

Aftermath: Unanswered questions from 9/11

An investigative documentary by Guerilla News Network (GNN)

www.gnn.tv

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30 April 2003

Aftermath: Unanswered questions from 9/11, *shown April 21, 2003 at the Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, sponsored by www.deceptiondollar.com*

Much to the surprise of the event's sponsors, the 928-seat Herbst Theatre in San Francisco was full, with standing room only, at the showing of the film *Aftermath: Unanswered Questions from 9/11*.

This film is a documentary questioning the official version of the events of September 11, 2001 that has been promulgated by the Bush administration through its willing mouthpieces, the corporate media. It was produced by Guerilla News Network (GNN), a group founded by Steve Marshall and Josh Shore, who first collaborated at MTV to bring more relevant content to television.

The documentary asks 11 questions that have gone unasked by not only the media, but also by Congress—questions that remain unanswered by the Bush administration after more than a year and a half. The film is narrated by Hip-Hop performer and political protester Paris, whose music comprises the soundtrack. Paris's latest CD, "Sonic Jihad," has been effectively suppressed in the United States due to the fact that no US distributor will market it because of its anti-government content.

Aftermath uses various quick-cut and video montage methods, in accordance with its origins in the music video genre. The scene shifts from pictures of firemen clearing the World Trade Center rubble to pictures of soldiers, politicians, etc.

Spoken words flash across the screen as they are being spoken. The people featured responding to the questions are shot in extreme close-up. Paris's music throbs in the background, while his voice asks 11 questions relating to the suicide hijackings, such as:

- * To what extent should airlines have been prepared for 9/11?
- * What did the Bush administration know and when?
- * Why did the US military not intercept the hijacked planes?
- * How did the administration respond to the failures of the military and intelligence agencies?
- * What ties, if any, did the US government and intelligence agencies have with the terrorists and their supporters?
- * Were there plans for a war in central Asia prior to September 11?
- * Is there evidence to suggest that the government used the 9/11 attacks to justify its war in Central Asia?
- * How has the government's reaction to the terrorist attacks

affected the rule of law in the United States?

* How has recent legislation like the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security bill affected the lives of American people?

Answers to these questions are solicited from a diverse group, including George Soros (billionaire), Mary Schiavo (aviation disaster attorney), Michael Ruppert (well-known ex-cop and publisher of *From the Wilderness*), Nafeez Ahmed (author of *The War on Freedom*), and Riva Enteen (executive director of the San Francisco National Lawyer's Guild), among others.

Regarding the first of the 11 questions asked by the filmmakers, attorney Schiavo comments on airline preparedness in light of lawsuits that have been filed by families of victims of the hijackings. She adds, however, that the very first claims for damages and protection came *from the airlines themselves, on September 11, 2001*, while, she picturesquely adds, "the bodies were still burning" at Ground Zero.

There follows discussion of what the administration knew, and when, involving questions that have been asked repeatedly by many, including the *World Socialist Web Site*, since the date of the suicide hijackings. This leads to the question of why the air force failed to scramble its fighter jets as soon as it received news that four planes had been hijacked.

Nafeez Ahmed reiterates what is standard operating procedure following the report of a plane that leaves its flight path and fails to respond to air traffic control. Air force planes should be in the air within 10 minutes, but on 9/11 the planes weren't ordered into the air for more than *half an hour*. Ahmed adds that this sort of delay can only occur *if it is so ordered*.

Former CIA analyst, David McMichael, deals with the official response to the failures of the military and intelligence agencies by noting that, far from losing their jobs or being reprimanded, the top officials were actually *promoted* after the events of 9/11, and their agencies received an increase in funding.

The answers to the rest of the questions cover familiar ground, including the plans of the United States government to gain access to the oil and gas of the Caspian basin by using the "war on terror" as an excuse for invading Afghanistan and establishing a military presence in other Central Asian countries. There are also references to prior US attempts to use the excuse of defending the nation against threats to its safety to attack and invade other countries, such as the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana

Harbor, which set off the Spanish-American War, and Project Northwoods, in which it was proposed that the US government instigate terror against American citizens and blame it on the Cubans.

On the question of the links, if any, between the US government and its intelligence agencies on the one hand, and terrorists or their supporters on the other, the Pakistan connection turns out to be the murkiest. It ties together the US, the Saudis, Osama bin Laden and the CIA-funded mujahedin. But, again, these allegations and connections are not new.

The most practical discussion was that of Enteen on the dismantling of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights by the provisions of the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Bill, although these comments could be called preaching to the choir, given the audience present in the hall. Her comments included practical advice on how to behave when arrested, for instance.

Ruppert and Enteen participated in a discussion panel that took place after the showing of the film. With them were Peter Dale Scott (emeritus professor of English at University of California Berkeley, author of the book *Drugs and Oil*, and researcher of US covert operations and their impact on democracy at home and abroad, including the JFK assassination) and moderator Barrie Zwicker, Canadian media critic, producer of a weekly current affairs program for Canadian television, and founder of “Sources,” a free information web site for journalists, writers, editors and researchers.

This discussion was disappointing. The statements made by the panelists were pretty much what one has come to expect. There was much talk from Scott and Ruppert about the CIA, double and triple agents, and other intricacies of global skullduggery in service of national entities in the struggle for markets and resources. As fascinating as these stories may be to conspiracy fans and followers of the covert world, they did not offer any new insights into the US drive for global hegemony, its causes, aims or consequences.

There was a great deal of imputation (what the government knew, did, or did not do), disputation (whether anti-government demonstrations and protests constitute a real motor for change in government policy or whether it might be more helpful to change one’s Internet provider or bank to those that don’t feed the corporate coffers) and confirmation of all of our worst fears about the security state. All of this, however, was merely skirting the issue of the underlying engine driving this burning bus—capitalism.

While a gathering of a large audience of people to discuss what the media will not discuss is to be welcomed, the ultimate goals of the forces gathered remained unclear. There were representations from all sorts of organizations and tendencies—environmental activists, Kennedy assassination specialists and the like, nearly all of whom had literature on offer in the front lobby—but no unifying force amongst them that would seem to outline a way forward. Although the panelists, Ruppert in particular, several times expressed the need to get down to the “root cause” of all of the factors behind the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq war, and the ever more militaristic and unilateral direction of the US government under the Bush regime, none of them discussed the political history, particularly that of the twentieth century, which has produced the

policies we are seeing enacted today.

For instance, while making fun of a George Bush speech wherein Bush was attempting to list the three most dangerous ideas of the twentieth century, one of the panelists quoted him as starting, “Communism, Nazism and...” The pause was Bush searching for the third dangerous idea. That word was fascism.

But the filmmaker and panelists were themselves guilty of omitting a crucial word: after an entire evening of accusations and revelations of the *effects* of capitalism, there was no mention of capitalism itself, and no delving into the intricacies of *its* history and record in the last century.

David North of the WSWS Editorial Board has related how the movements for social change in the United States are often afraid of using what he referred to as the “S word,” and even more so, the “C word”—in this case, “C” for communism. But the participants in last night’s discussion were more afraid of the biggest “C” word of all time—capitalism.

While the history of the oil industry, the rise and fall of Enron, and the machinations of the CIA and other national security services were traced and related to the outcome of that history, there was no equivalent history of the rise of the modern capitalist class. Its rapacious scouring of the planet, its indifference to everything other than acquiring vast wealth, and its chipping (frequently gouging) away of hard-won rights of the working class of this country and others were not discussed. In other words, there was no questioning of the capitalist system itself.

Ultimately, *Aftermath* is worth seeing for the sheer fact that it asks the questions that it asks. But the most important question in the end, and the one that will lead to the answers to the others, is the question that was not asked.



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