

The Official White House Photos of Dick Cheney on 9/11

Analysis: Two Damning Scenarios

by Elizabeth Woodworth

I. Was Vice President Dick Cheney Leading the Military Response on 9/11?

During the attacks of September 11, 2001, Commander-in-Chief President George Bush was visiting a school in Florida. There, impeded by poor communications, he was restricted in dealing with the early military response, leaving Vice President Cheney to coordinate military control from the White House.¹

In a best-selling 2007 book, *Washington Post* columnist Barton Gellman describes Cheney in the underground Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Bush's deputy chief of staff Josh Bolton:

“Participants in that morning’s events described surprisingly little contact between them. The Vice President took briefings, conferred with Scooter Libby [his chief of staff] in a voice too low for anyone else to hear, then got on the phone with heads of agencies.

‘He was holding the fort,’ said one White House staffer who watched him all day in the bunker. ‘He was the man in charge.’”²

How Cheney Began his Day

At 7 AM, Vice President Dick Cheney pulled up to the White House in his motorcade, according to one witness, looking like “an absentminded professor,

¹ The uncertain whereabouts of Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld are discussed in: “Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s Behavior between 9:00 and 10:00 AM,” 9/11 Consensus Panel (<http://www.consensus911.org/point-mc-5/>).

² Barton Gellman, “Angler: The Cheney Vice-Presidency,” Penguin, 2008, 118. Note that Lewis “Scooter” Libby was indicted by a Grand Jury in October 2005 and sentenced to 30 months in prison for “obstruction of justice, false statements, and perjury charges” in connection with the Iraq invasion. *Washington Post* review (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcxajkslWe0>).

deep in thought, oblivious to the world.” An aide followed him into the building, picking up the papers he dropped.³

Beyond this, there is surprisingly little information about what Cheney was doing while the attacks were underway – from the first tower impact at 8:46 AM until the official time the Pentagon was hit at 9:37:46 AM (we will cite 9:38 AM).

Where Was Cheney Located When the Pentagon Was Hit?

This question is important because of evidence of a stand-down in the interception of Flight 77, which allegedly hit the Pentagon at 9:38 AM.⁴

The following accounts indicate that soon after the second tower was hit, Cheney was moved by the Secret Service to the PEOC deep beneath the White House:

- Presidential speech-writer John McConnell had a scheduled 8:30 AM meeting with Cheney. He was kept waiting in the outer office because of an unscheduled visit from financial administrator Sean O’Keefe. Also in the outer office were Cheney’s secretary Debbie Heiden, and a Secret Service agent posted at the door who received a call that a passenger jet had hit the World Trade Center at 8:46 AM.

McConnell entered Cheney’s office at 9 AM and together they watched the television as a second plane hit the WTC at 9:03 AM. Within a few minutes senior officials Condoleezza Rice, John Bolton, Mary Matalin, “a man from the Situation Room [Richard Clarke],” and Scooter Libby converged on Cheney’s office and McConnell departed.⁵

- Counter-terrorism coordinator Richard Clarke writes that when the first tower was hit at 8:46 AM, he drove three blocks to Cheney’s office, arriving about 9:05-9:10 to find Cheney with Condoleezza Rice. Rice told Clarke

³ David Kuo, “Tempting Faith,” Free Press, 2006, 183.

⁴ “The 90-Minute Stand Down on 9/11,” *Shoestring Blog*, December 20, 2009 (<http://shoestring911.blogspot.com/2009/12/90-minute-stand-down-on-911-why-was.html>); Gore Vidal, “Dreaming War: Blood for Oil and the Cheney-Bush Junta,” Thunder’s Mouth/Marion Books, 2002, 32.

⁵ “Presidential Speechwriter John McConnell: Notes on Eight Years in the White House,” March 28, 2013, 24:55 minutes at (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wc6heZn9F9s&t=337s>).

that the Secret Service wanted them downstairs in the PEOC. Leaving, Clarke observed agents in the outer office waiting to take Cheney to the bunker.⁶

- President Bush's personal secretary, Ashley Estes, saw Secret Service agents running down the hallway, carrying Cheney along, after she saw the second plane hit the WTC on television at 9:03 AM.⁷
- Cheney's official photographer, David Bohrer, was reported to have said that just after 9 AM several agents removed Cheney from his office.⁸
- In 2002, Karl Rove told *MSNBC* that immediately after President Bush left the Florida classroom (at 9:16 AM) he asked Rove to get Cheney on the phone, but they could not because Cheney was at that time being rushed to safety.⁹
- Cheney himself related that "shortly after that [the second tower strike at 9:03] my lead agent burst into the room and said that we had to leave immediately, and propelled me out of my chair and put one hand on my belt and one hand on my shoulder and moved me."¹⁰

⁶ Richard A. Clarke, "Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror," Free Press, 2004, 1-2.

⁷ "Interview of Ashley Estes, President's Personal Secretary, by 60 Minutes II, West Wing," August 29, 2002 (<https://www.scribd.com/document/16063525/T3-B1-EOP-Press-Interviews-of-Staff-Fdr-Internal-Transcript-8-29-02-60-Minutes-II-Interview-of-Ashley-Estes-Bush-Secretary-VP-to-PEOC-Just-After>).

⁸ *ABC News*, "Sept. 11 Scramble: A Plane Hits the Pentagon; Bush Takes Flight; Others Give Orders From Bunkers," September 14, 2001 (https://web.archive.org/web/20021215215556/http://abcnews.go.com/onair/DailyNews/sept11_moments_2.html).

⁹ "Karl Rove, 9/11 Interview with Campbell Brown," *MSNBC*, September 11, 2002 (<http://web.archive.org/web/20080121071415/http://www.msnbc.com/modules/91102/interviews/rove.asp?cp1=1>).

¹⁰ "9/11 Reflections: Dick Cheney," *ABC News*, 2012, 45 seconds in: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/911-reflections-dick-cheney-14476056>.

What Did the 9/11 Commission Say?

The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) wrote that Cheney was hastily removed from his office by the Secret Service “just before 9:36 AM”, when there was a report of a plane heading for Washington. He arrived in the underground tunnel at 9:37, learned that the Pentagon had been hit, and made a phone call to the President from the tunnel. Accordingly, he did not enter the PEOC bunker until 9:58 AM¹¹ – nearly a full hour after the second WTC tower was hit at 9:03, when Cheney and the Secret Service learned the nation was under attack.

What Did the Secret Service Say?

In April 2010, a group of classified Secret Service logs released through FOIA all showed that Cheney was in the bunker before the Pentagon was hit at 9:38.¹²

The Danny Spriggs log reported:

“AD Spriggs said that SAIC [Special Agent] Anthony Zotto had telephoned the DCC during the initial stages to advise that Vice President Cheney had been relocated to the PEOC.”¹³

“A Timeline of the Actions of the Secret Service’s Technical Services Division (TSD) on 9/11” reported:

0930- ADC [redacted, Assistant Division Chief Danny Spriggs] reported to basement level ZP door¹⁴ and entered. SAIC Truscott and Zotto were already

¹¹ “The 9/11 Commission Report,” 2004, 39-40 (<https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>).

¹² “Monaghan FOIA- USSS- Memos and Timelines,” FOIA, April 23, 2010 (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/30764772/Monaghan-FOIA-USSS-Memos-and-Timelines>). Downloadable at: <http://www.mediafire.com/file/vydb4nxdmyy/SS+WH+9+11+Declassified.pdf>.

¹³ “SS WH 9 11 Declassified. Interview with ADC. Danny Spriggs,” October 1, 2001, p.7. (<https://www.scribd.com/document/105591636/SS-WH-9-11-Declassified>).

¹⁴ The PEOC was originally built by FDR under the East Wing to withstand a direct nuclear hit. Its exact specification is classified. “The Underground White House” (<https://whitehouse.gov1.info/tunnel/>). There is no clear picture of the

in the area with numerous (10) Presidential and Vice Presidential staff to include Vice President Cheney and NSC Advisor Rice. The Vice President was completing a telephone call at the base of the stairs. Upon completion of the Vice Presidents call, SAIC Truscott requested that the group proceed to the PEOC.¹⁵

(U) 0933 - The group entered the PEOC at which time information flow to the Vice President and staff began.¹⁶ (Regarding this 9:33 time, the layout of the PEOC is classified. Another FOIA Secret Service document, part of the 9/11 Commission files, noted that there may have been confusion between the “shelter” area and the PEOC.¹⁷)

These Secret Service reports mean that Cheney was in the PEOC at least 8 minutes before Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.

The TSD Division also operates the Tigerwall early warning system of airborne threats, and stated that at 09:18 AM “SAIC Truscott learned that an aircraft had been identified en-route to the Washington area.”¹⁸

Researcher Kevin Ryan observed:

“We have officially prepared documentation that indicates Truscott was aware of a hijacked plane heading for Washington at least 18 minutes before the official account says the vice president was moved from his office [at

PEOC layout, although the *9/11 Commission Report* (page 40) mentioned a tunnel leading to it with a secure telephone.

“Project ZP,” a 150-foot tunnel, was dug connecting the Oval Office to a location under the East Wing as an emergency route to move the president quickly to the PEOC. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_to_Treasury_Building_tunnel, accessed March 27, 2019.

¹⁵ “Monaghan FOIA- USSS- Memos and Timelines,” FOIA, April 23, 2010, 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁷ 9/11 Commission Summary of “USSS Statement and Interview Reports,” July 28, 2003 (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/14353654/DH-B5-Secret-Service-Requests-Fdr-Entire-Contents-5-Withdrawal-Notice-Doc-Req-Notes-Garabito-Shortly-After-9am-FAA-Van-Steenbergen-Said-4-Planes>).

The end of this document, p. 13, asks “Shelter distinct from PEOC?”

¹⁸ “Monaghan FOIA- USSS- Memos and Timelines,” FOIA, April 23, 2010, 6.

9:36]. If this is true, the public deserves to know why the vice president was not moved to safety immediately.”¹⁹

Barbara Riggs, former Deputy Director of the Secret Service, who was in Washington headquarters that day, recalled:

“Thru monitoring radar and activating an open line with the FAA, the Secret Service was able to receive real time information about other hijacked aircraft. We were tracking two hijacked aircraft as they approached Washington, D.C. and our assumption was that the White House was a target.”²⁰

Oddly, the *9/11 Commission Report* omitted this fact, which was also mentioned by Cheney, and by Richard Clarke, noting that the “Secret Service had a system that allowed them to see what FAA’s radar was seeing.”²¹

Because the above contradictions point to a cover-up regarding the Vice President’s whereabouts as Flight 77 was tracked towards the Pentagon, we will take an in-depth look at the alleged photographic evidence of his activities.

II. What Do the White House 9/11 Photographs Reveal?

Introduction

At the time of the 9/11 attacks, the White House Photograph Office was still using low-tech film, which was processed at the Anacostia Naval laboratory nearby. According to Eric Draper, who headed up the Photographic Office when Bush

¹⁹ Kevin Ryan, “September 11, 2001: Failures of the US Secret Service on the Morning of 9/11: A Call for Transparency,” *Global Research*, March 25, 2012 (<https://www.globalresearch.ca/september-11-2001-failures-of-the-us-secret-service-on-the-morning-of-9-11-a-call-for-transparency/29956>).

²⁰ “Spotlight On: Barbara Riggs,” *Cornell Alumni PCCW Newsletter*, Spring 2006 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060908074227/http://pccw.alumni.cornell.edu/news/newsletters/spring06/riggs.html>).

²¹ Richard A. Clarke, “Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror,” Free Press, 2004, page 7. Cheney stated that “the Secret Service has an arrangement [of open lines] with the FAA,” *MSNBC*, September 16, 2001 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20011102013616/https://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>).

came to power in January 2001, it took nearly two years to move from the naval lab processing to digital photos.²²

Significantly, Draper also noted that “every hour of the President schedule had to be documented including the schedule of the First Lady and Vice President.”²³

In July 2015, in response to repeated FOIA requests from *Frontline*, 356 official photos of Vice President Dick Cheney on September 11, 2001 were released to the public from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). (These had been forwarded to NARA in 2009 when the Bush presidency ended.)

We will consider only two sets of Cheney’s 9/11 photos:

- 1) The vast majority were taken in the White House underground bunker (the PEOC) by official Cheney photographer David Bohrer, and were created on September 11, 2001 (as shown in their accompanying image metadata)
- 2) Fifteen photos, many of which are near duplicates of one another, were said to have been taken in VP Cheney’s office before he left for the bunker at the disputed time of 9:36. Their metadata shows they were created nearly a year later, on August 15, 2002, and includes no photographer.²⁴

The metadata time-stamp for all the photographs has been withheld from the public. Only one of the 356 photographs reveal the time in any way, either on wall clocks or wrist-watches: an evening photo showing the watch of CIA director George Tenet in the PEOC.²⁵

It has therefore been necessary to establish the time of the 15 office photos by comparing, in meticulous detail (such as the shape of smoke drifting from the Twin

²² Eric Calouro, “An Interview with Eric Draper, George W. Bush’s Presidential Photographer,” *PetaPixel*, June 24, 2013 (<https://petapixel.com/2013/06/24/a-brief-interview-with-george-w-bushs-presidential-photographer-eric-draper/>).”

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The “Date Created” metadata field records the date and optionally the time the image was created. “IPTC Photo Metadata User Guide” (<https://www.iptc.org/std/photometadata/documentation/userguide/index.htm#!Documents/administrationandcommissioningdetails.htm>).

²⁵ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19890692856/in/album-72157656213196901/> (click to enlarge).

Towers²⁶), the images shown on Cheney's office TV set to those unfolding on the time-stamped ABC live broadcast.²⁷ A sample image comparison is shown below, showing the ABC Live News time-stamp at 9:31:



²⁶ For example, there is precise correspondence between both the text and the smoke pattern in the image on Cheney's television in this photograph, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19728890778/> (click to enlarge) and minute 44:58 of the ABC live broadcast, time-stamped 9:36, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

²⁷ "9/11 Attacks: ABC News Live Coverage - Sept 11, 2001 (Part One)," (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s).

The Time Period Covered by the Office Photos

Although Cheney arrived at work just after 7 AM,²⁸ and several witnesses reported that the Secret Service removed him to the PEOC soon after the second tower was hit at 9:03, the 15 released photos only cover the time that Cheney was in his office between 9:27 and 9:36 – the long-contested period as to whether or not he was directing operations in the PEOC before the Pentagon was hit.

Hence there are no photos to show Cheney in his office for the 24 minutes after the second tower strike at 9:03 – during which it was reported that many senior staff converged on his office, where photographer Bohrer was present with his mandate to document the vice president.

That Bohrer was indeed on duty and photographing the VP that morning is evident from a rare photo aired by *ABC News* in a 2012 interview with Cheney, showing him being herded down the steps to the PEOC by a Secret Service agent. The photo below, which was *not included* in the official 2015 release, is clearly stamped “Official White House Photo/David Bohrer.”²⁹



²⁸ David Kuo, “Tempting Faith,” Free Press, 2006, 183.

²⁹ “9/11 Reflections: Dick Cheney,” *ABC News*, 2012, 38 seconds in: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/911-reflections-dick-cheney-14476056>.

In fact, only three of the released office photos show anyone else at all with Cheney, right up until just before 9:36, when the 9/11 Commission said he was moved to the PEOC two minutes before the Pentagon was hit.³⁰

- Scooter Libby alone with Cheney at 9:27 AM³¹
- Scooter Libby and counselor Mary Matalin alone with Cheney at 9:28 AM³²
- Unidentified male staffer alone with Cheney at 9:36 AM (not the Secret Service agent in the Bohrer photo above).³³

III. Analysis: Two Damning Scenarios Raised by the Photos

Scenario One: If the 15 Office Photos Are Authentic

If the Commission's "just before 9:36" removal time is correct, and if the still office photos are authentic and not digitally manipulated using images from the ABC live broadcast,³⁴ many compelling questions and contradictions arise:

1. Why are there no released photos of the convergence of senior staff in Cheney's office right after 9:03 AM?

³⁰ "The 9/11 Commission Report," 2004, 39-40.

³¹ Photo at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19730266319>
Cheney's identical TV screen image is at 36:18 minutes in the ABC Broadcast, September 11, 2001,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

³² Photo at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19295977883>
Cheney's identical TV screen image is at 37:06 minutes, ABC Broadcast,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

³³ Photo at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19730248029>
Cheney's identical TV screen image is at 45:21 minutes, ABC Broadcast,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

³⁴ Digital manipulation has been historically performed by governments, as seen at <https://www.pocket-lint.com/apps/news/adobe/140252-30-famous-photoshopped-and-doctored-images-from-across-the-ages> and <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170629-the-hidden-signs-that-can-reveal-if-a-photo-is-fake>

2. Why was Cheney alone watching the President's 9:30-9:31 AM, 90-second speech from the Florida school,³⁵ shown in three of the photographs?
3. Why, starting at 9:30 AM, and in several of the photos following, is Cheney shown relaxed and unconcerned, watching TV by himself, with a foot resting casually on his desk, until 9:36, when the unknown staffer came in?³⁶
4. Why does Mary Matalin say that after Cheney was "warp-speed evacuated" to the PEOC, she was left alone with speech-writer John McConnell, when McConnell reported that he left Cheney's office soon after 9:03 AM as senior officials converged on the office?³⁷
5. Why, in the last 9:36 AM photo, is neither Mary nor John in the office, but only an unidentified staffer?³⁸



6. Why, in the 9:36 AM photo shortly before that, is Cheney still watching TV alone

³⁵ One of these photos is at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19728931340/> The ABC time of 9:31 AM is established at 40:05 minutes,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

³⁶ Three photos are near duplicates of

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19921999311/> taken at 9:33.

The matching ABC image is at 41:57 minutes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwiM_R9MR2M&t=2420s.

³⁷ Mary Matalin said: "John McConnell and I were left behind in his office, staring at each other as if to say, 'What are we, chopped liver?'" "What I Remember: That unforgettable morning," An NRO Symposium — September 8, 2011, *National Review*

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20150922030408/http://www.nationalreview.com/node/276536/print>).

³⁸ The staffer photo titled "VP Cheney talks with staff member," is at

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19730248029/> The 9:36 AM time-stamp for this TV image is at minute 45:21 of the ABC Broadcast.

with his leg outstretched on his desk?³⁹

7. Why did Special Agent James Scott “push through the staff gaggle around the vice president at 9:36 a.m.” and command “Now!”⁴⁰ when there are no officials shown in the three released 9:36 office photos?
8. Why are there no group photos in Cheney’s office at all?
9. What was Cheney doing in his office for the half hour after 9:03, when he and the Secret Service knew the nation was under attack?
10. Are there unreleased photos of that half hour in his office, like the unreleased Bohrer photo of Cheney on the steps with the Secret Service agent? Or do none exist because he was in the PEOC?
11. Why was Cheney, the acting Commander-in-Chief, photographically portrayed as not taking an active leadership role during the critical period from 9:27 to 9:36, while the FAA was tracking Flight 77?

Scenario Two: If the 15 Office Photos Are Not Authentic

We have seen that the 15 office photos only represent the period between 9:27 and 9:36, while Flight 77 was being tracked towards the Pentagon. However, there is persuasive evidence that Cheney was in the PEOC at that time – suggesting that the photos may have been altered or fabricated (possibly in the military lab) as a cover-up.

In a rarely seen 2002 interview, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta told *NBC News* that right after he saw that the second tower had been hit on his office TV, he received a call from the White House to "Get over here right away." He “ran down to the car, red light and sirens,” arrived at the White House and ran in, stopping briefly in the Situation Room to see Richard Clarke, and then ran with a Secret Service agent down to the PEOC.

“The Vice President and I were across from each other on the conference room table in the PEOC,” he said, “and it was probably about 9:27.”⁴¹

³⁹ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19728890778/> The time-stamp for his TV image is at minute 44:58 of the ABC Broadcast.

⁴⁰ Barton Gellman, “Angler: The Cheney Vice Presidency,” Penguin, 2008, 115.

⁴¹ Robert Hager, "Norman Mineta: 9/11 Interview with Robert Hager," *NBC News*, September 11, 2002

(<http://web.archive.org/web/20071102131924/http://www.msnbc.com/modules/91>

Eight months later, Mineta told the 9/11 Commission that Dick Cheney was in charge when he arrived, and that “within a few minutes, American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.”⁴²

Five or six minutes after he arrived, Mineta said, a young officer began coming into the bunker to report that a plane was coming in closer and closer to the Pentagon. It was first “50 miles out,” then “30 miles out,” and when it got down to “10 miles out,” he asked Cheney, “Do the orders still stand, sir?” Cheney then whipped his neck around and said, “Of course the orders still stand. Have you heard anything to the contrary?”⁴³

At 9:38 AM, the Pentagon was hit, allegedly by American Airlines Flight 77.

Why is this episode important?



Bush's authorization of the shoot-down order *after* the Pentagon was struck indicates that there had been no prior standing order to shoot down unresponsive aircraft.

Therefore, the standing order, which Cheney followed, would logically have been *not to shoot*, but to stand down.

Significantly, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (2004):

1. Did not include Mineta's testimony at all, nor was the video footage of Mineta preserved in its archive.

[102/interviews/mineta.asp?0cb=-31a105678&cp1=1](https://www.911commission.gov/interviews/mineta.asp?0cb=-31a105678&cp1=1)). This interview has disappeared almost totally from the Internet, including the Wayback Machine.

⁴² National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, “Public Hearing, Friday, May 23, 2003”

(https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm).

⁴³ Ibid.

2. The testimony of the junior officer speaking to Cheney has been redacted from its archive and classified as “national security.” The agenda page attached to the testimony confirms that the subject was the “standing order” described by Mineta.⁴⁴

IV. Conclusion

If the 15 photos are authentic, we have one damning scenario of Cheney in his office. If they are not, we have another damning scenario of Cheney in the PEOC.

The officially released photos, if authentic, show how little we know about what Cheney did between the time of the first attack at the WTC and shortly after 9:35 AM, when he was allegedly evacuated from his office. While the attacks were taking place – when his actions might have made a difference to the outcome of the crisis – he is seen relaxing in front of television, contributing nothing to America’s defense.

According to the *9/11 Commission Report*, Cheney only got shootdown authorization from Bush between 10:18 AM and 10:20 AM – after the attacks were well over.⁴⁵ Yet surely Cheney should have been trying to get this authorization as a high priority, as soon as he saw the second WTC crash at 9:03, when it became obvious that America was under attack.

This pattern of behavior – doing nothing significant until it was too late to make a difference – was exhibited by numerous key officials, including President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ralph Lopez, "9/11 report testimony altered to hide Cheney role in Pentagon hit," *Digital Journal*, February 2, 2015 (<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/9-11-report-testimony-altered-to-hide-cheney-roll-in-pentagon-hit/article/425008>).

⁴⁵ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 41, 465, note 221.

⁴⁶ David Ray Griffin and Elizabeth Woodworth, “9/11 Unmasked: An International Review Panel Investigation,” Interlink Books, 2018, 101-158. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, “by his own admission to the 9/11 Commission, did not speak to the President or issue any orders to the military to defend America until well after the attack had ended.” Lt. Col. Robert J. Darling, "24 Hours Inside the President's Bunker: 9-11-01: the White House," iUniverse, 2010, Introduction.

If the photos are not authentic, and Cheney was in the PEOC directing the military response in the minutes before 9:38, there is evidence that he stood down the interception of Flight 77.

Bush and Cheney had long resisted the formation of a 9/11 Commission. When it was finally called under pressure from the 9/11 families in November 2002, they testified jointly in the Oval Office, declining to take oath or be recorded.⁴⁷ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, written under the direction of White House insider Philip Zelikow,⁴⁸ was clearly a cover-up for the glaring defense failures of 9/11 – or worse.

The particular selection of office photos released in 2015 appears to be a further cover-up, showing Cheney’s casual non-involvement in the military response from 9:27 to 9:36, during which time an apparent stand-down allowed Flight 77 (or some other fast-moving object being tracked by radar) to hit the Pentagon.

If the photos are authentic, then Cheney was in dereliction of duty, as were those who were supposed to protect him. If they are inauthentic, which seems very likely, then they are part of a cover-up that has already been described amply during the almost 20 years since 9/11.

The cover-up suggests that what Cheney was actually doing during the time in question is a carefully guarded secret.

⁴⁷ Elisabeth Bumiller, “Bush-Cheney Interview Won’t Be Formally Recorded,” *New York Times*, April 28, 2004 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/28/us/bush-cheney-9-11-interview-won-t-be-formally-recorded.html>).

⁴⁸ Paul Sperry, "Is Fix in at 9/11 Commission?" March 31, 2004 (<https://original.antiwar.com/paul-sperry/2004/03/31/is-fix-in-at-911-commission/>).