

A Critical Review of Morgan Reynolds' *Why Did the Trade Center Skyscrapers Collapse?*

by Jim Hoffman

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The article [Why Did the Trade Center Skyscrapers Collapse?](#) published on the libertarian-oriented website LewRockwell.com, has garnered considerable attention. It makes the case for the controlled demolition of the Twin Towers and Building 7 with much the same eloquence as David Ray Griffin, whom it cites. Its author, Morgan Reynolds, brings unprecedented credentials to the community of skeptics of the official story: He is professor emeritus at Texas A&M University, former director of the Criminal Justice Center at the National Center for Policy Analysis, and former chief economist for the US Labor Department during 2001-2002.

Reynolds provides an excellent summary of evidence for the controlled demolition of the WTC skyscrapers. However, he also devotes about a third of his article to supporting the dubious idea that neither the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, nor the field in Shanksville, PA were the sites of the crashes of the jetliners commandeered on 9/11/01. His article thus weds the thesis of controlled demolition of the skyscrapers with the denial that Flights 11, 175, 77, and 93 crashed where reported. This is unfortunate because it functions to discredit the case for demolition by associating it with ideas that lack scientific merit, are easily debunked, and are inherently offensive to the victims of the attack -- especially the survivors of the passengers and crews of the crashed flights.

The role of disinformation in undermining the exposure of the facts of the 9/11 attack -- the subject of the [information warfare](#) section of 911Review.com -- is appreciated by few in the 911 Truth Movement itself. Indeed most sincere researchers of the attack have been fooled, at least temporarily, by some of the many hoaxes that have been promoted under the guise of truth exposure. Reynolds, a relative newcomer to the skepticism of the basic tenets of the official story, is likely no exception. I can imagine several reasons he might give the no-jetliners theories so much credence.

- The no-jetliners theories have been pervasive in every forum of the 9/11 investigations since 2002, when Thierry Meyssan popularized the no-Pentagon-plane theory. These theories have persuasive advocates and noisy promoters who drown out criticism.
- Several aspects of the jetliner crashes, such as the paucity of visible aircraft debris, are apt to arouse skeptics' suspicions because they run counter to conventional intuitions about crashes. Not being a physical scientist, Reynolds may lack the

informed intuition and understanding of physics required to correctly interpret the evidence in these unusual crashes.

- Given the number of outrageous lies in the official story, the recognition of some of these lies inclines many skeptics to reject all its aspects. This tendency has been amplified by officials' suppression of evidence that could quickly put to rest speculation of the no-jetliners variety.

In the remainder of this essay, I separate Reynolds' case for the controlled demolition of the WTC skyscrapers from his case for the non-involvement of jetliners in the crashes, highlighting errors in both. Whereas Reynolds accurately articulates the evidence for controlled demolition, he makes a series of flawed arguments to support the no-jetliners theories.

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Reynolds' Summary of Demolition Evidence

Reynolds opens his article by disparaging the explanation of the collapses of WTC 1, 2, and 7 by *mainstream experts* as "about as satisfying as the fantastic conspiracy theory that '19 young Arabs acting at the behest of Islamist extremists headquartered in distant Afghanistan' caused 9/11," and proceeds to undermine the conventional wisdom that the towers were severely damaged by the plane impacts, noting pre-collapse photographic evidence, and aspects of the towers' engineering such as their [massive core structures](#). I review his opening arguments [below](#), but I first review the persuasive case he makes for controlled demolition in the latter part of his article.

The latter two-fifths of Reynolds' article contains three bulleted lists summarizing the case against the theory of fire-induced collapse and for the theory of controlled demolition. The second list, which notes problems with the official collapse explanations, and the third list, which enumerates the collapse features indicating demolition, are treated in the next two sections. These are more persuasive than the first list, which attacks the idea that the fires in the Twin Towers were severe.



Given the strength of arguments against the fire-induced total collapse of steel-framed buildings *regardless of fire severity*, quibbling about the fires functions as a distraction, and errors in assessing the fires' extent add to the distraction. Reynolds minimizes the severity of the North Tower's fires citing photographs of the tower's north side early in the event, but [photographs from the south side](#) shortly after the South Tower crash, and photographs after the South Tower collapse show extensive regions of fire.

Although fires in the towers probably diminished a few minutes after the impacts as the jet fuel burned off, the North Tower fires clearly grew later on, apparently becoming the most severe after the South Tower's collapse.

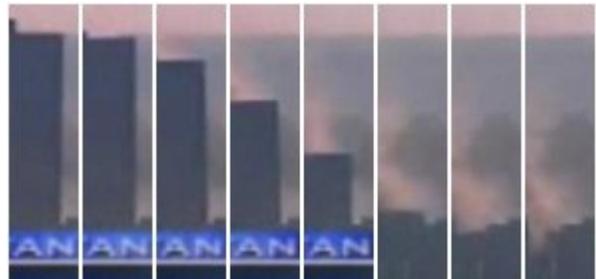
Defects in the Official Account

Reynolds attributes his list of "primary defects in the official account of the WTC collapses" to David Griffin. It addresses the implausibility that fires and crash damage could have been the cause of the total collapses of the three skyscrapers.

Griffin ([*The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*] pp. 25-7) succinctly identifies the primary defects in the official account of the WTC collapses, and its sister theories. These problems were entirely ignored by *The 9/11 Commission Report* (2004), so the government appointees must have found it difficult to account for the following facts:

1. Fire had never before caused steel-frame buildings to collapse except for the three buildings on 9/11, nor has fire collapsed any steel high rise since 9/11.
2. The fires, especially in the South Tower and WTC-7, were small.
3. WTC-7 was unharmed by an airplane and had only minor fires on the seventh and twelfth floors of this 47-story steel building yet it collapsed in less than 10 seconds.
4. WTC-5 and WTC-6 had raging fires but did not collapse despite much thinner steel beams ([*Painful Questions*] pp. 68-9).
5. In a PBS documentary, Larry Silverstein, the WTC lease-holder, recalled talking to the fire department commander on 9/11 about WTC-7 and said, "... maybe the smartest thing to do is pull it," slang for demolish it.
6. FEMA, given the uninviting task of explaining the collapse of Building 7 with mention of demolition *verboden*, admitted that the best it could come up with had "only a low probability of occurrence."
7. It's difficult if not impossible for hydrocarbon fires like those fed by jet fuel (kerosene) to raise the temperature of steel close to melting.

Point 3 understates the near free-fall rapidity of Building 7's collapse. Examination of the [CBS video](#) shows that, ignoring the penthouse, the building collapsed entirely in under 7 seconds. An brick dropped from the height of the building's roof through a vacuum would have taken 5.9 seconds to reach the ground. Clearly, the structure of this building had been shattered to remove nearly all the resistance to its collapse.



This photo-montage from the book [Waking Up From Our Nightmare](#) quantifies the rate of Building 7's collapse. "The slices are separated by one-second intervals. The distance from the top of the intact building to the top of the logo is about 400 feet."

Point 7 is incorrect, because blast furnaces do use hydrocarbon fires to melt steel. However, blast furnaces are fundamentally different from building fires, because blast furnaces pressurize and/or preheat the air and mix it with fuel in the optimal ratio before combustion. Lacking pre-heating and pressurization, it is difficult to achieve flame temperatures much above 800°C, far below the over-1500°C melting points of most steel.

More important, the inability of such fires to melt steel is a red herring, because the officially endorsed explanation of the collapses blames the softening, not the melting, of the structural steel. *Scientific American* [falsely accused 911Research](#) of using the *no melted steel ... no collapses* straw man argument, when in fact 911Research has long debunked both versions of the official story:

- The [column failure theory](#)

- The [truss failure theory](#)

Professional Demolition

Then Reynolds notes that "professional demolition" can explain all of these facts ignored by the official account, as well as 11 features of the collapses that the official account cannot begin to explain.

Professional demolition, by contrast, can explain all of these facts and more. Demolition means placing explosives throughout a building, and detonating them in sequence to weaken "the structure so it collapses or folds in upon itself" ([*Demolition: The Art of Demolishing, Dismantling, Imploding, Toppling and Razing*] p. 44). In conventional demolitions gravity does most of the work, although it probably did a minority on 9/11, so heavily were the towers honeycombed with explosives.

1. Each WTC building collapse occurred at virtually free-fall speed (approximately 10 seconds or less).
2. Each building collapsed, for the most part, into its own footprint.
3. Virtually all the concrete (an estimated 100,000 tons in each tower) on every floor was pulverized into a very fine dust, a phenomenon that requires enormous energy and could not be caused by gravity alone ("...workers can't even find concrete. 'It's all dust,' [the official] said").
4. Dust exploded horizontally for a couple hundred feet, as did debris, at the beginning of each tower's collapse.
5. Collapses were total, leaving none of the massive core columns sticking up hundreds of feet into the air.
6. Salvage experts were amazed at how small the debris stacks were.
7. The steel beams and columns came down in sections under 30 feet long and had no signs of "softening"; there was little left but shorn sections of steel and a few bits of concrete.
8. Photos and videos of the collapses all show "demolition waves," meaning "confluent rows of small explosions" along floors (blast sequences).
9. According to many witnesses, explosions occurred within the buildings.
10. Each collapse had detectable seismic vibrations suggestive of underground explosions, similar to the 2.3 earthquake magnitude from a demolition like the Seattle Kingdome ([*Demolition: The Art of Demolishing ...*] p. 108).
11. Each collapse produced molten steel identical to that generated by explosives, resulting in "hot spots" that persisted for months (the two hottest spots at WTC-2 and WTC-7 were approximately 1,350^o F five days after being continuously flooded with water, a temperature high enough to melt aluminum ([*Painful Questions*] p. 70).



This photograph was taken about 10 seconds after the South Tower's top started to fall. By that time, only about half of the tower had been destroyed.

This generally accurate description of the characteristics of the collapses has a few errors. Point 1 repeats the mistaken estimate that the total collapse times of the Twin Towers were about or under 10 seconds, when video recordings show that each collapse took approximately 15 seconds. See, for example, this [elapsed time analysis](#) of the North Tower collapse. This rate is still much too fast to be explained by a gravity-driven collapse given that the descending rubble would have to crush and accelerate almost 1000 feet of vertical intact structure. It is especially revealing that each tower disappeared at about the same rate as the rubble fell through the air, as if the tower's structure provided no more resistance to the descent of rubble than did air. The similar rates of descent of rubble inside and outside the profile of the North Tower is readily apparent in photographs showing the descending [rubble cloud's flat top](#) at about 8 seconds into its collapse.

Point 10 echoes a widely copied error that seismic spikes indicate explosive detonations, when the evidence shows that the largest seismic disturbances were caused by the ground impact of falling rubble. Since the Twin Towers were destroyed from the top down, in each case it took about 10 to 15 seconds from the onset of collapse for the rubble to reach the ground. That rubble consisted of hundreds of thousands of tons of material, much of it having fallen from over 1000 feet, and would have dwarfed ground shaking caused by even large explosions. [Timing analysis](#) confirms that the large seismic signals were caused by the impact of falling rubble.

Floor Trusses, FEMA, and Eagar

The first part of Reynolds' article provides some details on the engineering of the Twin Towers and analysis of the damage to them by the plane crashes. He cites photographs of pre-collapse damage to note that the towers were motionless, and showed no signs of column buckling.

Though Reynolds' description of the Tower's construction is generally accurate, he repeats an apparent error made by the anonymous author of the first comprehensive critique of FEMA's *World Trade Center Building Performance Study*, suggesting that [web trusses were not the primary support structures](#) undergirding most floors. There is evidence that [solid I-beam framing supported the mechanical](#)



[equipment floors](#), and I-beams were clearly integral to the flooring systems inside the core structures, but the suggestion that typical floor diaphragms were supported by I-beams instead of web trusses is highly questionable. What is clear is that truss-failure-theory proponents such as Eagar have [misrepresented the floors' construction](#) by:

- Omitting the perpendicular cross-trusses.
- Ignoring the fact that the trusses were attached to the corrugated steel floor pans.
- Misrepresenting the attachments of the trusses to the columns as "angle clips."



The upper photograph shows a row of floor trusses, and the lower photograph shows the steel shelves on which they rested. Eagar's description of these as "angle clips" is a gross misnomer.

Reynolds relates some salient points about FEMA's investigation, noting:

The criminal code requires that crime scene evidence be saved for forensic analysis but [FEMA](#) had it destroyed before anyone could seriously investigate it. FEMA was in position to take command because it had arrived the day before the attacks at New York's Pier 29 to conduct a war game exercise, "Tripod II," quite a coincidence. The authorities apparently considered the rubble [quite valuable](#): New York City officials had every debris truck tracked on GPS and had one truck driver who took an unauthorized 1 1/2 hour lunch fired.

Reynolds' Analysis of the Plane Crashes

Reynolds quietly transitions from discussing problems with NIST's collapse theory to a block of nine paragraphs arguing against the involvement of Flights 11, 175, 77, and 93 in the crashes at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the field in Pennsylvania. He starts with the North Tower impact hole.

North Tower Hole Column Deflection

About a dozen of the fragmented ends of exterior columns in the North Tower hole were bent but the bends faced the "wrong way" because they pointed toward the outside of the Tower. This fact is troublesome for the official theory that a plane crash created the hole and subsequent explosion between floors 94 and 98. The laws of physics imply that a high-speed airplane with fuel-filled wings breaking through thin perimeter columns would deflect the shattered ends of the columns inward, if deflected in any direction, certainly not bend them outward toward the exterior.

This statement apparently reflects a misinterpretation of photographs of the North Tower impact hole, such as the one to the right. That shows what appear to be outward-bent columns in the upper-right corner. However, the steel columns were covered by thin aluminum cladding, and it is only the aluminum cladding that is deflected outward. The steel columns, which are darker and slightly narrower than the aluminum cladding, are either straight or bent inward.



This photograph, like [others showing the towers' impact holes](#) does not show outward-bent steel columns, only outward-bent aluminum cladding.

Reynolds then describes and dismisses a hypothesis that exploding jet fuel bent the columns outward. Indeed, exploding jet fuel would be very unlikely to bend the steel columns, but it is an entirely plausible explanation for the observed outward deflection of some of the aluminum cladding.

Reynolds proposes that the North Tower impact hole was created by shaped charges rather than a plane impact.

Also supporting this theory is the fact that the uniformly neat ends of the blown perimeter columns are consistent with the linear shaped charges demolition experts use to slice steel as thick as 10 inches. The hypothesis of linear shaped charges also explains the perfectly formed crosses found in the rubble (crucifix-shaped fragments of core column structures), as well as the rather-neatly shorn steel everywhere.

This passage mixes up two entirely distinct issues: what produced the North Tower's impact hole, and what brought the tower down 102 minutes later. The suggestion that shaped charges created the impact hole is a non-starter for several reasons:

- The aircraft that the "fireman's video" captured flying into the North Tower had the dimensions of a 767. Are we to believe that hundreds of shaped charges were placed in the perimeter columns to exactly match the impact position and profile of the aircraft, and then detonated at the exact instant that the plane entered the building?
- The broken column ends are not particularly "neat" but are severed where the plane penetrated the building at over 400 mph.

Pentagon Hole Size

The engineering establishment's theory has further difficulties. It is well-known that the hole in the west wing of the Pentagon, less than 18-foot diameter, was too small to accommodate a Boeing 757,

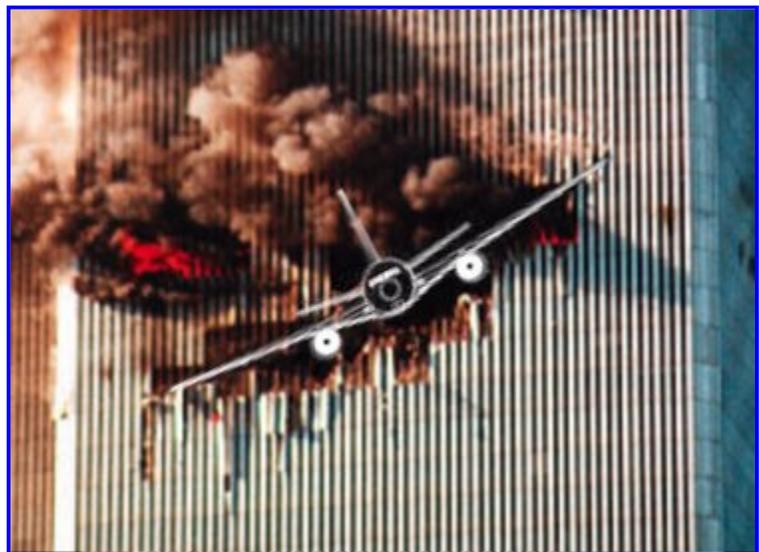
The 18-foot diameter figure for the "hole in the west wing" is wildly inaccurate because it ignores the 90-foot-wide expanse of breached walls on the first floor. It's true that the puncture in the second floor was about 18 feet wide, which would have accommodated the upper section of a 757's fuselage. For an analysis of the actual dimensions of the impact hole in the Pentagon's facade, see: [ERROR: The Pentagon Attack Left Only a Small Impact Hole.](#)

North Tower Hole Size

Reynolds quickly returns to the tower impacts.

but the North Tower's hole wasn't big enough for a Boeing 767 either, the alleged widebody airliner used on AA Flight 11 (officially tail number N334AA, FAA-listed as "destroyed"). A Boeing 767 has a wingspan of 155' 1" (47.6 m) yet the maximum distance across the hole in the North Tower was about 115 feet (35 m), a hole undersized by some 40 feet or 26 percent. "The last few feet at the tips of the wings did not even break through the exterior columns," comments Hufschmid (*Painful Questions*] p. 27). But 20 feet on each wing? I'd call that a substantial difference, not "the last few feet," especially since aircraft impact holes tend to be three times the size of the aircraft, reflecting the fact that fuel-laden airliners flying into buildings send things smashing about in a big way.

To the contrary, the North Tower's hole was big enough for a Boeing 767, as the graphic to the right illustrates. Note that the imprint extends out to the 767's wingtips. It is true that steel perimeter columns were not severed under the impact profile of the outermost 20 or so feet of each wing -- as would be expected in the contest between the very lightweight aluminum-structured wing-tips and the far stronger steel box columns.



It's true that such crashes "send things smashing about in a big way," but the velocity of the impact superimposed on the impact hole of the North Tower, whose width was 207'.

the damage. In particular, the higher the speed of the crash, the more thorough but localized the damage to the target. And the lightweight aluminum airframe of a 767 would be essentially shredded by the over 400-mph impact with the tower's curtain wall.

Flight 11 Crash Debris

The small size of the holes in both towers casts doubt on the airliner-impact hypothesis and favors professional demolition again. There were no reports of plane parts, especially wings, shorn off in the collision and bounced to the ground on the northeast side of the tower, to my knowledge, though FEMA reported a few small pieces to the south at Church street ([*Above Hallowed Ground: A Photographic Record of September 11, 2001*] pp. 68-9) and [atop WTC-5](#) to the east of WTC-1.

The idea that the wings should have bounced off reflects a failure to appreciate the effects of inertia in such a high-speed collision. Yes, we might see large pieces of wing survive a collision at 100 mph but not at 400 mph, which involves 16 times as much kinetic energy.

Adding to the suspicious nature of the small aperture in WTC 1 is that some vertical gaps in the columns on the left side of the northeast hole were so short, probably less than three feet ([*NIST Response to the World Trade Center Disaster*] p. 105) high ([*Painful Questions*] p. 27). Not much of a jumbo jet could pass through such an opening, especially since a fuel-laden plane would not minimize its frontal area.



Reynolds references this illustration from the NIST document *NIST Response to the World Trade Center Disaster* by Dr. S. Shyam Sunder, which shows damage to the North Tower caused by a portion of Flight 11's left wing.

Reynolds' suggestion that the 3-foot breach in the columns 136 to 140 (see above illustration) is too small to accommodate "much of a jumbo jet" fails to note that this region of the hole corresponded to the portion of the 767's left wing beyond its engine. That portion of the wing is substantially less than three feet thick.

The engines are a special problem because each engine is enormous and dense, consisting mainly of tempered steel and weighing 24 to 28.5 tons, depending upon model. No engine was recovered in the rubble yet no hydrocarbon fire could possibly vaporize it.

We don't know that no engine from Flight 11 was recovered in the rubble, given the [opaque conditions of the clean-up of Ground Zero](#). Furthermore only the fan of a 767 engine is "enormous", since the compressor, combustion chamber, and high-pressure turbines of such an engine are only about three feet in diameter, and the fan would likely shatter in such a crash.

The hole in the North Tower also is suspicious because it did not even have a continuous opening at the perimeter, but instead contained substantial WTC material (*[Painful Questions]* p. 27) just left of center. (*[NIST Response to the World Trade Center Disaster]* pp. 62, 105) This material appears integral to that area, so it did not move much, suggesting minimal displacement and no clean penetration by a jumbo jet. These huge airliners weigh 82 tons empty and have a maximum takeoff weight of up to [193 tons](#).

Again, an over 400-mph crash into the tower's grid of steel would thoroughly shred the aircraft, and the momentum would carry its remains well into the interior. Compared to a tower, whose steel alone weighed over 90,000 tons, a 150-ton aircraft was miniscule, so it's not surprising that the impacts did not even cause the towers to visibly sway.

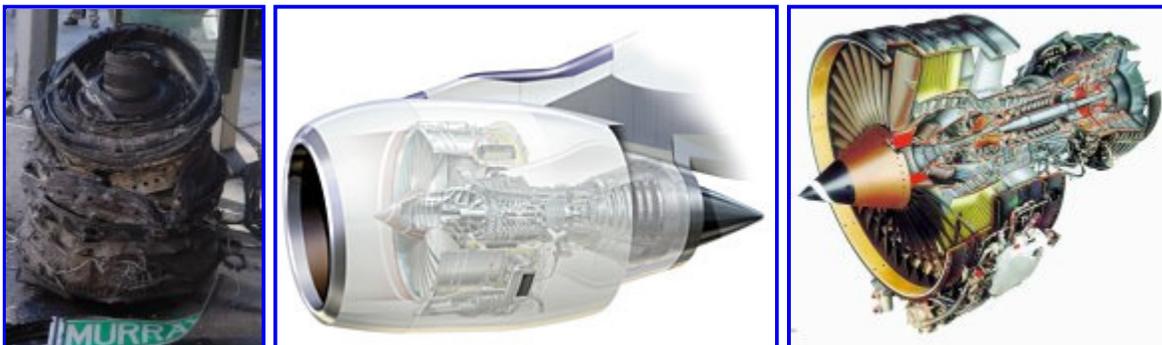
Flight 175 Crash Debris

In the case of the South Tower, an engine from UAL Flight 175 (tail number N612UA and [FAA-registered](#) as still valid!) has not been recovered despite the fact that the flight trajectory of the video plane implied that the right engine would miss the South Tower.

Reynolds does not tell us why he thinks the trajectory of Flight 175 would have caused its right engine to miss the tower. In fact, several videos show the plane completely entering the southwest face of the South Tower, from wing-tip to wing-tip.

Photos showing minor engine parts on the ground are [unconvincing](#), to put it mildly. Perhaps independent jet engine experts (retired?) can testify to the contrary.

Why are these unconvincing as engine parts? One doesn't need to be a jet engine expert to see that they are the correct size to be either high-pressure turbines or compressor rotors from a 767, which have diameters of between 2.5 and 3 feet.



The photograph on the left shows a portion of Flight 175's engine at the corner of Church and Murray Streets. The idea that this assembly, which is about three feet in diameter, is too small to be from a 767 is unfounded. Boeing 767s use high-bypass turbofan engines such as General Electric CF6-80, the Pratt & Whitney PW4062, or the Rolls-Royce RB211. Such engines have a fan measuring nearly 10 feet in diameter, but their core, containing the high-pressure turbines, compressor, and combustion chamber, is about a third of that diameter.

Further contradicting the official account, the beveled edge of the southeast side of the south tower was completely intact upon initial impact.

How does this contradict the official account of the crash of Flight 175?

The Evidence Vacuum

The government never produced a jet engine yet claimed it recovered the passport of alleged hijacker [Satam al Sugami](#) unharmed by a fiery crash and catastrophic collapse of the North Tower. The government has not produced voice (CVR) or flight data recorders (FDR) in the New York attack either, so-called black boxes, a fact unprecedented in the aviation history of major domestic crashes.

The destruction, suppression, and fabrication of evidence is a pattern repeated throughout the official response to the attack. The failure of the authorities to produce evidence identifying the crashed jetliners is not evidence that they didn't crash as reported. In fact the absence of such evidence has served the cover-up well, creating endless opportunities for circulating distracting theories which cannot be proven or disproven.

Flight 11 Crash Debris, Again

Adding to the problems of the official theory is the fact that photos of the North Tower hole show no evidence of a plane either. There is no recognizable wreckage or plane parts at the immediate crash site.

Again, Reynolds asserts that the lack of visible debris from Flight 11 is suspicious. However, this ignores two essential facts about the crash:

- The speed of the impact carried virtually all of the mass of the plane deep into the tower, where it was stopped by the core structure. Of course we are not able to see wreckage in the dark impact hole.
- High-speed collisions with formidable barriers reduce aircraft largely to confetti. This fact was graphically demonstrated by a crash test in which an F-4 was driven into a concrete barrier at 480 mph. The aircraft was reduced entirely to confetti.



This image from the F-4 crash test is from the [Sandia National Laboratories Video Gallery](#).

Flight 93 Crash Debris

In fact, the government has failed to produce significant wreckage from any of the four alleged airliners that fateful day. The familiar photo of the Flight 93 crash site in Pennsylvania (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, Ch. 9) shows no fuselage, engine or anything recognizable as a plane, just a smoking hole in the ground. Photographers reportedly were not allowed near the hole. Neither the FBI nor the National Transportation Safety Board have investigated or produced any report on the alleged airliner crashes.

Flights 11, 175, and 77 all crashed into strong building facades at very high speeds -- over 400 mph in each case -- events which shred aircraft into small pieces. These crashes are very different from the more typical ones in which jetliners hit the ground at shallow angles and break up, leaving some large recognizable pieces.

As noted above, the debris field from an aircraft crash is highly dependent on the nature of the crash. Some sense of the variety of crash debris fields can be had by looking at the photographs on AirDisaster.com.



Although the official account that Flight 93 crashed due to a passenger revolt at 10:03 AM [is contradicted by several bodies of evidence](#), there is no reasonable basis for questioning that it crashed in the field in Shanksville PA, as thoroughly documented by the website Flight93Crash.com. Numerous [eyewitness](#) reported that the jetliner precipitously dropped from the sky, several [seismographic stations recorded its impact at 10:06 AM](#), and the impact crater bears the profile of the plane and is consistent with a ground impact from a nearly vertical trajectory.

This aerial view of the impact crater of Flight 93 suggests that the plane plunged into the soft ground on a nearly vertical trajectory.

The attempt to deny the crash of Flight 93 in Shanksville, PA apparently originated with a September 17, 2004 article by Christopher Bollyn in *American Free Press*, a publication that promotes the Hitler-praising *Barnes Review*. The creator of OilEmpire.us [documents these neo-Nazi connections](#) and draws a parallel between the denial of gas chambers in the Holocaust and the denial that jetliners were crashed in the 9/11/01 attack.

Bollyn was also the apparent source of several rumors and errors about the World Trade Center destruction now deeply ingrained in 9/11 skeptics' literature, including:

- That [seismic spikes occurred at the onsets of the Twin Towers' collapses](#)
- That [molten steel was discovered in the basements](#)
- That [Building 6 was cratered by a huge explosion](#)

More recently Bollyn has promoted the idea that depleted uranium was present at all the crash sites. Such stories may just reflect a motivated reporter's tendency to amplify suspicious facts, but the ease with which several of them have been debunked highlights the importance of using the scientific method in evaluating evidence.

South Tower Hole Size

The WTC 1 and Pentagon holes were not alone in being too small. Photos show that the hole in WTC 2 also was too small to have been caused by the crash of a Boeing 767. In fact, the South Tower hole is substantially smaller than the North Tower hole.

Like the North Tower's impact imprint, the South Tower's also matched the profile of a 767, showing damage out to the wingtips. However, the area over which steel columns were broken away was slightly smaller. That is exactly what one would expect, given that the steel comprising the columns was about twice as thick at the 80th floor, where Flight 175's impact was centered, than at the 95th floor, where Flight 11's impact was centered.



This photograph shows the South Tower impact gash about 40 seconds after the collision of Flight 175. The profile of a 767, including both the wings and tail is visible in the imprint.

Conclusion

Reynolds' article promotes two distinct theories:

- That the Twin Towers and Building 7 were destroyed through controlled demolition.
- That the initial damage to the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, as well as the crater in Pennsylvania, were not caused by jetliner crashes.

The contrast between Reynold's handling of these two theories is striking.

Reynolds provides a compelling summary of the analysis of earlier researchers that the collapses of the WTC towers had to be the result of controlled demolition. That analysis employs diverse lines of reasoning and includes the application of basic principles of physics to the features of the towers' collapses documented by abundant physical evidence, such as scores of photographs of the collapses themselves.

In contrast, Reynolds' premise that jetliners were not involved at any of the four crash sites is baseless. Aside from the fact that there is no credible evidence that the initial damage was produced by anything other than jetliners, Reynolds fails to mention any of the bodies of evidence that jetliners did crash as reported, such as eyewitness accounts of each of the four crashes.

Each argument Reynolds advances for the no-jetliner theory is flawed. He confuses aluminum cladding for steel columns in North Tower crash photographs, fails to appreciate the effects of momentum on target damage and aircraft-part survivability in high-speed crashes, repeats an erroneous description of the Pentagon's facade damage, and makes unsupported claims that Flight 175 should have sliced through the South Tower's east corner and that its engine parts are "unconvincing."

As with the WTC towers' demolition, the points Reynolds makes in favor of the no-jetliner theory are all made by other authors, so the contrast between the soundness of his arguments for the two theories may just reflect the contrast between the strengths of the

theories themselves -- a contrast which Reynolds may not appreciate.

Reynolds' article, which combines strong theories with erroneous ones, is a microcosm of the 9/11 Truth Movement. Experience has shown that the [mainstream media will amplify the least credible and most offensive theories](#) and misrepresent them as gospel of the "conspiracy theorists." Reynolds' concluding paragraph highlights the importance of getting the science right.

If demolition destroyed three steel skyscrapers at the World Trade Center on 9/11, then the case for an "inside job" and a government attack on America would be compelling. Meanwhile, the job of scientists, engineers and impartial researchers everywhere is to get the scientific and engineering analysis of 9/11 right, "though heaven should fall."

I couldn't agree more.

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