

An open letter to Richard Gage and AE911Truth

Dear Mr. Gage and members of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth,

I am a member of AE911Truth (pending verification) and Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice. I have also contributed articles to the Journal of 9/11 Studies. While I appreciate the work you and others are doing to examine the events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, I am concerned that many arguments put forth are incorrect. Please don't mistake me for a NIST apologist or an official cover-up story believer. The truth movement needs to be very sure of its claims to avoid being dismissed as ignorant fools, nut-jobs or politically motivated manipulators. Justice is clearly dependent on the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Because of the large number of fallacious claims purveyed by various groups within the movement, my approach has been and will continue to be to examine claims on both sides of the argument and take them at their own merit. I hope others will embrace this approach so that the truth movement can live up to its basic values and achieve its well meaning goals.

There are clearly problems with the official story and these are well covered by truth movement. However, after spending many 100s of hours examining and discussing evidence, analyses and claims on both sides of the argument, I have found that a large portion of the truth movement's claims are unsubstantiated or incorrect. These need to be corrected. With this in mind, I have looked at the AE911Truth claims given below and I offer criticism where I feel it can be helpful.

From AE911Truth with **my comments** interspersed:

"As seen in this revealing photo the Twin Towers' destruction exhibited all the characteristics of destruction by explosions: (and some non-standard characteristics)

1. Extremely rapid onset of "collapse"

The validity of this claim rests on the definition of "extremely rapid". NIST provides evidence of growing instability 10 min prior to collapse including smoke expulsions from partial floor collapses and bowing of the exterior wall on the south side of WTC1.

2. Sounds of explosions and flashes of light witnessed near the beginning of the "collapse" by over 100 first responders

Surely, there were explosive sounds and flashes of light as there are too many witnesses to deny this. Nonetheless, the only videos of the collapses with sound do not have any explosive sounds. In the following video, one can hear people talking and the sound of the collapse. In videos of actual demolitions the explosive charges are at least ten times louder than collapse sounds. Compare:

http://www.911research.com/wtc/evidence/videos/docs/wtc2_south_below.mpg

to these actual demolitions:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79sJ1bMR6VQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XG-l3N1YfQ&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwMkJmnyDuQ>

This evidence directly contradicts the controlled demolition theory, at least by conventional means. Nonetheless, the witness testimonies should be taken seriously. It is possible that people heard or saw something else, for example, reflections of lights from emergency vehicles or cars exploding.

3. Squibs, or “mistimed” explosions, 40 floors below the “collapsing” building seen in all the videos

This argument would only favor controlled demolition if the pressures inside the building in a gravitational collapse are not sufficient or cannot propagate fast enough to cause the observed phenomena. To my knowledge, this has not been demonstrated.

4. Mid-air pulverization of all the 90,000 tons of concrete and steel decking, filing cabinets & 1000 people – mostly to dust

This claim is not correct and in no way favors controlled demolition over gravitational collapse. Engineers at Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice (STJ911), including Greg Jenkins, Tony Szamboti and Gregory Ulrich, have demonstrated that the upper bound for concrete pulverized to dust was 15%. We have also calculated that the amount of dust attributable to easily crushed materials like gypsum and SFRM (thermal insulation) was equivalent to 5 lbs per square foot over an area of 200 acres. We have also calculated that no extra energy source would be needed to create this amount of dust. The pressures approached 100,000 psi late in the collapse. How could these pressures not result in humans and other materials being crushed to dust?

5. Massive volume of expanding pyroclastic dust clouds

Is the cloud really pyroclastic, or is it just dust? Engineers at STJ911 have calculated that 15% of the concrete together with fireproofing and gypsum would result in massive volumes amounting to 10 lbs of dust per square foot over an area of 200 acres. Engineers at STJ911 have calculated that the air being expelled from the collapsing building was approaching velocities of 200 m/s. This is the primary engine driving the expanding dust clouds. The dust cloud was given even more energy from debris falling outside the perimeter.

6. Vertical progression of full building perimeter demolition waves

This is only one interpretation of the visual records of the collapses. Another interpretation is that the pressures due to impacts were blowing out the windows. The characterization as “demolition waves” has no support in the evidence or scientific analyses to date.

7. Symmetrical collapse – through the path of greatest resistance – at nearly free-fall speed – the columns gave no resistance

This is simply incorrect. Neither collapse was symmetrical. In WTC2, most debris falling outside the footprint went east and south. In WTC1, most debris falling outside the footprint went north and west. Engineers at STJ911 have calculated that the structure provided resistance to the extent that 40-60% of the original PE was dissipated prior to debris impact at the foundation.

8. 1,400 foot diameter field of equally distributed debris – outside of building footprint

This claim in no way favors CD over gravitational collapse. The size of the debris field is not surprising considering that the exteriors peeled outward (see also #10). The debris was not equally distributed.

9. Blast waves blew out windows in buildings 400 feet away

The characterization of blast waves is not supported. Since most of the broken windows were broken lower down on the surrounding buildings, the most likely cause was winds caused by the expulsion of air from the building as described in #5. The winds described above would certainly be capable of blowing in windows.

10. Lateral ejection of thousands of individual 20 - 50 ton steel beams up to 500 feet

Close inspection of some of the videos reveal that most exterior columns fell still connected as the exterior peeled outward. Since the exterior was 1400 ft. high it is not surprising that they reached 500 ft. away. In fact, there exist photos of the nearly intact exterior stretching all the way from WTC1 to the World Financial Center.

11. Total destruction of the building down to individual structural steel elements – obliterating the steel core structure.

It has not been demonstrated that this is uncharacteristic of a gravitational collapse that initiates high up in a 110 floor, high rise, tube/core structure building. Since the world has never seen such a collapse prior to or after 9/11, there are no empirical results to compare to. Often, the collapses are compared to gravitation collapses due to earthquakes resulting in pan-caking or toppling. These comparisons are not relevant to the Twin Towers because the initiation of the collapses is low in the building due to lateral forces. Nonetheless, it has been demonstrated that there was plenty of potential energy to enable buckling of all columns at every floor. In reality, the core columns broke mostly at the welded connections every 36 ft, which takes even less energy.

12. Tons of molten Metal found by FDNY under all 3 high-rises (What could have produced all of that molten metal?)

Does any evidence for “tons of molten metal” exist? What metals comprise this molten metal? This author is only aware of witness statements regarding molten metal and only small pieces of previously molten metal. Can molten metal observed in the pile weeks after the collapse be attributed to a thermate attack weeks before? The fires in the pile would not be hot enough to ignite any unburned thermate and any thermate burning in the pile would give off a characteristic bright white light, which

was not observed. If there is in fact evidence of tons (i.e. more than one ton), this is a reasonable issue to investigate. Until this claim is supported by evidence, it cannot be considered indicative of a thermate attack.

13. Chemical signature of Thermate (high tech incendiary) found in slag, solidified molten metal, and dust samples by Physics professor Steven Jones, PhD.

I believe that this is a valid issue which should be pursued by independent researchers and NIST alike. However, there may be alternative explanations other than a preplanned demolition and these should receive at least as much attention.

14. FEMA finds rapid oxidation and inter-granular melting on structural steel samples

I believe that this is a valid issue which should be pursued by independent researchers and NIST alike. However, there may be alternative explanations other than a preplanned demolition and these should receive at least as much attention.

15. More than 1000 Bodies are unaccounted for — 700 tiny bone fragments found on top of nearby buildings”

This does not favor the CD hypothesis over the gravitational collapse hypothesis. See #4.

And exhibited none of the characteristics of destruction by fire, i.e.

1. Slow onset with large visible deformations.

See #1 above.

2. Asymmetrical collapse which follows the path of least resistance (laws of conservation of momentum would cause a falling, intact, from the point of plane impact, to the side most damaged by the fires).

Has any rigorous analysis of the “path of least resistance” been done? An application of the principle of least action would probably be more appropriate. Mechanical dynamics are governed by inertia, force, momentum and material properties. This author has seen no dynamic analyses showing that the top parts of the towers should have fallen off. Unless this argument is supported by careful analysis it is only conjecture.

3. Evidence of fire temperatures capable of softening steel.

It is well proven that temperatures in building fires can soften steel. This is why buildings have thermal insulation applied to the steel structural components.

4. High-rise buildings with much larger, hotter, and longer lasting fires have never “collapsed”.

These buildings were not structurally damaged to begin with and had different structural designs than the Twin Towers. It would be meaningful to examine whether or not the buildings, which survived serious fires, had concrete cores or not. Does any evidence exist that buildings with similar structural design, damaged in the manner of the world trade center, should not collapse due to fires?

My conclusion is that there is no claim favoring the controlled demolition hypothesis over NIST’s impact/fire/gravitational collapse hypothesis. Most important, there are no tell-tale sharp cracking sounds in the sound video given above and there is no comparison between the sounds in that video and the sounds in videos actual demolitions. This means we can rule out demolition using conventional means.

I hope that your commitment to the truth is such that you take my criticisms seriously. If the truth movement is going to be successful, we will need to distance ourselves from fallacious claims and avoid conjecture. I would welcome constructive discussion of these issues in any forum. I am regularly available on the STJ911 and JREF forums, and you have my e-mail address.

Sincerely,

Gregory Urich

P.S. Some wordings have been changed for clarity and small errors have been corrected in this published version.