

Fifty-nine Deceits in Fahrenheit 911

by David Kopel
Independence Institute

If all you know is what the mainstream media tell you, then you are living in a world of illusions. But you can't free your mind if you merely replace one set of manipulative illusions with another set of manipulative illusions. Fahrenheit 9/11 is a twisted, dishonest, paranoid, and hateful fantasy. Learn the facts, and make up your own mind.

The list below is a summary of a much longer report, which is available for free at www.davekopel.org. The report also discusses many other issues about the movie.

There are lots of good reasons why people have chosen to vote against (or for) the re-election of George Bush. And there are lots of good reasons why patriotic Americans have decided to oppose (or support) the war in Iraq. One thing that all the good reasons have in common is that they are based on facts. In a democracy, we should try to convince our fellow citizens with facts and logical reasoning. To manipulate people with frauds and propaganda is to attack democracy itself.

1. The Gore “victory” rally isn’t celebrating a Florida win. It was held before the polls had even opened.
2. Like all the other networks, Fox mistakenly said that Gore had won in Florida. The first network to retract the Florida mistake was CBS, not Fox.
3. A 6-month study by a consortium of major newspapers shows that Bush would have won the Florida recount under any of the terms which Gore sought in his lawsuits.
4. Investigation by the *Palm Beach Post* and others shows that race was not a reason why election officials mistakenly disqualified some voters because they were incorrectly thought to have felony convictions.
5. Bush’s Presidency before 9/11 was not in serious trouble. No commentator said that he looked like a lame-duck president. Congress had passed his #1 bill (the tax cut) and was on the way to passing his #2 bill (the education bill). The scene at the end of the movie in which Bush tells a rich audience “I call you my base,” was from an October 2000 charity fund-raiser. Both Gore and Bush spoke at the fund-raiser and, as is the custom at the fund-raiser, made fun of themselves.
6. “In his first eight months in office before September 11th, George W. Bush was on vacation, according to the Washington Post, forty-two percent of the time.” As the Washington Post reported, the figure includes weekends, and includes time in “vacation locations” such as Camp David, where Bush was working—as when he met with Tony Blair.
7. In the golf course scene (about the middle of the movie), Bush had just heard about a terrorist attack on Israel. He called the press together to make a quick statement condemning the terrorism against Israel. He was not speaking about attacks on the United States.
8. There is no evidence that Bush did not read the Aug. 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Briefing about al Qaeda.
9. He never claimed that the title’s “vagueness” was an excuse for not reading it.
10. The Briefing did not say “said that Osama bin Laden was planning to attack America by hijacking airplanes.” It said that the FBI has “not been able to corroborate” such a threat.
11. The Saudis left the U.S. only after air travel was opened for the general public.
12. According to Richard Clarke and the September 11 Commission, Clarke personally approved the Saudi departures, and the decision went no higher in the chain of command.
13. Moore lied to a TV reporter in claiming that *Fahrenheit* discloses Clarke’s decision to the audience. Clarke called the Saudi exit material in *Fahrenheit* a “mistake” by Moore.
14. Contrary to what *Fahrenheit* claims, the September 11 Commission found that many Saudis were asked “detailed questions” before being allowed to leave.
15. James Bath did not invest bin Laden family money in Bush’s energy company Arbusto. He invested his own money.

16. Bath's name was blacked-out from an Alabama National Guard record released by the White House—as required by federal law, which prohibits the disclosure of health-related personal information.

17. Prince Bandar has way too much influence on the U.S. government, as *Fahrenheit* shows, but American coddling of the Saudi tyranny is a long-standing bi-partisan tradition, not a Bush invention.

18. Harken Energy: Bush only sold the stock after company lawyers told him it was OK.

19. The reason that Bush “beat the rap” was because there was no evidence he had engaged in insider trading.

20. The Carlyle Group is not a Bush playground. Many Bush opponents are investors, including George Soros.

21. The Bush administration dealt Carlyle a huge financial blow by canceling the Crusader, one of the few weapons cancellations in the Bush administration.

22. The bin Ladens dropped out of Carlyle before the stock sale. Of the 1.4 billion that the Saudis invested in companies with Bush connections, the vast majority of the money was invested in Carlyle before George H.W. Bush joined the firm.

23. Craig Unger claims that the Saudis have \$860 billion invested in the U.S. The figure appears in his book *House of Bush, House of Saud*, but neither of Unger's cited sources support such a large figure.

24. Moore claims that the Saudis “own 7% of America.” But even if you believe Unger's fictitious \$860 billion figure, the Saudis own only about 7% of total foreign investment in America, which is over 10 trillion dollars. Only if all of America were owned by foreigners could Moore's claim be correct.

25. The Saudi embassy does not receive special protection. It is not the only foreign embassy which is guarded by the U.S. Secret Service. An international treaty signed by the U.S. requires the U.S. to protect any embassy which asks for protection.

26. Moore's insinuation that Bush runs U.S. foreign policy according to Saudi instructions is contradicted by the Afghanistan invasion (which toppled the Taliban regime which the Saudis strongly supported), and by the Iraq War (which the Saudis opposed, in part because Iraqi oil will compete with Saudi oil).

27. As Governor of Texas, Bush never met with Taliban representatives.

28. The proposed Unocal pipeline was supported by the Clinton administration, but Unocal abandoned the pipeline idea in 1998.

29. The new Afghani government has signed a protocol to build a pipeline, but it is an entirely different pipeline, in a location hundreds of miles distant from the Unocal proposal.

30. Construction has not begun on the new pipeline. Although Moore claims that “Enron stood to benefit” from the pipeline, Enron has never had any participation in either pipeline.

31. The Bush administration did not “welcome” Taliban diplomats in March 2001, but instead condemned them for failing to hand over Osama bin Laden.

32. Despite Moore's pose in the movie, he opposed the Afghanistan War, and—in December 2002—claimed that Osama bin Laden might be innocent.

33. In claiming that the Afghanistan invasion was a mere ruse to protect the Saudis, Moore omits the results of liberation in Afghanistan: destruction of al Qaeda training camps, the creation of free elections, more freedom for women, and the homecoming of 1.5 million refugees from the Taliban.

34. The various quotes about Bush administration cooperation with the September 11 Commission have been re-sequenced to create a false impression.

In July 2003, Chairman Kean complained about lack of cooperation. In February 2004, Bush said that the White House had given extraordinary cooperation. Kean agreed, and praised the White House for providing “unprecedented” access.

35. John Ashcroft didn't really lose a Senate election to a “dead guy.” Mel Carnahan died in a plane crash a few weeks before the election, and the Missouri Governor had promised to appoint Carnahan's widow Jean Carnahan if voters pulled the lever for Mel Carnahan.

36. The FBI did not “know” about al Qaeda suspects who were attending flight training schools. The information was never passed above the level of one field office.

37. Ashcroft did not cut overall counter-terrorism funding. He only proposed a one-year cut in a particular program that already had two years of unspent money.

38. Rep. Porter Goss says he has an “800 number,” and the *Fahrenheit* caption says “He’s lying.” Goss does have a toll-free number, although the prefix is 877.

39. Moore says Saddam’s Iraq “had never murdered a single American citizen.” In fact, Saddam paid for terrorist bombers in Israel who murdered Americans, along with people of other nationalities. Saddam also sheltered the American-killing terrorist Abu Nidal, and the bomb-maker for the 1993 World Trade Center bombings.

40. In addition, Saddam ordered assassination attempts against former President Bush and against U.S. diplomats in the Philippines.

41. Moore claims that the Saddam regime “never threatened to attack the United States.” In fact, in 1997 the regime publicly ordered: “American and British interests, embassies, and naval ships in the Arab region should be the targets of military operations and commando attacks by Arab political forces.” On the first anniversary of September 11, Saddam’s regime called for suicide attacks on Americans.

42. Moore claims that there was no connection between Iraq and al Qaeda. In fact, there is an extensive record of collaboration although—as the September 11 Commission announced—there is no proof that Saddam participated beforehand in al Qaeda attacks on America.

43. *Fahrenheit* shows Condoleezza Rice saying, “Oh, indeed there is a tie between Iraq and what happened on 9/11.” The audience laughs derisively. Here is what Rice really said on Nov. 28, 2003:

"Oh, indeed there is a tie between Iraq and what happened on 9/11. It's not that Saddam Hussein was somehow himself and his regime involved in 9/11, but, if you think about what caused 9/11, it is the rise of ideologies of hatred that lead people to drive airplanes into buildings in New York. This is a great terrorist, international terrorist network that is determined to defeat freedom. It has perverted Islam from a peaceful religion into one in which they call on it for violence. And they're all linked. And Iraq is a central front because, if and when, and we will, we change the nature of Iraq to a place that is peaceful and democratic and prosperous in the heart of the Middle East, you will begin to change the Middle East...."

44. Moore portrays pre-liberation Iraq as a happy nation of kite-flying and weddings. In fact, a sixth of the population had fled Saddam’s tyranny. The United Nations and Amnesty International condemned “the systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and

of international humanitarian law by the Government of Iraq, resulting in an all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror.”

45. The only Iraqi casualties which Moore shows are civilians, although military casualties far outnumbered civilian.

46. When showing pictures of buildings being blown up, Moore does not reveal that many of them were military buildings, and civilians were never allowed anywhere near them.

47. A humorous sequence making fun of tiny countries in the Iraq liberation Coalition does not even mention the major countries in the Coalition, such as the U.K., Australia, Italy, and Japan.

Not a deceit, but mean-spirited and exploitive: The footage of the funeral of U.S. Air Force Maj. Gregory Stone at Arlington National Cemetery appears without his family’s permission, and over their vehement objection. Major Stone strongly believed in the Iraq mission, as does his family. The footage of Massachusetts National Guardsman Peter Damon, who is undergoing therapy at Walter Reed Army Medical Center is also used without his permission.

48. Despite Moore’s claims, American media have not been mindlessly supportive of the Iraq war. For example, Peter Jennings has been extremely critical. The evidence that Moore offers to portray Jennings as a war supporter is a clip of Jennings reporting in April 2003 that Saddam’s army had collapsed—which was true.

49. The scene of American soldiers making fun of a man underneath a sheet is not torture of a prisoner of war. They are making fun of a drunk who passed out in the street.

50. Moore reports that Bush proposed closing some Veteran’s hospitals. But he also proposed opening other veteran’s hospitals.

51. Bush once opposed renewing a special bonus of \$75/month for soldiers in “imminent danger zones.” Moore claims that Bush proposed cutting combat soldiers’ pay by 1/3; but a soldier’s pay and benefits is over \$27,000 per year, even at low enlisted grades.

52. While making false claims about a Bush pay cut, Moore omits the fact that Bush sought and won a 3.7% military pay raise in 2003.

53. Moore claims that only one Congressman has a child in Iraq. Actually, two do. (Democratic Senator Tim Johnson of S.D., and Republican Rep. Duncan Hunter of California.) Also, John Ashcroft has a son on a naval ship in the Persian Gulf.

54. *Fahrenheit* deceptively cut the footage of Rep. Mark Kennedy to make it look like Kennedy rebuffed Moore's request to help enlist Congressional children. In fact, Kennedy said it was a good idea, and offered to help.

55. *Fahrenheit* shows Rep. Michael Castle walking past Moore. But Rep. Castle is childless.

56. Based on Census Bureau data, Congressional families are more likely than other families to have children serving in Iraq.

57. Moore calls Flint, Michigan, "my hometown." In fact, he grew up in Davison, a much wealthier and much whiter suburb.

58. In *Fahrenheit*, Moore pretends to support our troops. But in fact, he supports the enemy in Iraq—the coalition of Saddam loyalists, al Qaeda operatives, and terrorists controlled by Iran or Syria—who are united in their desire to murder Iraqis, and to destroy any possibility of democracy in Iraq. Here is what Moore said on April 14, 2004, about the forces who are killing Americans and trying to impose totalitarian rule on Iraq: "The Iraqis who have risen up against the occupation are not 'insurgents' or 'terrorists' or 'The Enemy.' They are the REVOLUTION, the Minutemen, and their numbers will grow—and they will win." Do you really think that someone who wants Iraq to be ruled by Islamist or Ba'athist tyranny, and who deliberately kills innocent civilians with car bombs, is like the American Minutemen?

59. As reported in the trade journal *Screen Daily*, affiliates of the Iranian and Syrian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah are promoting *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and Moore's Middle East distributor, Front Row, is accepting the terrorist assistance: "In terms of marketing the film, Front Row is getting a boost from organizations related to Hezbollah which have rung up from Lebanon to ask if there is anything they can do to support the film. And although [Front Row's Managing Director Giancarlo] Chacra says he and his company feel strongly that *Fahrenheit* is not anti-American, but anti-Bush, 'we can't go against these organizations as they could strongly boycott the film in Lebanon and Syria.'" (Nancy Tartaglione, "Fahrenheit to be first doc released theatrically in Middle East," *Screen Daily.com*, June 9, 2004. The story is discussed in Samantha Ellis, "Fahrenheit 9/11 gets help offer from Hezbollah," *The Guardian* (London), June 17, 2004.)

Slate.com (6/24/04) followed up on the story, and reported: "Gianluca Chacra, the managing director of Front Row Entertainment, the movie's distributor in the United Arab Emirates, confirms that Lebanese student members of Hezbollah 'have asked us if there's any way they could support the film.' Chacra was unfazed, even excited, about their offer. 'Having the support of such an entity in Lebanon is quite significant for that market and not at all controversial. I think it's quite natural.'"

Do you think it's patriotic to accept help from a terrorist organization which has killed and kidnapped hundreds of Americans, which works with al Qaeda and other terrorists, and which is currently aiding the killing of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians? American patriotism can include presenting honest arguments against a particular American military policy. Hateriotism is the spreading of vicious lies against American soldiers and in favor of tyrants.

It's not unpatriotic to criticize a war or particular wartime policies. But how many patriots do you know who take aid from terrorists who kill Americans?

This essay comes from the Independence Institute, a think-tank in Colorado which is founded on the principles of the Declaration of Independence (www.independenceinstitute.org). The author, Dave Kopel, is a life-long Democrat who endorsed and voted for Ralph Nader in 2000. He supports some but not all aspects of the current war on terror.

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