

The Pentagon Attack in Context: a Reply to John Wyndham

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Introduction

A significant level of polarized disagreement has characterized the 9/11 truth movement's discussions of the Pentagon events, in contrast with the consensus reached by independent researchers about the strong evidence showing that the Twin Towers and Building 7 were destroyed by controlled demolition. In *9/11 Ten Years Later* (published in September 2011), Professor David Ray Griffin argued for a similar "consensus approach" to the long-standing problem of what happened at the Pentagon on 9/11. Surveying a wide range of evidence, Griffin showed that, despite some discord over certain issues, a high level of consensus does exist among researchers with respect to the falsity of the official story, as well as the basic inference that the Pentagon attack was a false-flag operation. He then argued that this established consensus should be built upon, as has successfully been done for the events at the World Trade Center, and that strong disagreements about "what hit the Pentagon" should not be allowed to undermine the importance and impact of the movement's consensus view on this most important fact about the attack on the nation's military headquarters.

Griffin's argument for a consensus approach to the Pentagon has been cited in a recent paper³ at the *Journal of 9/11 Studies* by John Wyndham, in which he has attempted to formulate and apply what he describes as a "scientific method" for analysis of the events that occurred at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Wyndham's principal concern is with what he describes as a "ten-year standoff" on the question of what happened at the Pentagon. However, whereas Griffin suggested that primary attention should not be given to "what hit the Pentagon," Wyndham argues that it is essential to reach agreement on this issue. He argues that the preponderance of evidence leads to the conclusion that it was struck by a "large" airplane, probably a Boeing 757. Wyndham contends that the reason for the continuing disagreement is a failure on the part of the majority of independent researchers to follow the scientific method in their data analysis. He then asserts that the "*scientific method requires that a theory address all or most of the available relevant evidence.*"

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³ John D. Wyndham, "The Pentagon Attack: Problems with Theories Alternative to Large Plane Impact," December, 2011, *Journal of 9/11 Studies* (<http://journalof911studies.com/volume/2010/Wyndham1.pdf>).

After evaluation of the Pentagon events, we conclude that Wyndham's paper has several flaws that undermine his argument and conclusions, which we discuss in detail below. Negating his own professed standard, Wyndham fails to consider evidence that conflicts with or undermines the plausibility of his own theory. His paper therefore appears to suffer from "advocacy-based thinking," in which his theory is promoted without objective consideration of the full range of relevant evidence.

In contrast to Wyndham's selective approach, the present paper argues for a contextual and integrative approach to the question of what happened at the Pentagon. By "contextual approach" we mean one which situates the evidence from the Pentagon attack site within the larger context of (1) the related events at other locations on 9/11 and the well-supported inferences based on them, as well as (2) the evidence from both before and after the events of the day which provide many clues about the perpetrators and their motives. By "integrative approach" we mean that the most productive analysis will result from careful consideration of all the different types of evidence that are available.

The first half of this paper provides a detailed discussion of the multiple contexts and the full range of evidence that need to be integrated, in places highlighting important considerations largely overlooked in Wyndham's paper. After detailing the broader context and complexity of the Pentagon events and outlining an appropriate methodology for their analysis, we turn in the second half to the examination of key weaknesses in Wyndham's treatment of a narrow subset of the full range of evidence. The weaknesses we identify concern his analysis of the eyewitness accounts, his hypothesis concerning the complete disintegration of a large aircraft inside the Pentagon, his interpretation of photographic evidence of damage at the site, the evidence provided by stopped clocks in multiple locations, and the arguably unreliable data provided by the alleged flight data recorder (FDR).

The Broader Context of the Pentagon Events – *What We Know*

Much is known about the 9/11 attacks at this time, more than ten years after the events. There is a complete consensus within the 9/11 truth movement that the falsity of the official story has been demonstrated to a very high level of confidence.⁴ There is near total agreement among independent researchers that the attacks at the WTC and the Pentagon were parts of one operation, and that in neither location could the attacks have been carried out by "al-Qaeda" operatives, even under the official assumption that al-Qaeda is a genuine foreign organization of Islamic jihadists.⁵ Al-Qaeda could not have

⁴ David Ray Griffin made this point at the end of his updated survey of a very wide range of evidence contradicting the official account in *The New Pearl Harbor Revisited* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press [Interlink Publishing], 2008), p. 258

⁵ For a BBC report that concludes that no such organization, under the control of Osama bin Laden, has ever actually existed, see "BBC Now Admits al-Qaeda Never Existed" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-hYorNi0nA>).

placed the explosives in the WTC buildings, nor could al-Qaeda, as Wyndham recognizes, have flown complex large aircraft with precision in such difficult trajectories.

Because of the much greater abundance of physical, photographic and video evidence at the World Trade Center, the level of confirmation of this general consensus is very high for that locality. Dust and steel samples from the WTC have been physically analyzed by qualified scientists, yielding a high level of confirmation, from multiple independent lines of evidence, of the use of explosives to bring the buildings down.⁶ Publicly available videos of the buildings' destruction have allowed many physical indicators of controlled demolition to be confirmed and many characteristics of the events to be analyzed rigorously.

Unfortunately, physical and video evidence from the Pentagon is almost completely unavailable to independent researchers because of the complete control of the site and such evidence by secretive government agencies. No physical debris is available for analysis to test for explosive residues, and the complete seizure by the FBI of videos from an estimated 85 locations outside the Pentagon has prevented a visual analysis remotely comparable to that carried out for the WTC. Available photographic evidence is limited for the Pentagon attack site; relatively little has been made publicly available in comparison with the abundance of photographic evidence at the WTC.

Detailed analysis of evidence from the WTC events has shown that plane impacts had no significant role in the complete destruction of the buildings.⁷ The primary role of the aircraft strikes appears to have been diversionary, i.e., they were used to create the *illusion* that the buildings disintegrated because they had been struck by the aircraft, and thus to divert attention from the true cause. Significantly, there is strong evidence that the aircraft that struck the Towers must have been flown by remote control.⁸ Further, the complete destruction of WTC 7 was brought about without benefit of the illusion

⁶ For an excellent survey of the scientific confirmation of the use of explosives to bring down the Twin Towers and WTC 7 see David Ray Griffin, *The Mysterious Collapse of World Trade Center 7: Why the Final Official Report about 9/11 is Unscientific and False* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press [Interlink Publishing], 2010). Coordinated by John Wyndham, the Scientists for 9/11 Truth website also provides a clear summary of the scientific evidence of the destruction of the WTC buildings (<http://www.scientistsfor911truth.org/introduction.html>). See also Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (<http://www.ae911truth.org/>).

⁷ See David Ray Griffin, "The Disintegration of the World Trade Center: Has NIST Debunked the Theory of Controlled Demolition?," *Debunking 9/11 Debunking: An Answer to Popular Mechanics and Other Defenders of the Official Conspiracy Theory* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press [Interlink Publishing]), 2007, pp. 143-207

⁸ See Aidan Monaghan, "Plausibility of 9/11 Aircraft Attacks Generated by GPS-Guided Aircraft Autopilot Systems," 2008, *Journal of 9/11 Studies* (<http://journalof911studies.com/volume/2008/AutopilotSystemsMonaghan.pdf>); also see the "Afterword" by Aidan Monaghan in *Black 9/11: Money, Motive and Technology* by Mark H. Gaffney (Chicago: Independent Publishers Group, 2012).

provided by an aircraft impact, and this fact is one of the reasons why the falsity of the official account of WTC 7's destruction can be seen so clearly.

Appropriate Methodology for Pentagon Attack Analysis

Critical limitations of data and metadata for the Pentagon events make conclusions about some issues difficult to draw in the first place or, if drawn, to confirm at the same level of confidence achieved with regard to the WTC events.⁹ Scientists especially have relatively little physical evidence to work with at the Pentagon.

There is, however, an abundance of *contextual evidence* that enables a high level of confidence regarding the most important fact about the Pentagon events, which is that they were, like the events at the WTC, an inside job. And this *most important* conclusion has already been reached by virtually all independent researchers of those events. The theory of "large plane impact" that Wyndham has tried to establish concerns a decidedly secondary question which, because of the poor body of physical, video and photographic evidence available, cannot be answered with a high level of confidence at present. Furthermore, it is incorrect to claim that the evidence available is sufficient to achieve an unambiguous "scientific" conclusion, as Wyndham does, stating in his conclusion that "the essence of [his] paper is that the scientific method proves all alternatives to large plane impact virtually impossible." However, in science, such claims of "proof" in propositions about contingent events are properly made only when empirical propositions attain a very high level of confirmation.

Because the analysis of the Pentagon events cannot achieve the certainty claimed by Wyndham, due to the current lack of sufficient credible and publicly available data, researchers should adopt a different goal, which will require a broader range of scholarly methods. Instead of attempting to "prove" what happened at the Pentagon by analysis of a restricted selection from the available data, a broader method is needed in which the mass of evidence, much of it not suitable for scientific analysis, would still be subjected to careful evaluation. This broader method would be "data-driven" as opposed to "theory-driven," i.e., it would be inclusive of *all* (not just "most") available relevant data, and would carefully and objectively consider alternative interpretations.

⁹ The distinction between data and metadata is very important because, although official "data" sources might be correct (in some way) about data provided, the associated metadata, i.e., information about data provenance, structures or content for officially-provided data pertaining to 9/11 are almost always absent, incomplete, corrupted, or simply false. In this way, officials when asked will defend the "data" but carefully avoid defending the associated metadata. Metadata, for example, might be crucial in establishing the provenance of claimed data sources such as the FDR relied upon by Wyndham. Curiously, however, he never raises the issue.

More Contextual Inferences About the Pentagon – *High Probabilities*

Extensive research carried out on the physical evidence from the WTC has established many important facts that must be kept in mind when analyzing the Pentagon events. For example, the diversionary use of aircraft strikes, definitively shown to have occurred at the WTC, should be considered a possibility at the Pentagon. The use of explosives, again clearly demonstrated at the WTC, is accordingly a possibility at the Pentagon. The specific types of aircraft diversions and the purposes for which explosives might have been used may of course be different, but it is possible that the perpetrators of the attacks used a limited set of highly reliable methods in both locations.

The existing strong evidence for the use of remote-controlled guidance of the aircraft at the WTC raises the same possibility at the Pentagon. Furthermore, the Flight Data Recorder (FDR) evidence provided by the government may have been fabricated,¹⁰ as have been so many other types of “evidence” used to support the official account of events on 9/11 (e.g., fabrication of video evidence purporting to show the “Flight 77 hijackers” going through security at Dulles Airport¹¹).

Wyndham’s appraisal of the staging of evidence at the Pentagon as unlikely provides an example of the detrimental impact on the analysis of the events that results from an overly-narrow analytical method. “Staging” is in fact a key characteristic of a complex false-flag operation, which is in essence a staged “attack.”¹² The destruction of the buildings at the WTC was staged to create the illusion that the US had been attacked by foreign enemies. The attack at the Pentagon was staged for the same purpose. The scale of these staged attacks had never been achieved in previous false-flag operations. The resources involved in staging them were substantial, but the resources available to the perpetrators, as controllers of military, intelligence agency, or corporate black budgets,

¹⁰ For discussion of the known unexplained anomalies and internal contradictions within the official account of the discovery of the FDR from AA 77 at the Pentagon, including the lack of a serial number for the recorder, the creation of the data file for the recorder four hours before it was reportedly found, and the widely differing official claims about where the FDR was found, see Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 190-191. Also see Aidan Monaghan, “Planes Without Paper Trails,” *Declassifying 9/11: A Between The Lines And Behind The Scenes Look At The September 11 Attacks* (iUniverse, 2012).

¹¹ See Jay Kolar, “What We Know About the Alleged 9/11 Hijackers,” in Paul Zarembka, ed., *The Hidden History of 9-11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), pp. 3-44, especially pp. 5-9; and Kolar’s 2011 presentation at the Toronto Hearings, “The Alleged 9/11 Hijackers,” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYOOZAELcsQ>).

¹² For an excellent discussion of general characteristics of false-flag attacks and other types of “SCADs” (State Crimes Against Democracy), see Lance deHaven-Smith, “Beyond Conspiracy Theory: Patterns of High Crime in American Government,” *American Behavioral Scientist*, February 2010.

were exceptionally large. As one possible measure of the “resources” available to the perpetrators, it has been well documented that numerous wargames, normally occurring at other times of year, were scheduled on or about September 11, 2001.¹³

At both the WTC and the Pentagon it is highly likely that subsidiary purposes were served as well. The staged attacks destroyed vast reams of evidence of government and financial crimes (the destruction of these records may have been a primary reason why WTC 7 and the Naval Command Center and Army administrative areas in the Pentagon were targeted). Staging occurred as well with planted evidence, such as the “hijacker passports” and a “hijacker headband” purportedly found at the WTC and at Shanksville.¹⁴ Given all this contextual evidence, in contrast to Wyndham’s doubts about staging, we should be open to the likelihood of staging or elimination of evidence at the Pentagon wherever it would serve the purposes of the perpetrators.

Furthermore, at both the WTC and the Pentagon, the government scrubbed the crime scene of almost all physical evidence. Fortunately, this beginning of the *cover-up phase* of the operation was not perfectly complete, especially at the WTC, so that significant physical evidence remained to be analyzed, e.g. dust and steel from the violent disintegrations of the buildings. At the Pentagon, however, control of the site was almost total and the scale of evidence destruction much more manageable for the perpetrators, so that no physical samples have surfaced for testing scientifically. Other aspects of the cover-up include, as just one example, the historically-unique “failure” of the tasked agencies to identify and assemble for examination airplane parts from the crash sites.¹⁵

Such clear evidence of cover-ups at both sites creates a compelling reason for suspicion of the evidence that *has* been provided by the government, for example the FDR data purportedly from AA 77. It is interesting in this regard that for the WTC airliners, for which video evidence is substantial, the FDR data were not released by the government

¹³ 9/11 Consensus Panel, “Point ME-2: The Claim that the Military Exercises Did Not Delay the Response to the 9/11 Attacks” (<http://www.consensus911.org/point-me-2/>).

¹⁴ See Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 18-19

¹⁵ On the thousands of time-change parts, each identified with a unique serial number, out of which every airliner is constructed, see Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 189-190. Such serial-numbered parts have always been found and utilized in the analysis of airline disasters. The failure by federal agencies to follow this standard forensic procedure for any of the 9/11 flights is another important context for the analysis of the Pentagon staged attack by independent researchers.

(even though FDRs were reportedly found in the wreckage¹⁶), but that for the attack at the Pentagon, for which no known video evidence provides any independent confirmation of aircraft impact, “FDR data” was released by the government. The suspicion that the release was made to support the government’s false account that the Pentagon was struck by an airliner is necessarily raised by this contextual analysis.¹⁷

Possible Purposes behind the Staged Attack on the Pentagon

Perpetrators of the staged attack at the Pentagon must have been motivated by highly important purposes to have planned and carried out such a complex operation. Detailed analysis of the results of the attack will shed some light on what those purposes could have been. Some purposes will have been more general ones, shared with the staged attacks at the WTC. Others will have concerned, with great probability, objectives specific to those in control of the Pentagon.

General Purposes: For any criminal act, investigators must always consider means, motive and opportunity. As documented by David Ray Griffin and others, these were all present for a group of neo-conservatives. Organized in the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) before George W. Bush’s coming into power, they entered his administration with a well-established set of objectives, some, but not all, of which they had discussed publicly. Now working from the White House and the Pentagon, individuals from this group unquestionably had the means to carry out the very complex operation of 9/11, a capability unavailable to any other entity in the world. They controlled aircraft, aerospace defense systems, the government “response” to the “attacks,” and evidently even the major media reporting from early on.

The general motives of this group are well documented. They laid out their principal objectives explicitly in numerous publications. They even publicly stated that their

¹⁶ For discussion of the claimed discovery of FDRs from the airliners that reportedly struck the Twin Towers, see Jim Hoffman, “Black Boxes: Contents of Flight Data and Cockpit Voice Recorders Are Missing” (<http://911research.wtc7.net/planes/evidence/blackboxes.html>).

¹⁷ John Lear, an experienced airline pilot and instructor, argues that Boeing 767 and 757 airliners cannot fly at elevations as low as the attack sites at the officially-claimed very high speeds (such as the 550+ mph for Flight 77 at the Pentagon indicated by the “AA 77 FDR”). See “9/11 Airplane Affidavit By John Lear, Son Of Learjet Inventor” http://beforeitsnews.com/story/1935/777/9_11_Airplane_Affidavit_By_John_Lear_Son_Of_Learjet_Inventor.html. Also, see Aidan Monaghan, “2 Major Accounts: AA 77 Hit Pentagon Via ‘North of Citgo’ Path”, January 9, 2012 (<http://911blogger.com/news/2012-01-08/pentagon-attack-problems-theories-alternative-large-plane-impact-john-d-wyndham#comment-254771>).

objectives were unachievable in the desired timeframe without a “new Pearl Harbor,”¹⁸ a shocking attack on the country that would break down the considerable opposition to their plans that would otherwise block them from fruition. It now appears that the “new Pearl Harbor” they envisioned was a false-flag operation, staged attacks against key icons of American power, the WTC¹⁹ and the Pentagon. The shock from these faked attacks would mobilize public support for aggressive military actions to obtain long-term access to and control of the world’s oil reserves, and expand areas controlled by US military bases overseas, initially in the Middle East and South and Central Asia. Control of these resources would provide US leaders with a more dominant position over major foreign rivals, primarily continental Europe, Russia and China. The operation would also assure massive increases in military spending, weaponization of space, establishment of a doctrine of preventive-preemptive war, and control of the domestic population through the implementation of police-state measures, such as the Patriot Act, legislated without debate by a compliant Congress. With all these initiatives in place, the long-term dominance of their policies and their power would be assured.²⁰

Once the levers of state power were in their hands, secret preparations would create the opportunity to launch the staged attacks. The day was selected; numerous military exercises scheduled; key leaders warned not to fly; insiders enabled to profit from the attacks; the global positioning system optimized over Manhattan and Washington D.C. in the morning hours;²¹ the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hugh Shelton, scheduled

¹⁸ Project for the New American Century, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, September 2000 (<http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>). Section V of *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, entitled "Creating Tomorrow's Dominant Force", includes the sentence: "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" (51).

¹⁹ Suggestive evidence of early planning for the WTC attack site is provided by Ashton B. Carter [current chief Pentagon weapons buyer], John M. Deutch [former CIA director] and Philip D. Zelikow [later executive director of the 9/11 Commission], “Catastrophic Terrorism: Elements of a National Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, November-December 1998 (<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/54602/ashton-b-carter-john-deutch-and-philip-zelikow/catastrophic-terrorism-tackling-the-new-danger>; full text available at <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/visions/publication/terrorism.htm>), which forecast, years in advance, a massive attack on the World Trade Center that would result in loss of civil liberties, detention without charge, torture, and endless wars abroad.

²⁰ See David Ray Griffin, “Imperial Motives for a New Pearl Harbor,” *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*, pp. 85-106.

²¹ See Aidan Monaghan, “Official GPS Data Reveal Superior Aviation GPS Service Provided To WTC & Pentagon During 9/11 Attacks,” May 31, 2011 (<http://911blogger.com/news/2011-05-31/official-gps-data-reveal-superior-aviation-gps-service-provided-wtc-pentagon-during-911-attacks>).

to be out of the country; and George W. Bush committed to a reading lesson in Florida. The number of exceptional conditions for the staged attacks that were optimal on September 11 can only be explained by the careful planning of high officials in the US government.²²

Pentagon-Specific Purposes: Given the extensive evidence of long, careful planning that led up to the staged attacks on 9/11,²³ our hypothesis, consistent with other researchers' earlier suggestions,²⁴ is that specific targets within the Pentagon were a primary focus of the operation there. Likely objectives include the elimination of evidence regarding the supervision and coordination of "terrorist" patsies (e.g., the destruction of "Able Danger" records, along with other records of pre-9/11 planning operations), and the elimination of evidence that had been amassed by Navy and Army investigators into the missing \$2.3 trillion of Pentagon budget monies.²⁵

Under this hypothesis, the Pentagon attack planners would have wanted to reduce operational risks as much as possible. For the Pentagon operation, this would mean that highly reliable explosive demolition²⁶ would most likely be a favored strategy for accomplishing prime objectives (e.g., full destruction of the Navy Intelligence unit). Furthermore, it would mean that the achievement of no key goal of the Pentagon operation would be left dependent on the problematic contingencies of external operations, including aircraft, that were not under the planners' full control. Nevertheless, for diversionary purposes, as at the WTC, the overall operation would require patsies (to take the blame) and at least the illusion of aircraft (which could be thought to deliver the

²² These and many other optimal conditions for the 9/11 events are explained by the official conspiracy theory as coincidences. For a summary of major coincidences required by the official account, see David Ray Griffin, "Problems for a Coincidence Theory" in chapter 9 of *The New Pearl Harbor*, pp. 141-146, and additional "coincidences" listed in *The New Pearl Harbor Revisited*, pp. 231-235.

²³ For a detailed discussion of the complexity of the advanced planning for 9/11, which involved key corporate as well as government leaders and operatives, see Kevin Ryan, "Demolition Access to the WTC Towers," http://www.911review.com/articles/ryan/demolition_access_p1.html.

²⁴ E.g., Barbara Honegger, "The Pentagon Attack Papers" (<http://physics911.net/pdf/honegger.pdf>). Originally published as an appendix to Jim Marrs, *The Terror Conspiracy*, 2006.

²⁵ E.P. Heidner, "Collateral Damage: U.S. Covert Operations and the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001," (http://www.wanttoknow.info/911/Collateral-Damage-911-black_eagle_fund_trust.pdf). Heidner and others report that a large number of the approximately 40 employees of the Office of Naval Intelligence were killed.

²⁶ For a discussion of evidence for use of explosives inside the Pentagon on 9/11, see Kevin Ryan, "From renovation to revolution: Was the Pentagon attacked from within?" (<http://digwithin.net/2012/06/15/from-renovation-to-revolution-was-the-pentagon-attacked-from-within/>).

patsies and destroy the building). The patsies, of course, need not have been on a Pentagon-striking aircraft, and there is no evidence that they were.²⁷

Aircraft Associated with the Pentagon Staged Attack: Any discussion about the aircraft, or other attack system, associated with the staged attack at the Pentagon is best carried out in the context, provided above, of the means, motives, and opportunities of the likely perpetrators, and both broader and immediate context items already outlined. The failure to put the discussion of aircraft issues into the full context that existed when the attack occurred leads to the false presumption that “solving the Pentagon question” somehow hinges mostly (or entirely) on resolving certain questions about the alleged aircraft (e.g., whether such a craft was “large” or “small,” or whether it took a south-of-CITGO or a north-of-CITGO path). In contrast, the approach taken here argues that “solving the Pentagon question” can only be effectively accomplished by keeping broader contextual evidence in view.

Indeed, the contextual considerations proposed here indicate that no external attack system was truly central to the operation, and that the primary function of any external attack was to provide a diversion, as we know was the case at the WTC. It is highly likely that the same general *modus operandi* was used at the two locations: to create the illusion that Islamic hijackers had caused destruction and death by flying an airliner into an iconic building. The lack of strong video evidence that an airliner struck the Pentagon suggests that the desired illusion may not even have required a large aircraft. Given that the Dulles “Flight 77 terrorist arrival” video has been definitively established as staged, and the lack of strong video confirmation of an airliner strike into the Pentagon,²⁸ we reasonably ask now whether major elements of the external Pentagon events were staged.

The very fact that portions of the Pentagon lawn were so quickly and thoroughly “cleaned up” suggests that the perpetrators were anxious to eliminate evidence that would disconfirm the official account. On this hypothesis, possible types of evidence that would need to be eliminated include debris from inside the building resulting from the use of explosives there, and/or evidence that an aircraft of a different type than a Boeing 757 had been destroyed, either immediately in front of the building or by striking it. If the debris field had been simply the result of airliner impact according to the official story,

²⁷ The principal “evidence” for the presence of “hijackers” on the airliners has been the “phone calls from the planes,” but David Ray Griffin (in *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 101-140) has shown that these calls were almost certainly faked. In particular, he has established that the purported calls from Barbara Olson to her husband Solicitor General Ted Olson, in which, press reports claimed, she described the hijackers on Flight 77 before it hit the Pentagon, never in fact took place (as the FBI admits), so that there is actually no evidence that any aircraft flown by hijackers hit the building.

²⁸ See the discussion of the important research of Italian film-maker Massimo Mazzucco, which shows that the two videos released by the Department of Defense in 2006, one of which contained the “five frames” which had been released in 2002, provide clear evidence of fakery, in Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 183-184.

such rapid external scrubbing would have no plausible explanation. The scrubbing operation may also have served as an opportunity to plant fake evidence to support a “757 impact” diversion.

Although Wyndham insists that staging physical evidence would have been difficult, we believe that such staging at the Pentagon would have been a relatively simple and minor operation compared to the full scope of the staged attacks that day. That evidence was faked is clear from the “Dulles terrorist arrival” video and many other videos (see notes 12 and 29). When the broader context is kept in view, there is no substantive reason to reject the possibility of staged evidence at the Pentagon on the basis of “complexity” or cost.

Weaknesses in Wyndham’s Arguments and Methods

Significant weaknesses of Wyndham’s analysis require discussion. The principal focus in this section will be on his treatment of the eyewitness testimony regarding the Pentagon events, and on his hypothesis that a large airplane thoroughly disintegrated on its path into and through the building, punching out the circular C-Ring hole as a “fluidized debris flow.” Some other issues are discussed, in less detail, as well.

Eyewitness Testimony: Wyndham has called for a consensus that the Pentagon was struck by a “large plane.” A major element of his argument is his interpretation of eyewitness testimony. Although he cites the chapter on the Pentagon in Griffin’s *9/11 Ten Years Later*, he does not build upon Griffin’s analysis of eyewitness testimony. Griffin shows that the eyewitness testimony is too various, contradictory or otherwise suspect to be relied upon for any firm conclusions to be reached about “what struck the Pentagon,” if anything did.²⁹

Wyndham’s treatment of the eyewitness evidence is problematic. Defenders of the official story that a large airliner struck the Pentagon have claimed that there were thousands, or at least hundreds, of witnesses who supported that account, but this claim is false. Careful analysis has shown that only 31 alleged witnesses “provide *explicit, realistic and detailed claims* that a 757 crashed into the Pentagon after executing a high velocity, low altitude approach.”³⁰ Wyndham reduces Griffin’s analysis of the eyewitness evidence to nothing more than this low estimate (31) of the number of “reliable” eyewitnesses to a “large” plane flying into the Pentagon and disappearing inside, while he emphasizes that other researchers estimated the number at over 100. On the basis of these numbers, Wyndham then argues that lower numbers of eyewitnesses who provided testimony that conflicts with his own preferred theory (e.g., testimony describing a “small” plane, or a north-of-CITGO path, etc.) can be dismissed as a small minority. But Griffin in fact argued that if we look at the identities of the 31 eyewitnesses whose

²⁹ Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, pp. 172-182

³⁰ Jerry Russell, “Eyewitnesses and the Plane-Bomb Theories,” 911-Strike.com, March 19, 2005 (<http://www.911-strike.com/PlaneBomb.html>).

testimony was apparently sufficiently realistic and precise to consider as potentially useful and credible, we find that the great majority of them are people whose associations with the Pentagon or major media corporations render their testimony suspect.³¹ In ignoring Griffin's argument, Wyndham has not presented Griffin's conclusions in an objective manner, but has distorted them for purposes of his own argument. Nor has Wyndham refuted Griffin's argument that the eyewitness testimony cannot be relied upon to assert that a large airplane struck the Pentagon; Wyndham just passes over this key argument in silence.

Wyndham's call for a consensus in agreement with his own view, which he admits to be a minority view within the 9/11 truth community, suggests that he misunderstands the meaning of "consensus." A consensus, by definition, does not apply to a minority viewpoint. Oddly, he labels his minority view the "main theory" because the general public believes it. But the public holds this belief because they have not examined all or even most of the evidence.

It seems likely, as has been argued by Griffin, that the issue of what kind of aircraft, if any, struck the Pentagon is not an issue on which consensus can be reached by the community without further evidence. The limited available evidence does not permit a simple consensus on the issue. Further, Griffin has argued that this issue is of secondary importance in comparison with those dimensions of the Pentagon events on which consensus *has* been reached, all indicating that the attack was a false-flag operation; he elaborates fourteen of them.³² The issue is essentially irrelevant to the primary goal of the 9/11 truth movement, which is to demonstrate that the official claim that al-Qaeda hijackers were the perpetrators of the attacks is false (that this claim is false is explicitly recognized by Wyndham). Demonstrating that a large plane hit the Pentagon, were that possible, would not significantly contribute to the achievement of this primary goal. It would merely confirm one narrow element of the official story, the purpose of which was, on the preponderance of contextual evidence, diversionary.

Wyndham's own treatment of the difficulties inherent in the attempt to interpret the widely varying and often internally contradictory eyewitness testimony is seriously inadequate for the task. He charges that critics of the "large plane theory" must assert that most of the eyewitness testimony is "mistaken" or "fraudulent", but he never mentions other problems with the testimony. Pentagon eyewitness testimony is often imprecise, so

³¹ "The fact that almost half of the 31 explicit witnesses were 'elite insiders,' combined with the fact that a great majority (77 percent) of the 31 witnesses worked for either the government or a Gannett news organization, should give pause. There were very few individuals who could be considered neutral, in the sense of not occupationally biased in favor of the government's account of events. We cannot, therefore, simply assume them to be disinterested, and thereby trustworthy, witnesses." Griffin, *9/11 Ten Years Later*, p. 173. See also the detailed analysis of the suspect testimony of Pentagon employees by Kevin Ryan, "Renovation to Revolution," section "On the day of 9/11."

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 155-167

that nothing useful can be learned from it. This in fact is the case with the great majority of the testimonies. Or the testimony can be, and often is, internally contradictory. Further, Wyndham explicitly discounts the reality of the influence exerted by interviewers on witnesses, as described for example by April Gallop,³³ which is known to have occurred with WTC witnesses as well. Wyndham mentions but does not seriously consider another documented feature of WTC witness testimony, namely, the possibility of suggestion and peer-pressure on witness accounts.³⁴

It is clear that the analysis of eyewitness evidence is not an easy task; indeed, it is an extremely complex one. Therefore, it calls for a complex method of analysis, rather than the overly-simple “numbers” approach taken in Wyndham’s essay. Each witness account needs to be evaluated individually, with full consideration of these questions:

- Who gave it?
- Did the witness have ties to the Pentagon or other institutional supporters of the official narrative?
- When was the testimony given?
- To whom was the witness speaking?
- Did the interrogator(s) ask ‘leading’ questions?
- Who published the statement?
- Does the testimony say anything realistic and coherent?
- Does it contain internal contradictions?
- Does it contradict known facts?

Wyndham makes no effort to base his main claim — that the vast majority of Pentagon eyewitness evidence supports the conclusion that a large plane struck the Pentagon and passed completely into the building — on a consideration of any of these important questions about the evidence. Instead, he discounts critical analyses that have been carried out by other researchers by listing possible extenuating circumstances for weaknesses in the testimonies. He lists factors such as “different communication styles,” “different vantage points,” “poor use of language,” and the short opportunity to see anything because the plane was traveling so fast (“less than one second”). In fact, some

³³ “Barbara Honegger Interviews April Gallop,” a videotaped, under-oath interview that took place on March 11, 2007.

³⁴ Graeme MacQueen, “118 Witnesses: the Firefighters’ Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers.” *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, 2006, (http://www.journalof911studies.com/articles/Article_5_118Witnesses_WorldTradeCenter.pdf); Graeme MacQueen, “Waiting for Seven: WTC Collapse Warnings in the FDNY Oral Histories,” *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, 2008 (<http://www.journalof911studies.com/volume/200701/MacQueenWaitingforSeven.pdf>); Graeme MacQueen, “Eyewitness Evidence of Explosions at WTC,” The International Hearings on the Events of September 11, 2001 (Toronto Hearings), September 10, 2011 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UPwJGZfHbo>).

of the quotations from the testimony which he includes to support his conclusion are themselves mutually or internally contradictory.³⁵ His conclusions, therefore, should not be taken as reliable, much less scientific: the compilation of unreliable data will yield only unreliable conclusions.

Finally, some of Wyndham's arguments for the importance of eyewitness evidence are self-contradictory. He claims that witness testimony based on vision somehow overrules witness testimony based on other senses, such as hearing or smell. On this basis he argues that witness testimony to the sound of bombs going off and the distinctive smell of cordite within the Pentagon can be ignored as erroneous.³⁶ But in reality all the senses provide information of roughly comparable reliability; they vary primarily in the type of sensory stimulus and in the precision with which the place of origin of the stimulus can be determined. Self-contradictorily, Wyndham also argues that eyewitness testimony to dead bodies in the A and B rings — beyond the point of furthest penetration of his hypothesized “large plane” as a “fluidized debris flow” at the C-Ring inner wall — can be ignored because there is no “hard evidence” (presumably photos) to confirm the eyewitness testimony. Thus Wyndham appears to believe eyewitness testimony only when it supports the case he advocates. This methodological fallacy is called “confirmation bias,” a prominent type of cognitive bias.³⁷

Proposed “Quasi-Fluid Flow”: Remarkably, Wyndham proposes a completely unsupported explanation for the disappearance of almost all normally-identifiable debris from his alleged large airplane (“probably a Boeing 757”), as well as for the creation of a circular hole over 3m in diameter in the inner C-Ring wall inside the Pentagon. The problems he seeks to deal with are serious ones. Photographic evidence of debris within the Pentagon does not show most of the things reasonably expected, such as obvious

³⁵ As just one example, Wyndham claims that “several witnesses ... reported that they saw the plane clip the [light-]poles,” and quotes one of them, “D. S. Khavkin,” to back up this claim: “First, the plane knocked down a number of street lamp poles, then headed directly for the Pentagon and crashed on the lawn near the west side of the Pentagon.” Since the lawn was completely unmarked by any plane impact, half of this quotation is obviously false, but Wyndham provides no evidence that he took this fact into account in his assessment of the testimony. More examples could be cited of mutually- or internally-contradictory testimony used by Wyndham to back up his interpretation.

³⁶ See David Ray Griffin, “Reports of Bombs,” *The New Pearl Harbor Revisited*, pp. 100-105, and Barbara Honegger, “Eyewitnesses and Evidence of Explosions at the Pentagon,” in *The 9/11 Toronto Hearings Report: Final Report of The International Hearings on the Events of September 11, 2001* (in press, 2012).

³⁷ “Confirmation bias ... is a tendency of people to favor information that confirms their beliefs or hypotheses. People display this bias when they gather or remember information selectively, or when they interpret it in a biased way” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias).

parts of the plane (sections of fuselage, wings and tail, seats, luggage, etc.). Nor do most of the eyewitness testimonies from people who were inside the West Wing of the Pentagon when the attack occurred, or shortly thereafter, support the claim that a large airplane had entered the building; indeed, some flatly deny it.³⁸ Additionally, analysis by independent researchers has shown that a significant number of interior columns between the alleged entry point through the outer wall of the building and the C-Ring hole were not destroyed by the penetration of the alleged plane.³⁹

To save his favored theory, Wyndham must provide an explanation of how the plane progressed between the two endpoints of the claimed interior path without destroying the intervening columns. The solution he offers is that the plane disintegrated into small pieces upon collision with the columns without destroying them, passed around them, and continued as a “quasi-fluid flow” of debris with sufficient mass, momentum and concentration to punch out the circular C-Ring hole.⁴⁰ Most importantly, he fails to provide any physical arguments for the plausibility of this hypothesis on which his whole theory depends.

³⁸ David Ray Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor Revisited*, pp. 65-68

³⁹ This analysis is based on the official account provided in the *Pentagon Building Performance Report*, ASCE, p. 53. The fact that no path of destroyed columns was cleared by the “large plane” in its alleged penetration of the interior to the C-Ring is not contested by Wyndham.

⁴⁰ Wyndham has tasked himself with providing an explanation that sustains the claim that the C-Ring hole was caused by the penetration into the Pentagon of a large airliner, but avoids the incoherence and incredibility of the explanations provided by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other Pentagon spokespersons. As summarized by David Ray Griffin (*9/11 Ten Years Later*, p. 186), “Two days after 9/11, Donald Rumsfeld, appearing on ABC’s ‘Good Morning America,’ said:

[The plane] came in . . . between about the first and second floor And it went in through three rings. I’m told the nose [is] still in there, very close to the inner courtyard, about one ring away.

Two days later, Lee Evey, the program manager for the Pentagon Renovation Project, said at a Pentagon news briefing:

The plane actually penetrated through the . . . E ring, D ring, C ring. . . . The nose of the plane just barely broke through the inside of the C ring, so it was extending into A-E Drive a little bit.

However, the nose of a 757 is very fragile. It could not have gone through the outer (E ring) wall, with its steel-reinforced concrete, and then punched out a large hole in the C-ring wall, with its steel mesh and eight inches of brick.”

To be physically plausible, any such hypothesis, at a minimum, would have to be supported by various careful arguments concerning issues raised. Some of the necessary arguments would include the following:

- A quantitative estimate is needed for the mass of airplane debris for which there is photographic evidence. Does such debris come close to the total mass of an airliner, as required by the quasi-fluid hypothesis? If it is far less, then the hypothesis would be implausible. Such an estimate would require distinguishing between airplane debris and building debris. If that is not possible through photographic analysis, then some quantitative estimate of the relative proportions of the two types of debris would need to be made and supported by cogent argument.
- The hypothesized quasi-fluid needs to be evaluated quantitatively in terms of its available kinetic energy after punching through the outer wall and impacting the support columns.
- The presence of intervening columns would inevitably disrupt and divert the flow of such a quasi-fluid, requiring some physical explanation of how the debris “refocuses” to a uniform circular pattern beyond the columns (a serial process that would have to be repeated beyond each impacted column) instead of diverging outward in many directions.
- The impact of the hypothesized “refocused” quasi-fluid of debris against the C-Ring wall needs to be evaluated quantitatively in terms of its available kinetic energy to show that it would be sufficient to do the damage that occurred.
- An explanation is needed of how the quasi-fluid flow to the C-Ring hole can simultaneously cause severe damage to the Naval Command Center (NCC), the Army administrative area in Wedge 2, and the area in the A and B rings where deaths of Pentagon personnel occurred. Indeed, the NCC (the most highly-damaged interior portion of the Pentagon) and the Army administrative area (where the greatest number of deaths of Pentagon employees occurred) were both located off the line of propagation of the high-pressure flow hypothesized by Wyndham, and the death zone in the A and B rings was well beyond its terminus at the C-Ring hole. Furthermore, the “refocusing” of this flow is inconsistent with the high-angle lateral diversion of such a flow that would be required to significantly impact the NCC and Army administrative areas.

Wyndham, in calling for the application of scientific method to the Pentagon problem, would reasonably be expected to have attempted some such scientific analysis and argument to support his speculative physical hypothesis, but he did not. The lack of sufficiently broad explanatory applicability of the hypothesis to the damage observed at the NCC (Naval Command Center), Army administrative area and in the A and B rings renders it insufficient even for Wyndham’s own purposes, among which is his attempt to rule out the theory proposed by Barbara Honegger, according to which pre-placed internal explosives were a key part of the Pentagon attack as they were at the WTC.⁴¹

The NCC and Army administrative areas (as discussed above in the section “More Contextual Inferences ... *High Probabilities*”) from the broader contextual evidence, would have been key targets for those wishing to cover up evidence inside the Pentagon related to the 9/11 attacks or derived from investigations of missing Pentagon funds. As a result of this fact, it would have been logical for perpetrators of the staged attack on the Pentagon to use explosives to assure that these targeted areas were destroyed, and not to depend on the very unsure distribution of damage from an airplane impact. From airplane impact alone, expected damage to the NCC and Army administrative areas would have been minor, and insufficient for the likely purposes of the perpetrators. This circumstance argues for a “plane plus explosives” hypothesis, or only explosives, but not a “plane only” hypothesis. However, these important considerations of context are never mentioned by Wyndham.

Other Weaknesses of Wyndham’s Analysis: There are additional weaknesses in Wyndham’s paper. A subset of these can only be treated very briefly here.

Wyndham ignores or distorts evidence that does not support the “large plane” theory. For example, he claims that the damage to the façade of the West Wing, which was visible in photos taken before the subsequent collapse of the area, matches his expectation of the damage that would be caused by a 757-like airliner crashing into the building at high speed. However, such an aircraft’s tail, approximately 40 feet high, would have damaged the building well above the second floor. To have penetrated into the building it would have had to destroy not only the outer wall and windows above the second floor, but the floor structures as well. But the floor structure separating the first and second floors is visible and unbreached in the photos, and the wall and even windows above the second floor are essentially undamaged. The absence of any evidence for the damage the tail would have caused argues against his theory of a large plane impact. Wyndham completely fails to address the issue of the “missing tail” for his theory.

Wyndham distorts the evidence that he advances to support his case for collisions of the “large plane’s” right and left engines into a generator trailer and a low concrete structure, respectively, as the nose of the plane crashed into the official account’s impact point at Column 14. Detailed analysis of the photographic evidence indicates that the two objects were much closer together than the distance between the two engines of such an aircraft, and that the lateral distance between Column 14 and the generator trailer for a plane approaching on Wyndham’s hypothesized flight path is far greater (about 100 feet) than the distance between the fuselage and the engine (about 25 feet).⁴²

⁴¹ Evidence of Explosives at the Pentagon," in *The 9/11 Toronto Hearings Report: International Hearings on the Events of September 11, 2001*, ed. J. Gourley, International Center for 9/11 Studies (www.ic911studies.org), p. 245-269

⁴² Evidence of Explosives at the Pentagon," in *The 9/11 Toronto Hearings Report: International Hearings on the Events of September 11, 2001*, ed. J. Gourley, International Center for 9/11 Studies (www.ic911studies.org), p. 245-269

Additionally, Wyndham relies on the officially-released flight data recorder (FDR) for various arguments (including estimations of the degree of banking and the high speed of the plane), but admits that the FDR may not be from AA77, suggesting that it might be from a different Boeing 757 instead. Thus he admits that the FDR provided by the government may not be what the government claims it is, but he nevertheless treats the FDR's "information" as trustworthy. Further, Wyndham notes that the FDR was "found" at two widely-separated locations according to two different "official" accounts, but does not discuss the significance of such an impossibility for the credibility of the "data" provided. Finally, Wyndham neither points out nor reflects upon another crucial contradiction in the official account of the FDR: the official time of creation of the forensic data file containing the digital readout purportedly from the FDR was *at least four hours before* the official times of discovery of the black box at either of the two locations.⁴³

Wyndham has great difficulty dismissing the significance of the evidence for stopped clocks inside the Pentagon and the heliport tower at significantly earlier times (from about 9:30 to 9:32:30 AM) than the official impact time of 9:37:46 AM provided by the FDR.⁴⁴ Because he is advocating a theory that relies on the officially-sanctioned FDR "data" for much of its support, and is simultaneously trying to play down the significance of evidence for explosive events unrelated to the impact of a "large plane," he is twice forced to the untenable suggestion that the official time of impact is due to a 5+ minute error on the FDR clock. But again, this "error" in the "data" supplied by the FDR is not considered by Wyndham as an indicator that the FDR is unreliable. Nor does he deal with the fact that this FDR-based official time was, according to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, confirmed by radar data, and thus cannot be the result of a clock error.⁴⁵

⁴³ Aidan Monaghan, "Pentagon 9/11 Flight 'Black Box' Data File Created Before Actual 'Black Box' Was Recovered?" 18 May 2008 (<http://www.911blogger.com/news/2008-05-18/pentagon-911-flight-black-box-data-file-created-actual-black-box-was-recovered>).

⁴⁴ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 96, citing as its source the National Transportation Safety Board, "Flight Path Study-American Airlines Flight 77," Feb. 19, 2002, available at (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB196/doc02.pdf>). The NTSB report lists its sources as FDR data "as well as radar data from the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Route Traffic Control Centers, approach control at Washington Dulles Airport, and the U.S. Air Force's 84th Radar Evaluation Squadron" (p.1).

⁴⁵ Barbara Honegger has presented substantial evidence for major, separable events at the Pentagon in the time frame from 9:30 to 9:34 am (Evidence of Explosives at the Pentagon," in *The 9/11 Toronto Hearings Report: International Hearings on the Events of September 11, 2001*, ed. J. Gourley, International Center for 9/11 Studies [www.ic911studies.org], p. 245-269). As a representative sample of these, the heliport clock was stopped at precisely 9:32:30 am, a clock within the Navy area of the Pentagon was stopped at 9:31:39 am, and April Gallop's wristwatch (she was located in the Army administrative area) was stopped at 9:30 am. These times are very possibly indicators of distinct events. Even if we allow a 5+ minute adjustment for the FDR

Summary and Conclusion

A broad-based analysis is needed to understand the Pentagon events – an analysis that is based on the full range of available evidence and therefore cannot be exclusively scientific in a narrow sense. This is especially important due to the fact that physical, quantifiable evidence is extremely limited, while there are multiple related events and information that can contribute helpfully to addressing (and providing context for) the problem. Thus, we have emphasized the superiority of a systematic contextual approach that builds effectively on such related information, and the need to treat the limited available evidence within its associated context. Further, we have emphasized the need to leverage the best established results, including attention to the likely means, opportunities, and motives of perpetrators.

Finally, we have argued for greater care with analyses that depend heavily on eyewitness observations, and emphasized the ongoing need to model and better quantify associated scientific hypotheses, preferably in ways that enable both clear tests between alternatives and metrics for confirmation or falsification. Only by such careful methodology can 9/11 research be adequately evidence-based — in contrast to the advocacy-based approach, afflicted by confirmation bias, that adversely affects almost all expositions of the official conspiracy theory.

We join David Ray Griffin in the hope that future research on the deadly events at the Pentagon will build on the robust case already established *against the official account of 9/11*, all major dimensions of which have now been demonstrated to be clearly false. For agreement concerning the issue of “what hit the Pentagon” to be reached, deeper analysis of the whole range of evidence will be needed. The best way to do this is to apply our various capabilities where they are most effective, and not divert them into narrowly-conceived battles over secondary issues. We invite further thoughtful and open dialogue on the historic events at the Pentagon on 9/11.

clock, it is not clear how a single impact event could explain these different stopped clock times, especially in combination with their quite separated locations (e.g., the heliport clock was located far away from the alleged impact zone favored by Wyndham’s version of the “large plane theory”).