



## Pressing for the Truth on 9/11

Henry Kissinger “nearly fell off the couch.” He spilled his coffee on himself. He was visibly shaken. The next day he announced that he was stepping down as chairman of the 9/11 Commission, the post to which President Bush had named him a couple of weeks earlier. What had caused the always poised and famously unflappable “Dr. K” to come unhinged? Why the abrupt resignation from the chairmanship he had so recently accepted amidst such fanfare?



The day before his resignation, Dr. Kissinger invited a small group of 9/11 family members to the New York office of Kissinger Associates, the premier global consulting service to presidents, princes, potentates, and corporate executives. The date was December 12, 2002. Kissinger, no doubt, expected them to be putty in his hands. After all, he is the fabled, gravelly voiced eminence who has strode across the world stage for the better part of half a century. Wars, revolutions, financial panics, political scandals, and economic crises — he has come through them all, not only unscathed but almost apotheosized to demigod status.

But the ever calm and supremely confident diplomat was unnerved when Laurie Van Auken, whose husband was killed in the World Trade Center, said the families wanted him to disclose his client list to assure there was no conflict of interest. She asked if there were any Saudis among his clients and if any were members of the bin Laden family.

Kristen Breitweiser, another 9/11 widow who was there, gives this account of the meeting: “Kissinger told us to trust him. We told him we couldn’t.... Kissinger seemed stunned.... He didn’t understand the fuss about his client list — they were all reputable people, he said. Kissinger seemed stricken and became unsteady. In reaching for his cup of coffee he bobbed, knocked the pot, spilled his own cup and nearly fell off the couch.”

After their hard-fought campaign to get an independent investigation, the 9/11 families were understandably alarmed when President Bush announced the appointment of Kissinger, a longtime adviser and mentor to President Bush (not to mention Bush Sr., Richard Nixon, David and Nelson Rockefeller, et al.). In reporting on the nomination, the *New York Times* (part of Kissinger’s media fan club) noted that Kissinger is the “consummate Washington insider,” and wondered if his selection “is not a clever maneuver by the White House to contain an investigation it long opposed.” *Of course* it was



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a containment maneuver, though, as events have shown, it was not quite “clever” enough.

The Kissinger-9/11 story and many other important stories related to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 — and the subsequent official investigations and coverups — are grippingly told in the important video documentary, *9/11 Press for Truth*. Though it does not provide all the answers, this brave quest for justice by 9/11 families and independent researchers does at least ask many of the right questions — very pointed questions that most Americans have forgotten, or likely never even heard of amongst the incessant coverage related to 9/11 and its aftermath. *9/11 Press for Truth* is a well-crafted exposé that will be an eye-popper to many Americans who still believe that the *9/11 Commission Report* issued in 2004 represents the culmination of an exhaustive, good-faith effort by federal authorities to get to the bottom of what went wrong and how it was that this devastating attack so easily overcame our nation’s defenses.

*9/11 Press for Truth* centers around four widows who lost their husbands in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. These four women — Laurie Van Auken, Patricia Casazza, Mindy Kleinberg, and Kristen Breitweiser — have come to be known as “the Jersey Girls.” As months dragged on after the attacks and it became more and more apparent that the official “investigation” was turning into stonewalling and coverup, this quartet came together with other grieving survivors to build public pressure for a genuine investigation.

The documentary begins by telling the story through the eyes and voices of these determined wives and mothers who refuse to be bullied or cajoled into silence or tricked into accepting half-truths and lies for answers. Friends and relatives, as well as government officials, told them to just “let it go,” to just grieve and heal and get on with their lives. But as Patricia Casazza says in the video, “We were looking for answers.” Finding answers to some of their very troubling questions was an essential prerequisite for real healing.

Many of the families had been compiling notebooks, computer archives, and recorded videos of news stories and official statements. They were confused and angered by the steady stream of conflicting, contradictory statements of government officials and the adamant opposition of the Bush White House to an independent investigation. They were equally outraged by the complicity of the major media in willingly propagating the government’s ever shifting “Party line” on so many troubling aspects of 9/11. They were also exasperated by the way in which the government — aided and abetted by the media — fragmented and effectively hid so many of the 9/11 facts and documents even when they *did* finally release them by dribbling them out here and there amidst an avalanche of other stories.

The Jersey Girls and their fellow 9/11 family members got a big boost when they discovered Paul Thompson’s “Complete 911 Timeline,” an easily accessible online source where thousands of media stories and public source documents have been compiled and collated. In most cases, the original source can be accessed through a URL web link. As anyone who’s made a serious attempt to sort through the labyrinth of 9/11 stories (this writer included) can tell you, Thompson’s timeline is an indispensable research tool.

Within the limits of its 85-minute time frame, *9/11 Press for Truth* does an admirable job of effectively presenting some of the most glaring discrepancies, lies, and coverups concerning the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil. It does this largely by layering video news clips of public officials and events surrounding 9/11 with statements from, and interviews with, 9/11 family members (including the Jersey Girls), Paul Thompson, and other investigators and journalists.



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*9/11 Press for Truth* asks, for instance, why NORAD fighter jets weren't scrambled on that fateful morning. Fighters are sent up, on average, more than twice a week to check on planes that have strayed off course or are not responding to the FAA or local air towers. This happens *routinely* — more than 100 times per year, and without any major signals that a hijacking or terrorist attack is underway. Why, on September 11, 2001, did this air defense system uniquely — repeatedly — fail, even *after* the first plane hit the World Trade Center and it was blindingly apparent that we were under attack? *The 9/11 Commission Report's* explanation, which contradicts four previous explanations by federal officials on this matter (all four of which also contradict each other), is fraught with discrepancies, errors, omissions, and contradictions.

The 9/11 families are still demanding to know what *really* happened and why? Ditto for other unexplained (and seemingly inexplicable) subsequent events such as the repeated “escapes” of Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders in Afghanistan — apparently courtesy of the governments of Pakistan and the United States. *9/11 Press for Truth* presents interviews with Gary Berntsen, the CIA's field commander in charge of Operation Jawbreaker, the agency's hunt for bin Laden in the caves of Tora Bora. Berntsen and others have charged that bin Laden and large convoys of his followers were repeatedly allowed to get away when they were about to be taken by U.S. forces. When the Taliban and al-Qaeda legions were trapped by U.S. forces in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in November 2001, the Pakistani government sent in planes to airlift the terrorists to safety in Pakistan, with the apparent blessing of the U.S. government.

There has also been amazing resistance by U.S. officials and the major U.S. media to a thorough investigation of the involvement of Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, in the 9/11 attacks. In the video we see a reporter at a press conference asking Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice about the visit of ISI chief General Mahmood Ahmad to Washington, D.C. She evades the question. The State Department's official transcript of the press conference conveniently “erases” the inconvenient question by saying it was “inaudible.” (It is *clearly* audible on the video.) General Ahmad, convincing evidence shows, may actually have been the paymaster for 9/11 hijackers' leader Mohammed Atta. Yet Pakistan's President Musharoff and the ISI are supposed to be our key allies in the war on terror.

But like so many other important aspects of the 9/11 investigation, Pakistan's support of international terrorism has been ignored or actively covered up by our government and the U.S. media.

This documentary is important not only for its content but for its professional packaging and high production values, which add to its credibility. But its main value may lie in the hope it gives that common, ordinary people — without office or power — *can* make a difference. It transcends partisan politics and should be seen by all Americans who are committed to justice and are determined to secure our country against similar — or worse — attacks in the future.



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