

I wrote this about 4 years ago:

We were in a canoe paddling towards the middle of the lake. The sky and water was blue as the blue in a Maxfield Parrish painting. I looked down and it seemed I could see forever into the depths of the lake. And I wondered ... What would it be like to lose something ... Something of great value ... Right here in the middle of the lake? What would it be like if my wedding band slipped off my finger into the lake?

It would be lost the moment it hit the water.

Even if I immediately dove in after the ring it would sink faster and deeper than I could swim. But I would be able to clearly see it as it sank ... for a long time. That's the terrible part. To see it fall away with absolute clarity ... sunlight glinting off the gold as it rapidly receded farther and further into the depths ... finally passing deeper than light can penetrate ... and then ... wink out of existence.

Lost.

As we paddled back to shore a small wave of sadness hit. Not about the hypothetical loss of a ring ... but about all the things we've lost ... clearly lost ... things that are quickly receding into an irrevocable irretrievable past.

Yeah. Those are the kinds of happy bunny thoughts I have when we're on vacation. Imagine what's banging around inside my head when I'm stuck in my room reading the news.

What triggered the hypothetical loss of my ring while paddling my wife and son across Lake Crescent was thinking about the then upcoming 47th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's murder. Again ... who thinks about assassinations in the middle of Nature's Grandeur? And why?

To set the record straight ... I was thinking about all kinds of things while we were out on the lake. My mind was drifting around just like the canoe. The stuff that bubbled up to the top wasn't in any order. I hadn't been dwelling on anything in particular that morning. So why did Kennedy's murder pop up at all?

Because it's "down there" that's why. All sorts of things are.

In the mid-morning of Friday, November 22, 1963, my seventh grade class had just returned from the auditorium where our class pictures had been taken. The teacher, a super-strict Dominican nun, was trying to get us back into our desks so the day's routine would get back onto her inflexible timetable. The classroom door opened and another nun swooped into the room and began furiously whispering to our teacher. They both turned to the class and my teacher told us she had to leave for a moment and we were to fold our hands upon our desks

and sit quietly until she returned. They both left and nobody dared to sit un-quietly. No one wanted to tap into the wrath of Nun-zilla. She had two modes: simmering tolerance and Vesuvius. We had all learned to follow her dictates if we didn't want to end up like the crispy denizens of ancient Pompeii. Some nuns were quick to slash with the wicked end of a rapier-like ruler. Others could have benefited from mandatory anger management courses. But my seventh grade teacher should have been shot with a tranquilizer gun, chained to the wall, and exorcised.

She returned with the janitor pushing a television bolted to a rolling metal cabinet. He plugged it in, turned it on, adjusted the rabbit ears, and turned the channel selector to Seattle's CBS affiliate just in time to hear Walter Cronkite announce that JFK had died. School was dismissed early that Friday.

We all went home in a state of shock. The world had changed and no one knew what the new world was going to be like. Everything looked the same but there were new rules in this new world. The President of The United States, supposedly one of the most protected men in the world, could be killed by a "lone nut" warehouse worker who made \$1.25/hr.

My family spent the rest of Friday and all day Saturday in front of our black and white Zenith television set. The "regularly scheduled programs" were preempted by the assassination story. The President went to Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald killed him. The President went to Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald killed him. The President went to Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald killed him.

We watched the same story over and over again until it was completely and absolutely indelibly etched into our brains. The President went to Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald killed him.

My parents made my sister and I go to church on Sunday. We returned home just in time to watch Jack Ruby murder Lee Harvey Oswald on live television.

I don't know the precise terms describing the psychological processes that occur when people experience a fundamental shock to their understanding of reality, and then just when they're beginning to recover from the first shock ... another shock drives them to their knees. I don't know what it's called. I just know what it feels like. So do millions of Americans who repeatedly relived The Assassination of The President story, and then the Assassination of the Assassin story.

After we watched the story, we wanted to know How Could This Happen? We needed to know How Could This Happen? We needed this New Reality to be explained to us so we would know how to go forward in this new world. President Lyndon B. Johnson established The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy on November 29, 1963. The commission's 889-page final report was presented to President Johnson on September 24, 1964 and made public three days later.

The Commission's findings became the establishment's official version of The Story: The President went to Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald killed him.

Two years later Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment* was published and was the first book to challenge The Official Story. Since then over 2,000 books have been written about the JFK assassination. Some of these "conspiracy theories" go to absolutely unbelievable lengths to stretch the theory to fit the known facts.

The most outlandish of the bunch involved moving one of Kennedy's wounds two or three inches from his back to his neck. And then the rest of the theory's arguments are completely dependent upon the existence of a magic bullet. Here's a tip. You should know your theory's in big trouble when you need to fake the data and come up with a magic bullet to make it work. The problem is ... that's the Official Story.

Warren Commission member Congressman Gerald Ford edited a key sentence of the report about where a bullet entered John F. Kennedy's body. If the bullet had hit Kennedy in the back, it could not have struck Governor Connolly in the way the Commission said it did. So Ford rewrote the sentence, moved the wound up to Kennedy's neck, and made possible Warren Commission staffer Arlen Specter's Magic Bullet: the bullet that caused all the wounds to the Governor and the non-fatal wounds to the President. Seven entry/exit wounds in total. The Commission needed that magic bullet. If all of the injuries had not been caused by only one bullet, the assassination could not plausibly have been carried out by only one gunman. The Official Story needed a lie, and a Magic Bullet, to eliminate the possibility of a conspiracy to murder John Kennedy.

The trauma of November 1963 has never been properly resolved in our national consciousness. We needed the truth from our government. Because without it, our doubt and fears await in the dark, emerging unbidden at any time - starting awake at three o'clock in the morning or in a canoe in the middle of a lake under an azure sky of deepest summer, because it's been "down there" unresolved for over 50 years.

There are fewer and fewer Americans who can say where they were the day President Kennedy was murdered. In fact, only about a third of America's current population was alive on that day in 1963 -- and less than 30 percent might actually remember. But I believe, as William Faulkner said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

I don't like to say "9/11." I don't like the "shorthand" feel of it. To condense everything that happened into a number, a slash, and two more numbers seems to disrespect the horror of it all.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. After two hours of bombing, 18 U.S. ships had either been sunk or damaged, 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed, and 2,403 U.S. military personnel and civilians were killed. The American response was to declare war upon the Empire of Japan the next day.

The attacks that occurred on 9/11 killed 2,996 people. We saw the towers collapse in New York, the Pentagon burning, and the wreckage in a field in Pennsylvania. The American response

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was to declare War on Terror.

In 1941 the U.S. was at war against the Axis powers - Germany, Japan and Italy. In 2001, the U.S. was at war against what? Fear? ... Violence? The War on Terror became anything the government said it was.

The sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and the German and Italian declarations of war were the reasons the U.S. went to war. But 9/11 wasn't the reason ... it was the excuse the government used to transmogrify the country into a full-blown fascist state.

The U.S. Government and The MainStream Media capitalized on the events of 9/11 to create fear. Everything we saw and heard fed The Fear. There was no going back. The pre-9/11 world didn't exist anymore. We could only go forward into this new land founded upon fear. Our leaders excelled at whipping up The Fear at every opportunity. Millions of Americans gave up everything for security from fear. But all they really did was ... give up everything.

Thirteen years ago on September 11th a guy I know in Florida called me up way too early in the morning and told me to turn on the television. One of the World Trade Center towers was burning. And then a passenger jet crashed into the other tower. And then another passenger jet crashed into the Pentagon. And then there was news of another jet crashing into a field in Pennsylvania.

My wife had already left for work and when I finally reached her, I told her to head back home. I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know if there were going to be more attacks or where they might happen.

I remembered to start stuffing tapes in the VCR and record everything. When disasters occur I've noticed it's best to get a record of what everybody's saying at the moment before the Official Story comes down. By that evening it was official. Osama bin Laden, founder of the Wahhabi extremist militant organization al-Qaeda, was responsible for the attacks.

Who the hell was Osama bin Laden? What was al-Qaeda?

On September 23, 2001, two weeks after 9/11, Secretary of State Colin Powell, spoke to Tim Russert on Meet the Press:

RUSSET: Will you release publicly a white paper which links him [bin Laden] and his organization to this attack to put people at ease?

POWELL: We are hard at work bringing all the information together, intelligence information, law enforcement information. And I think in the near future we will be able to put out a paper, a document that will describe quite clearly the evidence that we have linking him to this attack.

From GlobalResearch.ca:

Powell reversed himself, however, at a press conference with President Bush in the White

House Rose Garden the next morning, saying that, although the government had information that left no question of bin Laden's responsibility, "most of it is classified." According to Seymour Hersh, citing officials from both the CIA and the Department of Justice, the real reason for the reversal was a "lack of solid information."

This was the week that Bush, after demanding that the Taliban turn over bin Laden, refused their request for evidence that bin Laden had been behind the attacks. A senior Taliban official, after the US attack on Afghanistan had begun, said: "We have asked for proof of Osama's involvement, but they have refused. Why?" Hersh's answer was that they had no proof.

Without showing the American people proof of bin Laden's guilt, the U.S. government launched the war against Afghanistan on October 7, 2001.

And then ... there was this word ... a word I had never heard or read any American politician ever using. On the night of September 20, 2001, George W. Bush spoke to a joint session of Congress, and uttered a word that made me instinctively recoil.

Homeland.

After Bush announced he had created an Office of Homeland Security, everyone in the Bush Administration started using "Homeland" when referring to the United States.

As blogger James A. Bartlett wrote, "The word "homeland" had a strange ring, like a false note in a piece of music. It didn't sound right. ... And it's not just the politicians. I have been trying to recall a previous instance in which I've heard an American--any American--use the term "homeland" to refer to the United States of America. And I can't."

When Bush said "Homeland," he sounded like a fake Texan trying to sound like a Nazi. It seemed to me the Bush/Cheney regime was trying to jumpstart Patriotism and Nationalism in traumatized Americans in a Nazi-resonating way. Regardless of how repellant the word was ... it's now in our lexicon.

Seven days after the Kennedy assassination, President Johnson established the Warren Commission. The president needed to show the American people a serious investigation into how this tragedy happened. Regardless of the outcome, it was a public relations move that had to be made to ease the fears of a traumatized nation. The Bush/Cheney Regime however had no interest in allaying the nation's fears. They were in the fear creation business.

An investigation of the attacks on 9/11 - arguably the most catastrophic U.S. military and intelligence failure in American history - was stonewalled by the Bush/Cheney Regime for over a year. Unlike Presidents Roosevelt and Johnson, Bush opposed an independent commission inquiry into the national disaster that occurred on his watch.

As CBS News reported, "President Bush took a few minutes during his trip to Europe ... to voice his opposition to establishing a special commission to probe how the government dealt with terror warnings before Sept. 11."

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The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, known as the 9/11 Commission, was established by President George W. Bush and the United States Congress on November 27, 2002, 442 days after deadliest terrorist attacks on American soil.

From the Center for American Progress:

The White House has done everything it can to stall, impede and block the commission from doing its vital work.

WHITE HOUSE OPPOSED FORMATION OF COMMISSION: President Bush and Vice President Cheney both contacted then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle in the months after 9/11 to insist on strict limits in the scope of any investigation into the attacks. And despite entreaties from the families of victims of 9/11 attacks and a bipartisan group of senators and congressmen, the president vocally resisted forming an investigatory commission. President Bush only relented on November 27, 2002, a year after the attacks.

While President Bush and Vice President Cheney did ultimately agree to testify, they did so only under these conditions:

They would be allowed to testify jointly;

They would not be required to take an oath before testifying;

The testimony would not be recorded electronically or transcribed, and the only record would be notes taken by one of the commission staffers;

The notes would not be made public.

9/11 was the excuse the Bush/Cheney regime used to go to war twice, and shred The Constitution. But they never wanted an investigation into what happened that day. I don't even know why the Bush Administration worried, because the 9/11 Commission was set up to fail.

From Wikipedia:

"The two co-chairs of the Commission, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, believe that the government established the Commission in a way that ensured that it would fail. In their book *Without Precedent: The Inside Story of the 9/11 Commission* describing their experience serving, Hamilton listed a number of reasons for reaching this conclusion, including: the late establishment of the Commission and the very short deadline imposed on its work; the insufficient funds (3 million dollars), initially allocated for conducting such an extensive investigation (later the Commission requested additional funds but received only a fraction of the funds requested and the chairs still felt hamstrung); the many politicians who opposed the establishment of the Commission; the continuing resistance and opposition to the work of the Commission by many politicians, particularly those who did not wish to be blamed for any of

what happened; the deception of the Commission by various key government agencies, including the Department of Defense, NORAD and the FAA; and, the denial of access by various agencies to documents and witnesses. "So there were all kinds of reasons we thought we were set up to fail."

Let's get this - as Nixon would say - Perfectly Clear.

The Bush/Cheney Regime did not want an investigation into the worst thing that had ever happened on U.S. soil since the Civil War. The 9/11 Commission didn't have enough time, money or cooperation. They were lied to by various key government agencies, and they didn't have access to all relevant documents and witnesses.

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

This is the process that resulted in The Official Story of 9/11? And if you don't swallow whole The Official Story ... You are labeled a Conspiracy Nut!

Then and now ... I still can't believe we let them get away with it. What was even more amazing to me was the response from progressive journalists and historians about the vast number of anomalies that make up the Official Story of 9/11.

Matt Taibbi has written extensively on the financial scandals that devastated economies around the world. Taibbi maintains that "all of us, conservatives and progressives, are being bled dry by a tiny oligarchy of extremely clever criminals and their castrato henchmen in government."

Taibbi has built a career out of exposing Wall Street's lies. But for some reason the government's lies about 9/11 aren't compelling enough for him to investigate them. He wrote in an email exchange, "Of course we've been lied to about 9/11. Governments lie about everything. But that's a long way from complicity in the attacks."

Of course lying doesn't equal complicity. But lying about something as important as 9/11 warrants an investigation doesn't it? If only to rule out complicity.

Chris Hedges has said regarding 9/11, "I don't know we were lied to."

Noam Chomsky thinks the 9/11 Truth Movement is, "... diverting activism and commitment away from the very serious ongoing crimes of state."

One of the only writers I've found that took the 9/11 anomalies seriously is Pepe Escobar. His article, Fifty questions on 9/11, published on September 11, 2009 in the Asian Times should have convinced other investigative journalists to look further into 9/11. But that was five years ago. The events of 9/11 are falling into a sepia tinted past where nothing more is known because The Official Story becomes history and turns to stone.

I don't care about the melting point of steel, why Bush continued to read The Pet Goat, or if Dick Cheney personally ordered United Airlines Flight 93 shot out of the sky over Pennsylvania. I

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have a notion that has been impossible to shake for the last 13 years. We've been blasted into another dimension where every effing thing the government has done that has turned The United States away from any semblance of what it used to be started the day after 9/11. That's why 9/11 is important.

John Kennedy was murdered over 50 years ago. Planes crashed into The Twin Towers and The Pentagon 13 years ago. Those things happened, we were never told the truth about them, so they stay unquiet in the dark. Sometimes the feeling of loss I have when I think about them is compounded with the thought:

It's not that the truth will never be known ... it's that if it is ... it won't make any difference.

The men who killed Kennedy and the architects of the 9/11 attacks took the world to where we, the survivors, still live. Cui bono? To whose benefit?

As Chomsky wrote, " ... in one of my first interviews after 9/11 I pointed out the obvious: every power system in the world was going to exploit it for its own interests: the Russians in Chechnya, China against the Uighurs, Israel in the occupied territories,... etc., and states would exploit the opportunity to control their own populations more fully through "prevention of terrorism acts" and the like. By the "who gains" argument, every power system in the world could be assigned responsibility for 9/11."

By writing that, Chomsky effectively diffuses and deflates any motivation to pursue the truth about 9/11. There is no point to investigate further if every power system in the world could be assigned responsibility for 9/11. The problem becomes too large for any of us to attempt to solve.

And then I have another thought. I have heard the same thing regarding Kennedy's murder and 9/11:

We will never know The Truth.

That's absolutely true. But if I can add this somewhat optimistic thought:

We Know Enough.

We know from the cast of characters who lied. We know who the people were who drove the country into illegal wars. We know who were responsible for transforming the country into a grotesque parody of democracy.

We Know Enough.

And we all know what the next question is:

Do we have the courage to ask it?