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**FRANK RICH,
ARIANNA HUFFINGTON,
& DWIGHT GARNER
ARE
LIARS, DECEIVERS,
AND TRAITORS**

(PART ONE)

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**NOTES FROM
A DYING NATION
NUMBER FOUR**

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Part 1

Traitors, Type One

When a once-noble free republic enters its death-throes isn't a time when timidity of response remains useful or meritorious any more than does a continued insistence upon good manners—especially when “manners” serve as much as barriers to truth as they do aids to a civility that might once have done more good than harm.

For these reasons, I use the crass, blunt, impolite, and leaden declarative sentence, “Frank Rich, Arianna Huffington, & Dwight Garner Are Liars, Deceivers, and Traitors,” as title for this essay.

And the truth is that the same flat-footed declarative sentence could and should be rephrased to apply to leagues of other American writers, journalists, thinkers, and cultural analysts from both high estate and low, all the way from the Huffingtons and Riches topping the visibility stakes down to someone I know who has an education from the most elite of eastern universities, whom I've been fairly close to for thirty-five years or so, who has proven herself both as literary scholar and socio-cultural historian—and yet who, on the historical subject of 9/11, remains stuck in an Archie Bunker cocoon of ignorance so thickly woven that she still actually thinks that the moronic and malignant phrase “conspiracy theory” explains everything there is to be explained about 9/11 truth-seekers—that, in short, they're “conspiracy nuts” (in [Frank Rich's elegant phrase](#)) and therefore blinded by zeal, steered by desire, and beyond the guidance of reason.

The truth, though, is exactly the opposite—my old acquaintance is among those who cling like mussels in their dreamland of “belief,” while those who are examining 9/11 truth are the real empiricists, looking at evidence and drawing logical conclusions from it.

I'll admit I'm shocked by this particular manifestation of settled refusal, if only because my old acquaintance is a highly and *most* impeccably trained, long-serving professional intellectual—and yet even she has fallen for the cheap disinformation campaigns that have been employed for years to malign and smear the movement. (If you don't believe me about the disinformation, click [here](#) and do a page-search for “Sferios,” or just click [here](#)). Even worse, she has glibly written off *other* highly trained scholars and writers—including yours truly—as being incapable of objective thought or analysis and therefore as being, unlike her, victims of conspiratorial crazy-think.

Well. Not only am I puzzled as to why this colleague, who for thirty-five years has been gratifyingly generous with praise for me as a writer, should suddenly *now* relegate me to the realms of the Frank Richian “nuts.” And there's another thing. I've know this person for three-and-a-half decades, and I've watched—and admired—her quickness to criticize those who claim expertise of one kind or another (usually in a literary field or genre, or simply in an argument or discussion) but have failed to read or study the basic relevant texts.

In other words, there can't be expertise without homework. And there can't be wisdom without roots. In this, my friend is perfectly correct and has *been* perfectly correct for all these years. *Now*, however, she shows absolutely *no* inclination to acquaint herself with the basic and relevant texts that might justify *her* posing as a critic of *all of us* who are part of the 9/11 truth movement. Do you smell a rat? Well, I sure do.

I wrote my friend—as I have every New York City resident I know and have an address for—urging that she look at the [NYC 9/11 Ballot Initiative site](#) and give serious thought to signing the petition (which I attached) that, if enough signatures are collected, will put a referendum question on the ballot in November whereby residents of the city can vote yes or no to empower the commission in a new and non-partisan investigation into the truth of the events that took place on 9/11 and immediately afterward.

Here is part of what she wrote back:

As for the ballot initiative. . . : I can not sign the petition. If the investigative commission—whoever or whatever it is—finds no conspiracy, the conspiracy theorists will add that finding to the conspiracy. . . [sic] and so it goes with such theories. . . [sic] everything becoming grist for the mill.

This adult, professional, practicing American literary intellectual, in other words, can't or won't be bothered so much as to glance [at a web site](#) before slurring “whoever it is” she'd find out about there. Slur first, do your homework second. No. Correction: Do your homework not at all. This kind of prideful, blind, cavalier bigotry is all too often met and expected in some of the lowlier regions of our graceless and anti-educated so-called society. But to find it in the most *highly* educated and most thoroughly trained is to despair at once of the American character *and* of American education.

It's obvious that this person hasn't read even one of the major scholarly books on [9/11 itself, on the history leading up to 9/11, or on the covering up of the facts about 9/11](#).

Now, god knows that there's no written law saying that anyone whatsoever must read any of these books if they don't choose to. On the other hand, there *is* a law of another kind that pertains in this case. It's a law from the realm of ethics, and it's a law that pertains with a special visibility, if you will, among intellectuals and other professionals. It's the law of professional ethics that says, just as my friend always said, that if you're going to claim expertise about something, you'd better actually be expert in it.

Take a medical doctor. What if she claimed expertise in gall bladder removal but had never studied surgery? Take an attorney. What if he practiced divorce law but had no law degree? Take a professor. What if she claimed expertise in literature of the Elizabethan period but had read no literature, history, or criticism from or pertaining to any theme, figure, or literature earlier than Fielding?

The person in each of these examples would be a fraud, and the person in at least two of the cases could be punished by law.

I'm certainly not interested in a law suit, but I do have a question that I think is an important one: What, if anything, distinguishes these three examples of fraud from the example of my friend who claimed expertise about something—the nature of people and their scholarship in search of 9/11 truth—that she has no training in and knows nothing about?

The answer, of course, is that no difference is to be found. My friend is a fraud. I won't even admit that there's a difference in *degree* between the case of her fraud and the cases of the others, as I can imagine many people arguing. They would say, for example, that in the case of the fraudulent physician, actual physical *lives* could be lost, and in the

case of the fraudulent divorce lawyer, the lives of entire families could be harmed and unsettled.

And I would say in return that in the case of the fraudulent intellectual, the free republic could be lost, habeas corpus could be lost, and anyone—*anyone*, for no demonstrable or definable reason whatsoever—could be sent to any of the many concentration camps already waiting throughout the country, could be sent there, first, and then, second, forgotten forever. They could die there.

Flip, shallow, inattentive, smug, uninformed, self-involved, presumptuous Americans—including American intellectuals, even *leading* American intellectuals—are the second-greatest danger in the world today. The *greatest* danger is the [rogue “government,”](#) or the shadow [“government, or the “over” or the “deep” government](#) that the blindness and ignorance of this American citizenry, because of their having abandoned¹ every shred of their true responsibilities *as* citizens, have allowed in the first place to come into existence all around them and within their very midst; have allowed in the second place to metastasize into the conscience-less, rabid, flesh-eating global disease it now is; and, finally, have allowed to become very possibly unstoppable altogether unless it be at the cost of the destruction of life, health, and earth itself on scales never before imagined in human history, not even during, say, the Black Plague of the fourteenth century or the Holocaust of the twentieth.

And exactly who *has* destroyed the United States—is it the military-corporate government? In other words, is it those actually *wreaking* the destruction? Or could you just as well say that it’s the *citizens* of the United States, the multi-millions who in their ignorance and myriad fatuous complacencies have *allowed* the destruction to begin, grow, and now proceed unchecked?

And what about the *world*—who is it that’s responsible and has *been* responsible over the past sixty years for the destruction of *other* nations, *other* peoples, *other* races, *other* economies, *other* populations? Is it the corpo-military [“rogue”](#) or [“over”](#) government itself, the conscience-less, rabid, flesh-eating disease of conquest and empire that programmatically rapes, murders, tortures, irradiates, imprisons, starves, and ruins whatever peoples or nations it chooses elsewhere in the world? *Or*, again, does the fault for the unleashing of so great an evil lie with those who *failed to prevent* its birth, its growth, its long-time crushing implementation, and, now, in the power-vacuum after the collapse of the Soviet Union, its ruinous lunge for the jugular of peoples everywhere?

The answer is clear. The United States is a ruined and failed society—or a very carefully *destroyed* one, as [A Nation Gone Blind](#) argues. The “over” government commands the Nazis of today—the Nazis of today being “our” forces—but the *enablers* of the “over” government are *us*, we the negligent, ruined, intellectually lobotomized, visionless “people” of a visionless republic. We, this visionless “people,” will (as long as the party-to-the-death lasts) continue to be exploited, as will much of the world, by this monstrous, unaccountable, destructive power that controls us, the same unaccountable

¹ Or, in fairness, by merit of being *conditioned* to abandon, etc.

and destructive power that controls “our” “nation,” and the same unaccountable and destructive power that controls that nation’s “foreign policy”—including that part of its “foreign policy” that we now call “9/11.” This power I’m speaking of, this morally and ethically *hollow* force, is the force that was conceived in the United States and that developed gradually throughout the long empty years beginning with 1947 and stretching ever more grimly onward toward the end of the 20th century. Today, this force has at long last achieved its mature existence, has at last emerged fully-formed out of its stinking womb of death, deceit, lust-for-profit, and absence of humanity. So shrewdly, carefully, and maliciously has this great force been brought from conception through birth and now to full maturity that it exists seemingly beyond the reach of check, brake, or hindrance, but takes as its *right* the laying waste of all earth and all humanity that may stand in the way of its ravaging, bowel- and anus-connected (but neither heart- nor conscience-connected) maw.

This is the force that America *is* today. *This* force is the *character* of America today. This force of amoral, ravaging bestiality, destruction, and murder is the entirety of what America *is and has become* at this present moment in its sometimes hope-engendering, often colorful, but now depraved and perhaps wholly irredeemable history.

How did such a thing happen? How could it have come about? How could criminality have become lawfulness? How could “invasion” have become “pre-emption”? How could international law and crimes against humanity have become matters of no consequence to the ravaging American “will”? How could torture have become standard practice, as it was in the Gulag and among the Nazis? How could habeas corpus have been taken away? How could the principles of law as established in [Blackstone’s Commentaries](#) have [given way to the cruelties of Benthamite law](#), making pre-emptive detention as well as trial—and conviction—for “thought crimes” potentially commonplace?

It can be argued that every American citizen is complicit in bringing into existence the state of criminality that is what America has now become. And it can therefore be argued that every American is complicit in *every crime* that this state commits. It can be argued that everyone is complicit who *has done nothing to oppose* the transformation of America into a criminal state. Thinking about such awful matters, I’m reminded of Mickey Z. asking recently, in http://onlinejournal.com/artman/publish/article_3260.shtml “Ashamed to be American,” the equally awful question, “How much are you willing to endure before you take serious, sustained action?”

“*Serious, sustained action.*” How bad does it have to get before a person takes *action*, let alone “serious and sustained action”? This is a question that, cast in different situations and settings, has been popularized in dramatic form amid the popcorn and Jujubes in ten thousand grade B movies about World War II. How bad did it have to get before a person in, say, Berlin or Düsseldorf or Munich, or Paris or Toulouse or Marseilles, *took serious, sustained action*?

A word long lost to the nostalgic realms of a vital but old-fashioned history: *Resistance*.

We don't need to think of that word as a meaningful one to us, now, here in America. The "resistance." Oh, that was *way back in history*, someone says, a typically American notion about history, possibly spoken by an anti-educated high school kid who doesn't know the difference between the final exam and the Final Solution. On the other hand, the kid is right enough: The 1930s and 1940s in many ways *have* been transformed into remote antiquity, the nostalgic stuff of film noir and one-piece bathing suits, a time when men's pants were almost as baggy as the ghetto-hipsters' blue jeans are now. But at the same time, we must all agree that such soft-headed swoon-thinking as this is a cultural, philosophic, and political disaster. Mickey Z's question—"[How much are you willing to endure before you take serious, sustained action?](#)"—is like a boomerang that swoops far out in front of you and then returns to whack you in the jaw: And as it knocks you cockeyed, it whispers to you, You idiot, can't you see that the late 1930's have come back again, that they're *now*, that they're *here*? And the boomerang is right. It's telling the simple but unbelievable truth: Mickey Z's question says, reveals, speaks, hammers home the brute fact that *America is now the enemy*, that *we* are now the Nazis, that *we*, every *one* of us living in America today, *we*, without excuse or escape, *that we are all Germans now*.

No point in quibbling about it, since the facts are there. The only significant and pressing question is what to *do*. All the way back in February of this year, opening an essay called "[What Do We Stand For?](#)" Paul Craig Roberts used these words:

Americans traditionally thought of their country as a "city upon a hill," a "light unto the world." Today only the deluded think that. [Polls](#) show that the [rest of the world](#) regards the [US and Israel](#) as [the two greatest threats to peace](#).

This is not surprising. In the words of [Arthur Silber](#): "The Bush administration has announced to the world, and to all Americans, that this is what the United States now stands for: a vicious determination to dominate the world, criminal, genocidal wars of aggression, torture, and an increasingly brutal and brutalizing authoritarian state at home. That is what we stand for."

Addressing his fellow Americans, Silber [asks the paramount question](#), "Why do you support [these horrors]?"

His question goes to the heart of the matter. Do we Americans have any honor, any humanity, any integrity, any awareness of the crimes our government is committing in our name? Do we have a moral conscience?

The moral conscience question is a great one, but, to my way of thinking, a vitally related and equally important question is whether we have any *brains*.

We'll come to the moral question in a moment, as we move on to the second part of this essay, but I can hardly leave *this* part without returning for a moment to my old friend, acquaintance, colleague, whatever you may choose to call her, the one who

“couldn’t” sign the 9/11 truth petition because she *knew* that *all* 9/11 truth investigators are what she calls “conspiracy theorists,” that *all* conspiracy theorists are indistinguishable from one another, that none of them will accept *facts* but instead will adhere adamantly to *beliefs*, that they are therefore uniformly unreachable through the language of reason, and that they therefore should under no circumstances be encouraged in their “work” and should instead simply be ignored.

But, dear divinities in non-heaven! is my old acquaintance, as she speaks, not doing exactly those same things that she’s lacerating and belittling the “conspiracy theorists” for doing? Is she not, in other words, firmly making conclusive assertions about things that in actuality she *knows* not the least thing about but that she’ll stick by *no matter what*?

Has she, this old professional literary intellectual colleague of mine, not even read Plato’s “Apology”?

Readers will remember the story, or at least the essence of it. A man named Chaerephon once traveled to Delphi for the purpose of asking the oracle there whether any man was wiser than Socrates. The oracle responded in the negative, saying that indeed it was true, no man was wiser than Socrates.

When he learned what the oracle had said, Socrates found himself baffled. And now, years later, he explains before the court of Athens (where he is being tried on the charges of atheism and corrupting the youth of the city) how he went about finding the actual meaning of the oracle *and* how his discovery ended up over the intervening years creating for him the powerful dislike of many, many eminent Athenians.

When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of this riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a god and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After a long consideration, I at last thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, “Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest.” Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed to him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself; and I went and tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another, who had still higher philosophical pretensions, and my conclusion was exactly the same. I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.

After this I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first. And I said to myself, Go I must to all who appear to know, and find out the meaning of the oracle. And I swear to you, Athenians, by the dog I swear!—for I must tell you the truth—the result of my mission was just this: I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that some inferior men were really wiser and better.²



And now at last, thanks in good measure to Plato (and Socrates), we've got at least *part* of an answer to one of our three toweringly important questions. For clarification, let me cite what these three questions are. The first is Paul Craig Roberts' question, "Do we have a moral conscience?" The second is mine, "Do we have any *brains*?" And the third is the question of *exactly what one is to do* in response to Mickey Z's appeal for *resistance* against American global crimes, his appeal for "serious, sustained action."

And what is that partial answer? It's this: Don't be like my old acquaintance. Don't be like the prominent Athenians Socrates interviewed in order to let *them* reveal that they in fact knew *nothing* about things that they *claimed* to know about, that they *weren't* wise in matters that they *believed* themselves to be wise in—a belief that their followers and underlings made them adhere to all the more firmly through flattery and officiousness.

I'm shocked, as I admitted pages ago, by my friend's behavior. This shock comes partly from seeing *anyone* behave as she has, but it comes even more from seeing a purported *intellectual* behave in such a way.

What will happen to me as a result of my saying these things about my colleague? In Socrates' case, the penalty was death for having led the prominent Athenians to expose what was false in themselves. Socrates proposed regular free lunch at the city hall as "punishment" for what he'd done, since what he'd done was a good thing, but the angered prominent Athenians preferred death instead and put Socrates in prison and gave him the hemlock to drink.

I don't know whether my old intellectual acquaintance will advocate death for me, or, god knows, make an effort to bring it about. But I do know two things, and I know them very well. The first is that the general population of America, through behaving in ways similar to the way we've seen my colleague behave—through claiming or even *believing* that they know much about things that in truth they know nothing about—have brought the republic already near the door of death, and themselves along with it. Patriotism, for example, or citizenship. Clearly, most Americans know *nothing*

² ["Apology," trans. Benjamin Jowett](#)

whatsoever about these things, although they behave with the absolute certainty and conviction of trained and true experts in them. But with every [Jose Padilla](#)³ that's allowed, with every [Zacariaa Moussaoui](#) that's permitted, with every [Maher Arar](#), with every [Guantanamo prisoner](#), with every case of torture, with every [casualty](#) or fatality from [genocide](#) brought about through the use of [depleted uranium](#), with every permitted departure from the law of [Blackstone](#) and every embrace of the law of [Bentham](#)—with any and all such things as these, things that Americans in general accept or remain blind to and *fail to resist*, things that Americans ignore because they *think* they know what republican government is or what elections are, because they *think* they know what conspiracy is, because they *think* they know what *citizenship* is—with every such case of blindness or acceptance or neglect, America sinks only further into death; and with every such case of blindness or acceptance or neglect, Americans *themselves* sink only further in the same direction, being no longer republican citizens but nothing more than hollow men pacing blindly on the empty walks of death.

And the second thing I know and know very well is this: That what its ignorant and ruined citizens have allowed America to become is the most treacherous agent of ruin, death, destruction, and despair ever to have been known on the face of the earth.

—Eric Larsen
—6/12/2008

NOTE: NEXT TIME—TRAITORS, TYPE 2

³ [The jury, of course, had no idea of what was at stake. It was a patriotic jury that appeared in court with one row of jurors dressed in red, one in white, and one in blue \(Peter Whoriskey, *Washington Post*, Aug. 17, 2007\). It was a jury primed to be psychologically and emotionally manipulated by federal prosecutors desperate for a conviction for which there was little, if any, supporting evidence. For the jury, patriotism required that they strike a blow for America against terrorism. No member of this jury was going to return home to accusations of letting off a person who has been portrayed as a terrorist in the U.S. media for five years.](#)