order from the CIA.

911 Missing Links never relents from its torrent of anti-Jewish rhetoric. It makes the same mistake that many similar anti-Semitic films do: that is, not clearly distinguishing between the actions of the state of Israel and the whole of the Jewish people worldwide. One is guilty simply by virtue of their birth, per the film, and anyone in the government whose ethnicity is unclear is labeled a Jew as if doing so proved that they were a part of the conspiracy. *911 Missing Links* contains some compelling information about Mossad involvement in 9-11, but ultimately it gets lost in the unending sea of racism in the film.

The website for *9-11 Missing Links* contains an essay stating that conspiracy theorists Alex Jones, Jason Bermas, Webster Tarpley, and Jim Marrs are “disinfo” agents and members of something the filmmakers call the “Jewish Crime Network.”

9-11: THE ROAD TO TYRANNY (2002)

Filmmaker/Director: Alex Jones

Production Company: Infowars

JONES’ FIRST POST-9-11 FILM SEES HIM MAKING SOME ADJUSTMENTS TO his filmmaking style but not his message. As referenced in the title, the encroachment of tyranny into the American government is still his main focus. For Jones, 9-11 wasn’t the watershed moment of conspiracy theory that it was for other Conspiracy Cinema filmmakers, but instead a continuation of trends he’d been addressing for years. 9-11 only plays a small part in *9-11: the Road to Tyranny* and the majority of the film takes a closer look at the impact of that day on civil liberties than it does the events themselves.

Approximately half of the film’s running time is dedicated to exposing other False Flag events throughout history, beginning with Nero’s persecution of Christians after the burning of Rome and ending with the Oklahoma City Bombing. It is at this point that Jones arrives at 9-11 but addresses conspiracy theories briefly, only touching on the collapse of Building 7 before moving to other topics. Jones is more concerned with the aftermath of the event, in particular the USA Patriot Act and other legislation passed in the weeks and months afterward. *9-11: the Road to Tyranny* then becomes a “greatest hits” of sorts for Jones, incorporating footage from his earlier *Police State* films as evidence of 9-11 simply being another step in the gradual slide towards tyranny. Jones concludes with a look at surveillance techniques including the infamous implanted RFID chip before taking on topics rarely seen in his work: global warming, forced vaccinations, chemtrails, and food additives.

9-11: the Road to Tyranny has very little information not already available on Jones’ previous films but is an interesting work for examining his oeuvre as a whole. This film marks the beginnings of a change in his style from the amateurish look of his earlier films to the Hollywood-esque polish of his more recent work. *Road to Tyranny* also marked a change in how Jones presented himself. He is off-camera for most of the