

Dick Cheney and Rudy Giuliani: The First Government Officials to Dismiss the Idea of Controlled Demolition on 9/11

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One of the more perplexing aspects of 9/11 is how the public was so quickly and thoroughly convinced that the airplane impacts and ensuing fires—and not the explosions that so many witnesses reported—had caused the destruction of the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers.

People who have only a passing familiarity with the historical record of 9/11 might assume, understandably, that everyone has always believed, from day one, that the towers came down as a direct result of the airplane impacts.

Closer examination of the record, however, shows that officials in at least three government agencies responsible for responding to the attacks—the White House, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the New York City Fire Department (FDNY)—said they suspected that the buildings had been brought down with explosives. In addition, many individuals in the news media commented throughout the morning that explosives appeared to be involved.

For anyone attempting to quell suspicions that explosives were used, the simplest tactic would have been to trust that as soon as Al Qaeda was blamed for the attacks—which it was, within hours after the event—members of the media and government would conclude that Muslim terrorists would not have been able to plant explosives in the buildings without being detected; ipso facto, explosives could not have been used to bring them down.

The clearest example of someone ignoring their initial observation after learning the official narrative was structural engineer **Ronald Hamburger**, who worked for FEMA on the first official investigation of the collapses. Hamburger told [The Wall Street Journal](#) on September 19, 2001,

“‘It appeared to me that charges had been placed in the building.’ . . . Upon learning that no bombs had been detonated, [Hamburger said,] ‘I was very surprised.’”

But in response to all those people who early on voiced their suspicion that explosives had brought down the Twin Towers—before the official narrative was promulgated—anyone needing to quell suspicions about controlled demolition would find it necessary to gently dismiss such concerns.

‘It just pancaked’



Dick Cheney and Eric Edelman converse in the PEOC on 9/11.

One government official who openly speculated about the possibility of explosives being used at the World Trade Center was **Eric Edelman**, Vice President Dick Cheney’s Deputy Chief of Staff on 9/11. He was in the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) with his boss as the events unfolded that morning. In a little-known interview with [Newsweek Magazine](#) on October 25, 2001, he gave this account of his and Cheney’s reaction to watching the Twin Towers go down:

“Some of us, when the Trade Center came down, and then the second one came down, some of us I think were a bit stunned by how, the way it came down. As you recall from seeing the tapes, it almost looked like (inaudible) charges on each floor to bring it to the ground. Some of us were speculating that maybe, you know, there was some kind of charge on the ground or in the building. You know, we were dealing with all sorts of speculation.

“But [Cheney] basically said, well, just the way it looks to me, it just pancaked and (inaudible), top (inaudible) came down; just pancaked the rest of the building. His sense of all this was pretty impressive, I have to say—not just because I work for him.”



FBI Director Robert Mueller in the PEOC on 9/11.

It is impossible to know whether Cheney had inside information on the Twin Towers' demolition and was intentionally steering his colleagues away from that suspicion or whether he was reacting genuinely to what he observed. Either way, given that he had [unprecedented power](#) in the White House and that he was [the man in charge](#) on 9/11, his instant dismissal of the possibility of controlled demolition undoubtedly had some effect on the direction of various investigations that were just getting underway.

Of course, one of those investigations was being conducted by the FBI. Later that day, FBI **Director Robert Mueller** would join Cheney in the PEOC. It just so happens that the FBI's "working theory" of the attacks was that explosives had been used to bring down the Twin Towers. We know as much, because *USA Today* correspondent Jack Kelley provided [this report](#) on the day of 9/11:

Kelley: "Apparently, what appears to have happened is that at the same time two planes hit the building, that the FBI most likely thinks that there was a car or truck packed with explosives underneath the building which also exploded at the same time and brought both of them down."

USA Today Anchor: "Now that's the first time we're hearing that. So two planes and explosives that were in the building, is that correct?"

Kelley: "That is the working theory at this point. That is still unconfirmed, but that is what the FBI is going on at this point."

But at some point and for some unexplained reason, the FBI apparently abandoned its "working theory."

'We don't know of an additional explosion'

Had the FBI continued to pursue the explosives theory, it would have been corroborated by many officials and firefighters in the FDNY. Consider that at around 11:55 AM, approximately

90 minutes after both towers had disappeared from the New York skyline, *NBC's* Pat Dawson gave this [extensive report on his conversation](#) with the FDNY's Deputy Assistant Chief of Safety, **Albert Turi**:

Dawson: "Just moments ago I spoke to the Chief of Safety for the New York City Fire Department, who was obviously one of the first people here on the scene after those two planes were crashed into the side—we assume—of the World Trade Center towers, which used to be behind me over there. Chief Albert Turi told me that he was here just literally 10 or 15 minutes after the events that took place this morning, that is, the first crash. . . . [He] told me that shortly after 9 o'clock he had roughly 10 alarms, roughly 200 men in the building trying to effect rescues of some of those civilians who were in there, and that basically he received word of a possibility of a secondary device—that is, another bomb going off. He tried to get his men out as quickly as he could, but he said that there was another explosion which took place. And then an hour after the first hit here, the first crash that took place, he said there was another explosion that took place in one of the towers here. So obviously, according to his theory, he thinks that there were actually devices that were planted in the building. One of the secondary devices he thinks, that took place after the initial impact, he thinks may have been on the plane that crashed into one of the towers. The second device he thinks, he speculates, was probably planted in the building."

Turi was just one of many in the FDNY to suspect that explosives were planted in the Twin Towers. Others included firefighters **Tyrone Johnson** and **Jimmy Grillo**, whose battalion was stationed in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel as they witnessed explosions coming from the neighboring towers. They gave [this account just after the collapse of both towers](#):

Johnson: "We was in an explosion. We was in the lobby and it—the third explosion, the whole lobby collapsed on us. . . ."

Reporter: "Was that a secondary explosion?"

Johnson: "Yes, it was. Definitely a secondary explosion. Because we was inside waiting to go upstairs, and on the way upstairs, the whole fucking thing blew. . . . Everybody was inside the building waiting to go upstairs, and it just let loose. Everything just let loose inside the building."

Reporter: "So what you're telling me is that there was a plane, whatever hit the building, and then the secondary explosion?"

Johnson: "It was like three explosions after that. We came in there after the fire. We came when the fire was going on already. We was in the staging area inside the building, waiting to go upstairs. Then the explosions. Then the whole lobby collapsed inside. . . ."

Grillo: "People don't understand. There may be more. Any one of these fuckin' buildings could blow up. This ain't done yet."

[More than 100 other FDNY personnel](#), who were stationed outside the towers, said they, too, witnessed phenomena they believed to be explosions—or they surmised that the towers had been brought down with explosives. A small sampling of those eyewitness accounts includes **Captain Karin Deshore**, **Fire Marshal John Coyle**, and **Firefighter Christopher**

Fenyo:

[Deshore](#): “Somewhere around the middle of the World Trade Center, there was this orange and red flash coming out. Initially it was just one flash. Then this flash just kept popping all the way around the building and that building had started to explode. The popping sound, and with each popping sound it was initially an orange and then red flash came out of the building and then it would just go all around the building on both sides as far as I could see. These popping sounds and the explosions were getting bigger, going both up and down and then all around the building.”

[Coyle](#): “I thought it was exploding, actually. That’s what I thought for hours afterwards . . . because the debris from the tower had shot out far over our heads. . . . Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up.”

[Fenyo](#): “At that point [after the collapse of the South Tower] a debate began to rage because the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges. . . . [M]any people had felt that possibly explosives had taken out 2 World Trade, and officers were gathering companies together and the officers were debating whether or not to go immediately back in or to see what was going to happen with 1 World Trade at that point.”

Despite the fact that most members of the fire department thought the buildings were leveled with explosives—and many of them had directly witnessed what they believed were explosions—**Mayor Rudolph Giuliani** and New York City **Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik** [both denied having any information about secondary explosions](#) at a press conference that afternoon, with FDNY **Commissioner Thomas Van Essen** standing by their side:

Reporter: “Do you know anything about the cause of the explosions that brought down the two buildings yet? Was it caused by the planes or by something else? There were second explosions.”

Mayor Giuliani: “We believe it was caused by the after effects of the planes hitting the buildings. We don’t know of an additional explosion after that.” (While Giuliani is talking, he turns to Kerik, who shakes his head and appears to mutter the words, “No, nothing like that.”)

Was this a case of Giuliani, Kerik, and Van Essen simply not being in contact with the Deputy Assistant Chief of Safety and other members of the fire department? Were they truly unaware of the numerous reports of explosions from first responders and civilians—reports so ubiquitous that the journalist who posed the question treated the explosions, as well as the belief that they had brought down the towers, as established fact?

It is safe to say that Giuliani, Kerik, and Van Essen were probably better positioned than any other human beings on 9/11 to receive and make sense of all the eyewitness reports of explosions. Indeed, their roles put them in a perfect position to formulate and announce a coherent narrative of what these witnesses were saying had just happened. Yet they professed to have no knowledge of such information.

Whether or not the mayor and his two commissioners knew more than they were admitting,

Giuliani's assertion that it was the "after effects of the planes hitting the buildings" and not secondary explosions that brought down the Twin Towers was broadcast worldwide to millions of people, including members of the media who were just beginning to assemble an account of what had taken place that morning.

'Simply the planes hitting the buildings'

A less-known government official who also waved off the idea of explosives bringing down the Twin Towers—but who was equally involved in protecting the nation, New York City, and the World Trade Center from terrorist attacks—was counterterrorism expert **Jerome Hauer**.

According to his biography on the [Chertoff Group website](#), Hauer was "Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Senior Advisor to the Secretary for National Security and Emergency Management during the events of September 11, 2001 and the nation's anthrax crisis." Mere months earlier, in January 2001, Hauer had been [hired to run a new crisis management group](#) at Kroll Associates, the security consulting firm that had designed the security system for the World Trade Center complex in response to the 1993 bombing. And before that, from 1996 to 2000, he had been Mayor Giuliani's [Director of the New York City Office of Emergency Management](#). In fact, under Hauer's watch, the OEM installed its Emergency Operations Center on the 23rd floor of World Trade Center Building 7 in June 1999.

On the morning of 9/11, Hauer was a guest on CBS News with Dan Rather, who, like many other television anchors and reporters, speculated that the buildings had come down due to explosives. [Their conversation](#) went like this:

Rather: "Based on what you know—and I recognize we're dealing with so few facts—is it possible that just a plane crash could have collapsed these buildings, or would it have required the sort of prior positioning of other explosives in the building? What do you think?"

Hauer: "No, my sense is that just, one, the velocity of the plane and the fact that you have a plane filled with fuel hitting that building that burned. The velocity of the plane certainly had an impact on the structure itself. And then the fact that it burned, and you had that intense heat, probably weakened the structure as well. And I think it was simply the planes hitting the buildings and causing the collapse."

Taken together, we have the two government officials most responsible for directing the response to 9/11—Dick Cheney and Rudy Giuliani—dismissing the notion of controlled demolition within hours after the event. Add to them a man—Jerry Hauer—whose job at various times was to plan for terrorist attacks against the nation, the city, and the World Trade Center complex itself.

It's possible that all three of them were reacting candidly to what they observed and to the information available to them. If that's the case, it's quite unfortunate. Each was in a position to shape the course of ongoing investigations, and it's undeniable that an unbiased investigation would not have ruled out the possible use of explosives at that point in time.

It's also possible that one or more of them knew in advance that the Twin Towers were going to be demolished and that they were involved, whether directly or peripherally, in a

criminal conspiracy to cover up the murder of thousands of people.

Certainly, we know that a cover-up was carried out in the succeeding months and years. The removal of evidence, the FEMA investigation, the 9/11 Commission Report, and the NIST investigation were key elements of that cover-up. But, looking back, we might wonder if the most critical stage of the entire cover-up was in the minutes and hours immediately following the devastating destruction.

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