

The 1993 Bombing of the World Trade Center: The Betrayal 30 Years Later

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February 26th, 2023 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City — a widely misunderstood false flag operation that paved the way for 9/11 by portraying Muslims as terrorists and introducing Islamophobic racism to the U.S.

When I watched the three World Trade Center (WTC) buildings disintegrate on September 11, 2001, I assumed that there would be no interest in the story of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing; but when I read that **Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman** and **Osama bin Laden** were being blamed for it, I realized that the real story had to be told.

At the time of the bombing, the West's 40-year Cold War against Communism had recently ended with the disintegration of the USSR; unidentified western investors were said to have been scooping up its assets as its public resources were becoming privatized. The U.S. military needed a new enemy to replace Communism in order to maintain its budget and protect it from any "peace dividend". A classified Congressional document around 1991 (also sent to selected media) identified the new enemy as "Islamic Fundamentalists"; this expanded the target of the 1979 *Jerusalem Conference on International Terrorism*, which called for (legal) Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation to be criminalized internationally as "terrorism". President George H.W. Bush's 1991 "Madrid Peace Talks", to end Israel's 25-year military occupation of Palestinian territory, were continuing.

A massive bomb exploded under the Vista Hotel in the WTC at noon on Friday, February 26, 1993, killing 6, injuring 1000, and causing chaos throughout New York City for the rest of the day. The WTC complex covered 16 acres of lower Manhattan; the unforgettable twin towers rose one half mile into the sky. The damage under the hotel took out an area 2/3 the size of a football field and went down six floors to the PATH train station, underneath the level of the Hudson River.

The owner, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, thought that the bomb was so perfectly placed to cause maximum damage to the life support system that it had to be an inside job. This was confirmed by an extraordinary New York Times (NYT) graphic two days later which showed that the damage was not circular, but oblong, with the two ends hitting a corner of each tower: *the bombers had to have had access to the Trade Center blueprints*. The big question was, what country had the ability to pull off such a sophisticated operation when the only real U.S. enemy at that time was Iraq, which the US had invaded in 1991 and still basically controlled.

The damage was so massive that police estimated it would take six months to gather clues from the black abyss. It took a month to find the body of the Vista Hotel employee who had been working on the floor *above* the bomb; his body was found underneath all seven floors of rubble. That weekend, however, an ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms) agent entered the top edge of the abyss with a flashlight and came out with a load of vehicle parts that he claimed must have come from the bomb-laden van. An FBI agent immediately worked to decipher a Vehicle Identification Number and quickly identified it as coming from a Ryder van: a van that a Mohammad Salameh had rented.

Mohammad Salameh paid \$400 to rent a Ryder van to help move work mates who were soon to leave the New York area. That Thursday evening, he used it to bring friends shopping at a local mall; when they came out with their groceries, the van had disappeared. Horrified, Salameh called the police to report the van missing. An officer Badiak responded but was unable to put out an immediate warrant for the van because it had an out-of-state license and there seemed to have been a mistake in Ryder's handwritten license number that they gave to Salameh. Badiak didn't bother to track the number down that evening, but he made out the report and drove Salameh to his home at 24 Kensington, where he lived with an Israeli woman called Josie Haddas. Or maybe Gosie Hadass: she apparently spelled her name differently whenever she wrote it.

Mohammad Salameh spent days on busses trying to get his \$400 deposit back from the Ryder shop, which kept giving him a run-around. On the fourth attempt, on Wednesday, March 5th when he had been told he could pick up his refund, he was met with a small army of media and police, who arrested him as a suspect in the WTC bombing. (*Ryder records reportedly indicated that Salameh's van was returned!*)

Salameh's court-appointed lawyer had a hard time trying to explain to Salameh, a recent Jordanian immigrant who had difficulty with English, why he had been arrested. Salameh had faith in American justice; he wanted a fast trial so that he could get on with his life (stocking grocery shelves). NYT reporter Chris Hedges contacted Salameh's parents in Jordan; he had recently called them and they expected another call soon to announce his coming marriage.

The New York Times, which produced the most extensive coverage of this story, was fast off

the mark claiming that Mohammad Salameh — who they suspected had probable terrorist connections — was an “Islamic fundamentalist”. Its description of the WTC bombing as “sophisticated” turned to primitive, and the key graphic describing the pattern of damage disappeared from NYT archives, along with other information that did not fit the official government narrative.

Several other Muslim immigrants would join Salameh as defendants: gutsy Egyptian cabbie Mahmoud Abuhailima who, with his young family, had permanent resident status; Nidal Ayyad, a recently graduated (and married) Kuwaiti chemical engineer who had become an enthusiastic U.S. citizen, and Palestinian refugee claimant Ahmad Ajaj who had been incarcerated from the previous September until March on immigration charges and had never even met the other defendants. The New York Times noted that, except for the cabbie, the defendants were all of Palestinian descent, which it found significant. The four men faced a broad conspiracy charge for moving weapons across state lines. A fifth man was wanted with a reward: Ramzi Yousef had entered the U.S. five months before the explosion to join what was obviously the bombing plot and left the day it occurred. The court protected the identities of — and access to — an estimated two dozen other facilitators of the bombing, including Israelis such as Josie Haddas (whose name was on Salameh’s Ryder van contract).

Several months later, the FBI was called in by its asset Emad Salem, a former Egyptian intelligence officer and bomb expert, to raid what he claimed was bomb-making to attack New York City landmarks and transportation hubs. Some of the men weren’t sure what they were mixing stuff for and one who was charged, New Yorker Clement Hampton-El, smelled a rat and had been avoiding the group. Weeks later, the world-famous, blind Egyptian cleric (a 1990 refugee claimant) Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman was arrested. As the leader of local mosques that all of the defendants belonged to, prosecutors claimed the sheikh was the “mastermind” not only of the latest “bomb-making” but of the WTC explosion as well as the 1991 killing of terrorist rabbi Meir Kahane, (despite the fact that a New York State trial had found El Sayid Nosair not guilty!) Fifteen men in all would face a “seditious conspiracy” charge that included the WTC bombing (with an acknowledgment that that was being tried separately); the four defendants of the first WTC trial were “unindicted co-conspirators” of this second trial, which made both trials appear to be related. The conspiracy charges for both trials had such low requirements for conviction that guilty verdicts could have been regarded as virtually meaningless. Competent legal counsel (which the courts tried to bar) should have been able to get all of them off.

The New York Times coverage was racist, biased and inflammatory; it tried to ensure convictions by painting the defendants as shadowy Muslim criminals who refused to admit their involvement and who were bringing treacherous jihadi terrorism to threaten all Americans. *At the end of October, 1993, the NYT published articles with verbatim parts of Emad Salem’s taped conversations with his FBI handler Nancy Floyd and her boss John Anticev in which both of them acknowledged that the FBI had overseen the Trade Center bombing plot, which a “higher up” had decided to make live instead of using planned fake explosives for the entrapment.*

At the first WTC trial, the defense counsel couldn’t imagine that the defendants could be found guilty. Because the four defendants had alibis, no motive, no means of doing it, and there was no evidence that they had done it, their defense counsel didn’t see the point of calling defense witnesses. They were all convicted, apparently because jurors assumed that the lack of witnesses meant they had no defense! **All those who would be**

tried in connection to the WTC bombing would be convicted, and most sentenced to life, including Ramzi Yousef and the real driver of the van (Salameh had also been charged as the driver), who had been an unwitting accomplice. Yousef was the only defendant of all of the WTC-related trials who was aware of the WTC bombing plan. The appeals, at least one of which got to the Supreme Court, were of no use despite the Constitutional violations that they documented.

As a result of the Islamophobia generated by the media during these related trials, important Constitutional and judicial protections were jettisoned, which paved the way for the government's future "war on terror":

- The sheikh's sermons were used against him, despite First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and belief;
- The Fourth Amendment freedom from unwarranted searches was jettisoned by allowing the use of illegal search warrants;
- The Sixth Amendment right to counsel was abandoned in various trials, including raids on the sheikh's legal staff, tape recordings of private meetings with lawyers, and ultimately the use of secret evidence, *which encourages the fabrication of evidence*; and
- The Eighth Amendment against cruel and unusual punishment is violated by the Special Administrative Measures ("SAMs"), (which were applied to the sheikh and Ramzi Yousef, among others), which isolates and hides from public scrutiny not only those convicted, but even those merely accused of a crime. Defense counsel, like the sheikh's lawyer Lynn Stewart, are also vulnerable to being criminally charged and incarcerated for violating SAMs.

In 1993, the only obvious motives behind the WTC bombing appeared to be destroying American sympathy for the Palestinians during the ongoing Mideast peace talks, and using the Trade Center trials to undermine Constitutional rights.

After the events of September 11, 2001, other motives for the '93 bombing became evident. To justify NATO members joining the U.S.' "war on terror", the U.S. used, as further supposed evidence of a sustained foreign attack by Al Qaeda:

- the 1993 WTC bombing, including several names of those associated with it (Sheikh Abdul-Rahman, Ali Mohamed, Abdul Yasin, and Ramzi Yousef);
- references to the African Embassy bombing (Ali Mohamed and a minor participant); along with
- the USS Cole explosion and the Millenium shoe bomb plot, neither of which appeared to be connected to Al Qaeda.

Despite the fact that Bin Laden denied any responsibility for 9/11, that Al Qaeda was a recognized asset of the US government, *and that the FBI was already on record as having admitted to overseeing the WTC bombing*, the drama of the September 11th events was shocking enough that every NATO member agreed to joining the US' multi-year "war on terror".

The motive of 9/11 first appeared to be the "war on terror's" regime change of countries to benefit the U.S. or Israel; the "seven countries in five years" told to General Wesley Clark were clearly intended targets. It also became evident that there were financial motives, such as the destruction of the Office of Naval Intelligence at the Pentagon, which was

investigating billions of missing funds, along with other government-related financial fraud; its backup records at the WTC were also destroyed.

A financial motive for both the World Trade Center and Pentagon destruction became apparent with the publication of an extensively- referenced article called “*Collateral Damage: U.S. Covert Operations and the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001*” by a former member of the Office of Naval Intelligence using the pseudonym E.P. Heidner. Heidner claims that on September 12, 2001, 10-year bonds worth \$240 billion became mature and could be cleared only then because the Security and Exchange Commission, invoking emergency powers because of 9/11, suspended the requirement for identification to cash in securities for 15 days. The detailed information — with stunning implications that include the asset-stripping of the USSR — indicate that this plot had started by September, 1991.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this story, along with the loss of Americans’ Constitutional rights, and the crimes that have gone unpunished, is the impact of the politically- generated Islamophobia, which has been compared to anti-Semitic racism before WW II. The U.S. government has betrayed all of its citizens — particularly Muslims — by virtually defining “terrorism” as Muslim, and destroying the lives of many of the Muslims who came to the US to raise their families and make their own contribution to the United States. This includes the innocent defendants of this story who have endured tortuous incarceration, and their children and grandchildren for whom they are irreplaceable.

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Featured image: Image of the procession of rescue vehicles responding to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. One World Trade Center is on the far right of the frame. (Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

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