

Fifty-six deceptions in Fahrenheit 9/11

by Dave Kopel

There are many articles which have pointed out the distortions, falsehoods, and lies in the film Fahrenheit 9/11. This report compiles the Fahrenheit 9/11 deceptions which have been identified by a wide variety of reviewers. In addition, I identify some inaccuracies which have not been addressed by other writers.

The report follows the approximate order in which the movie covers particular topics: the Bush family, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. This report focuses solely on factual issues, and not on aesthetic criticism of the film.

To understand the deceptions, it helps to understand Moore's ideological position. So let us start with Moore's belief that the September 11 attacks on the United States were insignificant.

Edward Koch, the former Democratic Mayor of New York City, writes:

A year after 9/11, I was part of a panel discussion on BBC-TV's "Question Time" show which aired live in the United Kingdom. A portion of my commentary at that time follows:

"One of the panelists was Michael Moore. During the warm-up before the studio audience, Moore said something along the lines of "I don't know why we are making so much of an act of terror. It is three times more likely that you will be struck by lightning than die from an act of terror." I mention this exchange because it was not televised, occurring as it did before the show went live. It shows where he was coming from long before he produced "Fahrenheit 9/11."

Edward Koch, "Moore's propaganda film cheapens debate, polarizes nation," World Tribune, June 28, 2004. (By the way, I don't disagree with the point that it is reasonable to consider the number of deaths from any particular problem in assessing how serious the problem is. Moore's point, however, was willfully oblivious to the fact that al Qaeda did not intend 9/11 to the last word; the organization was working on additional attacks, and if the organization obtained the right weapons, millions of people might be killed.)

As we go through the long list of lies and tricks in Fahrenheit 9/11, keep in mind that Michael Moore has assembled a "war room" of political operatives and lawyers in order to respond to criticism of Fahrenheit 9/11 and to file defamation suits. (Jack Shafer, "Libel Suit 9/11. Michael Moore's hysterical, empty threats," Slate.com, June 12, 2004.)

Of course if there are any genuine errors in this report, the errors will be promptly corrected. Conversely, because Moore has a paid expert staff which is monitoring criticism of the movie, it is reasonable to assume that-unless I have specifically retracted some item in this report-Moore and his staff have not offered a persuasive rebuttal.

In this report, I number Moore's deceptions. Some of them are outright lies; some are omissions which create a false impression. Others involve different forms of deception. A few are false statements Moore has made when defending the film.

Deceptions 1-2: 2000 Election Night

Fahrenheit 9/11 begins on election night 2000. We are first shown the Al Gore rocking on stage with famous musicians and a high-spirited crowd. The conspicuous sign on stage reads "Florida Victory." Moore creates the impression that Gore was celebrating his victory in Florida.

Actually, the rally took place in the early hours of election day, before polls had even opened. Gore did campaign in Florida on election day, but went home to Tennessee to await the results. The "Florida Victory" sign reflected Gore's hopes, not any actual election results. ("Gore Campaigns Into Election Day," Associated Press, Nov. 7, 2000.)

The film shows CBS and CNN calling Florida for Al Gore. According to the narrator, “Then something called the Fox News Channel called the election in favor of the other guy..All of a sudden the other networks said, ‘Hey, if Fox said it, it must be true.’”

We then see NBC anchor Tom Brokaw stating, “All of us networks made a mistake and projected Florida in the Al Gore column. It was our mistake.”

Moore thus creates the false impression that the networks withdrew their claim about Gore winning Florida when they heard that Fox said that Bush won Florida.

In fact, the networks which called Florida for Gore did so early in the evening-before polls had even closed in the Florida panhandle, which is part of the Central Time Zone. NBC called Florida for Gore at 7:49:40 p.m., Eastern Time. This was 10 minutes before polls closed in the Florida panhandle. Thirty seconds later, CBS called Florida for Gore. And at 7:52 p.m., Fox called Florida for Gore. Moore never lets the audience know that Fox was among the networks which made the error of calling Florida for Gore prematurely. Then at 8:02 p.m., ABC called Florida for Gore. Only ABC had waited until the Florida polls were closed.

The premature calls probably cost Bush thousands of votes from the conservative panhandle, as discouraged last-minute voters heard that their state had already been decided, and many voters who were waiting in line left the polling place. In Florida, as elsewhere, voters who have arrived at the polling place before closing time often end up voting after closing time, because of long lines.

At 10:00 p.m., which network took the lead in retracting the premature Florida result? The first retracting network was CBS, not Fox.

Over four hours later, at 2:16 a.m., Fox projected Bush as the Florida winner, as did all the other networks by 2:20 a.m.

CBS had taken the lead in making the erroneous call for Gore, and had taken the lead in retracting that call. At 3:59 a.m., CBS also took the lead in retracting the Florida call for Bush. All the other networks, including Fox, followed the CBS lead within eight minutes. That the networks arrived at similar conclusions within a short period of time is not surprising, since they were all using the same data from the Voter News Service. (Linda Mason, Kathleen Francovic & Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “CBS News Coverage of Election Night 2000: Investigation, Analysis, Recommendations” (CBS News, Jan. 2001), pp. 12-25.)

Moore’s editing technique of the election night segment is typical of his style: all the video clips are real clips, and nothing he says is, formally speaking, false. But notice how he says, “Then something called the Fox News Channel called the election in favor of the other guy.” The impression created is that the Fox call of Florida for Bush came soon after the CBS/CNN calls of Florida for Gore, and that Fox caused the other networks to change (“All of a sudden the other networks said, ‘Hey, if Fox said it, it must be true.’”)

This is the essence of the Moore technique: cleverly blending half-truths to deceive the viewer.

Deceit 3: 2000 Election Recount

A little while later: .Michael Moore shows a clip of CNN analyst Jeffrey Toobin saying that if ballots had been recounted in Florida after the 2000 presidential vote, “under every scenario Gore won the election.”

What Moore doesn’t show is that a six-month study in 2001 by news organizations including The New York Times, the Washington Post and CNN found just the opposite. Even if the Supreme Court had not stopped a statewide recount, or if a more limited recount of four heavily Democratic counties had taken place, Bush still would have won Florida and the election. Thomas Frank, “Film offers limited view,” *Newsday*, June 27, 2004.)

Deceits 4-5: the Bush residency, before September 11

The movie lauds an anti-Bush riot that took place in Washington, D.C., on the day of Bush's inauguration. Moore continues: "No President had ever witnessed such a thing on his inauguration day. And for the next eight months it didn't get any better for George W. Bush. He couldn't get his judges appointed; he had trouble getting his legislation passed; and he lost Republican control of the Senate. His approval ratings in the polls began to sink."

Part of this is true. Once Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords left the Republican party, Democrats controlled the Senate, and stalled the confirmation (not "appointment") of some of the judges whom Bush had nominated for the federal courts.

Congress did enact the top item on Bush's agenda: a large tax cut. During the summer, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives easily passed many of Bush's other agenda items, including the bill whose numbering reflected the President's top priority: H.R. 1, the Bush "No Child Left Behind" education bill. The fate of the Bush bills in the Democratic-controlled Senate, as of August 2001, was uncertain. The Senate later did pass No Child Left Behind, but some other Bush proposals did not pass.

Did Bush's approval ratings begin to sink? Not really. Moore shows a screen displaying Bush with 53% job approval on May 3, and 45% on September 5. Strangely, the screen shot includes no source for this alleged poll.

University of Minnesota History Professor Steven Ruggles has compiled a chart showing Bush's approval ratings in 13 major polls throughout his Presidency. According to the chart, never during 2001 did Bush's approval rating fall as low as 45% in any of the polls.

Nor did Bush's approval ratings really "sink" after inauguration day. Bush's popularity ratings rose significantly in April (when his tax cut was the main issue in Congress), and then returned to more normal levels in June. From Bush's inaugural until September 10, almost all of his approval ratings were in the 50-60% range, with only a few results from an occasional poll either higher or lower.

Deceit 6: Bush vacations

Fahrenheit 911 states, "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."

Shortly before 9/11, the Post calculated that Bush had spent 42 percent of his presidency at vacation spots or en route, including all or part of 54 days at his ranch. That calculation, however, includes weekends, which Moore failed to mention.

Tom McNamee, "Just the facts on 'Fahrenheit 9/11,'" *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 28, 2004. See also: Mike Allen, "White House On the Range. Bush Retreats to Ranch for 'Working Vacation,'" *Washington Post*, August 7, 2001 (Many of those days are weekends, and the Camp David stays have included working visits with foreign leaders.)

[T]he shot of him "relaxing at Camp David" shows him, side by side, with Tony Blair. I say "shows," even though this photograph is on-screen so briefly that if you sneeze or blink, you won't recognize the other figure. A meeting with the prime minister of the United Kingdom, or at least with this prime minister, is not a goof-off.

The president is also captured in a well-worn TV news clip, on a golf course, making a boilerplate response to a question on terrorism and then asking the reporters to watch his drive. Well, that's what you get if you catch the president on a golf course.

Christopher Hitchens, "Unfahrenheit 9/11: The lies of Michael Moore," *Slate.com*, June 21, 2004.

Deceit 7: September 11

Fahrenheit presents a powerful segment on the September 11 attacks. There is no narration, and the music is dramatic yet tasteful. Instead of the oft-played images of planes hitting their targets, the visuals are reaction shots from pedestrians, as they gasp with horrified astonishment.

Moore effectively evokes the horror that every decent human being felt on September 11.

But remember, Moore does not necessarily feel the same way. As New York's former Mayor Edward Koch reported, Moore later said, "I don't know why we are making so much of an act of terror. It is three times more likely that you will be struck by lightning than die from an act of terror."

Deceit 8: Bush on September 11

Fahrenheit mocks President Bush for continuing to read a story to a classroom of elementary school children after he was told about the September 11 attacks.

What Moore did not tell you:

Gwendolyn Tose'-Rigell, the principal of Emma E. Booker Elementary School, praised Bush's action: "I don't think anyone could have handled it better." "What would it have served if he had jumped out of his chair and ran out of the room?"

She said the video doesn't convey all that was going on in the classroom, but Bush's presence had a calming effect and "helped us get through a very difficult day." "Sarasota principal defends Bush from 'Fahrenheit 9/11' portrayal," Associated Press, June 24, 2004.

Deceits 9-11: pre-911 briefing

Castigating the allegedly lazy President, Moore says, "Or perhaps he just should have read the security briefing that was given to him on August 6, 2001 that said that Osama bin Laden was planning to attack America by hijacking airplanes."

Moore supplies no evidence for his assertion that President Bush did not read the August 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Brief. Moore's assertion appears to be a complete fabrication.

Moore smirks that perhaps President Bush did not read the Briefing because its title was so vague. Moore then cuts to Condoleezza Rice announcing the title of the Briefing: "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US"

However, no-one (except Moore) has ever claimed that Bush did not read the Briefing, or that he did not read it because the title was vague. Rather, Condoleezza Rice had told the press conference that the information in the Briefing was "very vague." National Security Advisor Holds Press Briefing, The White House, May 16, 2002.

The content of the Briefing supports Rice's characterization, and refutes Moore's assertion that the Briefing "said that Osama bin Laden was planning to attack America by hijacking airplanes." The actual Briefing was highly equivocal: We have not been able to corroborate some of the more sensational threat reporting, such as that from a [deleted text] service in 1998 saying that Bin Laden wanted to hijack a US aircraft to gain the release of "Blind Shaykh," 'Umar' Abd al-Rahman and other US-held extremists.

Nevertheless, FBI information since that time indicates patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks, including recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York.

Deceits 12-15: Saudi departures from United States

Moore is guilty of a classic game of saying one thing and implying another when he describes how members of the Saudi elite were flown out of the United States shortly after 9/11.

If you listen only to what Moore says during this segment of the movie-and take careful notes in the dark-you'll find he's got his facts right. He and others in the film state that 142 Saudis, including 24 members of the bin Laden family, were allowed to leave the country after Sept. 13.

The date-Sept. 13-is crucial because that is when a national ban on air traffic, for security purposes, was eased but, nonetheless, many viewers will leave the movie theater with the impression that the Saudis, thanks to special treatment from the White House, were permitted to fly away when all other planes were still grounded. This false impression is created by Moore's failure, when mentioning Sept. 13, to emphasize that the ban on flights had been eased by then. The false impression is further pushed when Moore shows the singer Ricky Martin walking around an airport and says, "Not even Ricky Martin would fly. But really, who wanted to fly? No one. Except the bin Ladens."

But the movie fails to mention that the FBI interviewed about 30 of the Saudis before they left. And the independent 9/11 commission has reported that "each of the flights we have studied was investigated by the FBI and dealt with in a professional manner prior to its departure." (M'Namee, *Chicago Sun-Times*.) (Note: The *Sun-Times* article was correct, in its characterization of the Ricky Martin segment but not precisely accurate in the exact words used in the film. I have substituted the exact quote.)

Tapper: [Y]our film showcases former counter-terrorism czar Richard Clarke, using him as a critic of the Bush administration. Yet in another part of the film, one that appears in your previews, you criticize members of the Bush administration for permitting members of the bin Laden family to fly out of the country almost immediately after 9/11. What the film does not mention is that Richard Clarke says that he OK'd those flights. Is it fair to not mention that?

Moore: Actually I do, I put up *The New York Times* article and it's blown up 40 foot on the screen, you can see Richard Clarke's name right there saying that he approved the flights based on the information the FBI gave him. It's right there, right up on the screen. I don't agree with Clarke on this point. Just because I think he's good on a lot of things doesn't mean I agree with him on everything.

Jake Tapper's interview with Michael Moore, ABC News, June 25, 2004: Again, Moore is misleading. His film includes a brief shot of a Sept. 4, 2003, *New York Times* article headlined "White House Approved Departures of Saudis after Sept. 11, Ex-Aide Says." The camera pans over the article far too quickly for any ordinary viewer to spot and read the words in which Clarke states that he approved the flights.

Some Saudis left the US by charter flight on September 14, a day when commercial flights had resumed, but when ordinary charter planes were still grounded. When did the bin Ladens actually leave? Not until the next week, as the the 9/11 Commission staff report explains: Fearing reprisals, against Saudi nationals, the Saudi government asked for help in getting some of its citizens out of the country, we have found that the request came to the attention of Richard Clarke and that each of the flights we have studied was investigated by the FBI and dealt with in a professional manner prior to its departure.

No commercial planes, including chartered flights, were permitted to fly into, out of, or within the United States, until September 13, 2001. After the airspace reopened, six chartered flights with 142 people, mostly Saudi Arabian nationals, departed from the United States between September 14 and 24. One flight, the so-called Bin Ladin flight, departed the United States on September 20 with 26 passengers, most of them relatives of Usama Bin Ladin. We have found no credible evidence that any chartered flights of Saudi Arabian nationals departed the United States before the reopening of national airspace.

The Saudi flights were screened by law enforcement officials, primarily the FBI, to ensure that people on these flights did not pose a threat to national security, and that nobody of interest to the FBI with regard to the 9/11 investigation was allowed to leave the country. Thirty of the 142 people on these flights were interviewed by the FBI, including 22 of the 26 people (23 passengers and 3 private security guards) on the Bin Ladin flight. Many were asked detailed questions. None of the

passengers stated that they had any recent contact with Usama Bin Ladin or knew anything about terrorist activity.

The FBI checked a variety of databases for information on the Bin Ladin flight passengers and searched the aircraft. It is unclear whether the TIPOFF terrorist watchlist was checked. At our request, the Terrorist Screening Center has rechecked the names of individuals on the flight manifests of these six Saudi flights against the current TIPOFF watchlist. There are no matches.

The FBI has concluded that nobody was allowed to depart on these six flights who the FBI wanted to interview in connection with the 9/11 attacks, or who the FBI later concluded had any involvement in those attacks. To date, we have uncovered no evidence to contradict this conclusion.

Deceit 16: Bush and James Bath

Moore mentions that Bush's old National Guard buddy and personal friend James Bath had become the money manager for the bin Laden family, saying, "James Bath himself in turn invested in George W. Bush." The implication is that Bath invested the bin Laden family's money in Bush's failed energy company, Arbusto. He doesn't mention that Bath has said that he had invested his own money, not the bin Ladens', in Bush's company.

Matt Labash, "Un-Moored from Reality," Weekly Standard, July 5, 2004. See also: Frank, Newsday.

Deceit 17: Bush and Prince Bandar

Moore accurately points out the distressingly close relationship between Saudi Arabia's ambassador, Prince Bandar, and the Bush family. But Moore does not explain that Bandar has been a bipartisan Washington power broker for decades, and that Bill Clinton repeatedly relied on Bandar to advance Clinton's own Middle East agenda. (Elsa Walsh, "The Prince. How the Saudi Ambassador became Washington's indispensable operator," The New Yorker, Mar. 24, 2003.)

President Clinton's former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Wyche Fowler, has been earning a lucrative living as a Saudi apologist and serving as Chairman of the Middle East Institute—a research organization heavily funded by Saudi Arabia. (Joel Mowbray, "Feeding at the Saudi Trough," Townhall.com, Oct. 1, 2003.)

I am not suggesting that Mr. Fowler is in any way corrupt; I'm sure that he is sincere (although, in my view, mistaken) in his strongly pro-Saudi viewpoint. What is misleading is for Moore to look at the web of Saudi influence in Washington only in regard to the Republican Bushes, and to ignore the fact that Saudi influence and money are widespread in both parties.

Deceits 18-19: Harken Energy

Bush once served on the Board of Directors of the Harken Energy Company. According to Fahrenheit: Moore: Yes, it helps to be the President's son. Especially when you're being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

TV reporter: In 1990 when M. Bush was a director of Harken Energy he received this memo from company lawyers warning directors not to sell stock if they had unfavorable information about the company. One week later he sold \$848,000 worth of Harken stock. Two months later, Harken announced losses of more than \$23 million dollars.

Moore: Bush beat the rap from the SEC.

What Moore left out: Bush sold the stock long after he checked with those same "company lawyers" who had provided the cautionary memo, and they told him that the sale was all right. Almost all of the information that caused Harken's large quarterly loss developed only after Bush had sold the stock.

Despite Moore's pejorative that Bush "beat the rap," no-one has ever found any evidence suggesting that he engaged in illegal insider trading. (Byron York, "The Facts About Bush and Harken. The president's story holds up under scrutiny," *National Review Online*, July 10, 2002.)

Deceits 20-22: Carlyle Group

Moore's film suggests that Bush has close family ties to the bin Laden family-principally through Bush's father's relationship with the Carlyle Group, a private investment firm. The president's father, George H.W. Bush, was a senior adviser to the Carlyle Group's Asian affiliate until recently; members of the bin Laden family-who own one of Saudi Arabia's biggest construction firms-had invested \$2 million in a Carlyle Group fund. Bush Sr. and the bin Ladens have since severed ties with the Carlyle Group, which in any case has a bipartisan roster of partners, including Bill Clinton's former SEC chairman Arthur Levitt. The movie quotes author Dan Briody claiming that the Carlyle Group "gained" from September 11 because it owned United Defense, a military contractor. Carlyle Group spokesman Chris Ullman notes that United Defense holds a special distinction among US defense contractors that is not mentioned in Moore's movie: the firm's \$11 billion Crusader artillery rocket system developed for the US Army is one of the only weapons systems canceled by the Bush administration.

Michael Isikoff, "Under the Hot Lights. Moore's movie will make waves. But it's a fine line between fact and fanaticism. Deconstructing 'Fahrenheit 9/11.'" *Newsweek*, June 28, 2004.

Moore claims that refusing to mention of the Crusader cancellation was alright because the cancellation came after the United Defense IPO. But the cancellation had a serious negative financial impact on Carlyle, since Carlyle still owns 47% of United Defense.

Moore tells us that when Carlyle took United Defense public, they made a one-day profit of \$237 million, but under all the public scrutiny, the bin Laden family eventually had to withdraw (Moore doesn't tell us that they withdrew before the public offering, not after it). Labash, *Weekly Standard*.

There is another famous investor in Carlyle whom Moore does not reveal: George Soros. (Oliver Burkeman & Julian Borger, "The Ex-Presidents' Club," *The Guardian* (London), Oct. 31, 2000.) But the fact that the anti-Bush billionaire has invested in Carlyle would detract from Moore's simplistic conspiracy theory.

Deceit 23: Saudi investments in the United States

Moore asks Craig Unger: "How much money do the Saudis have invested in America, roughly?" Unger replies "Uh, I've heard figures as high as \$860 billion dollars."

Instead of relying on unsourced figures that someone says he "heard," let's look at the available data. According to the Institute for Research Middle Eastern Policy (a pro-Saudi think tank which tries to emphasize the importance of Saudi money to the United States), in February 2003 total worldwide Saudi investment was at least \$700 billion. Sixty percent of the Saudi investments were in the United States, so the Saudis had about 420 billion invested in the US-a large amount, but less than half of the amount that Moore's source claims he "heard." (Tanya C. Hsu, "The United States Must Not Neglect Saudi Arabian Investment" Sept. 23, 2003.)

Deceit 24: special protection for Saudi Embassy

Moore shows himself filming the movie near the Saudi embassy in Washington, D.C.:

Moore as narrator: Even though we were nowhere near the White House, for some reason the Secret Service had shown up to ask us what we were doing standing across the street from the Saudi embassy. Officer: That's fine. Just wanted to get some information on what was going on.

Moore, on camera: Yeah yeah yeah, I didn't realize the Secret Service guards foreign embassies.

Officer: Uh, not usually, no sir.

But in fact: Any tourist to Washington, DC, will see plenty of Secret Service Police guarding all of the other foreign embassies which request such protection. Other than guarding the White House and some federal buildings, it's the largest use of personnel by the Secret Service's Uniformed Division. Debbie Schlusel, "FAKEN-heit 9-11: Michael Moore's Latest Fiction," June 25, 2004.

According to the Secret Service website: Uniformed Division officers provide protection for the White House Complex, the Vice-President's residence, the Main Treasury Building and Annex, and foreign diplomatic missions and embassies in the Washington, DC area.

So there is nothing strange about the Secret Service protecting the Saudi embassy in Washington-especially since al Qaeda attacks have taken place against Saudi Arabia.

Deceit 25: alleged Bush-Saudi onspiracy

Moore asks, "Is it rude to suggest that when the Bush family wakes up in the morning they might be thinking about what's best for the Saudis instead of what's best for you?" But his Bush/Saudi conspiracy theory is contradicted by very obvious facts:

Why did Moore's evil Saudis not join "the Coalition of the Willing"? Why instead did they force the United States to switch its regional military headquarters to Qatar? If the Bush family and the al-Saud dynasty live in each other's pockets, then how come the most reactionary regime in the region has been powerless to stop Bush from demolishing its clone in Kabul and its buffer regime in Baghdad? The Saudis hate, as they did in 1991, the idea that Iraq's recuperated oil industry might challenge their near-monopoly. They fear the liberation of the Shiite Muslims they so despise. To make these elementary points is to collapse the whole pathetic edifice of the film's "theory."

Deceits 26-28: proposed unocal pipeline, in Afghanistan

Moore mentions that the Taliban visited Texas while Bush was governor, over a possible pipeline deal with Unocal. But Moore doesn't say that they never actually met with Bush or that the deal went bust in 1998 and had been supported by the Clinton administration. Labash, *Weekly Standard*.

Moore asserts that the Afghan war was fought only to enable the Unocal company to build a pipeline. In fact, Unocal dropped that idea back in August 1998. Jonathan Foreman, "Moore's The Pity," *New York Post*, June 23, 2004.

In December, 1997, a delegation from Afghanistan's ruling and ruthless Taliban visited the United States to meet with an oil and gas company that had extensive dealings in Texas. The company, Unocal, was interested in building a natural gas line through Afghanistan. Moore implies that Bush, who was then governor of Texas, met with the delegation.

But, as Gannett News Service points out, Bush did not meet with the Taliban representatives. What's more, Clinton administration officials did sit down with Taliban officials, and the delegation's visit was made with the Clinton administration's permission. M'Namee, *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Deceit 29: Bush administration's relationship with the Taliban

Moore also tries to paint Bush as sympathetic to the Taliban, which ruled Afghanistan until its overthrow by US-led forces shortly after Sept. 11. Moore shows a March 2001 visit to the United States by a Taliban envoy, saying the Bush administration "welcomed" the official, Sayed Hashemi, "to tour the United States to help improve the image of the Taliban."

Yet Hashemi's reception, at the State Department, was hardly welcoming. The administration rejected his claim that the Taliban had complied with US requests to isolate Osama bin Laden and affirmed its nonrecognition of the Taliban.

“We don’t recognize any government in Afghanistan,” State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said on the day of the visit. Frank, *Newsday*.

Deceit 30: Moore claimed that Osama bin Laden might be innocent

Fahrenheit 911 attempts in every way possible to link Osama bin Laden to George Bush. Moore even claims that Bush deliberately gave bin Laden “a two month head start” by not putting sufficient forces into Afghanistan soon enough. However: In late 2002, almost a year after the al-Qaida assault on American society, I had an onstage debate with Michael Moore at the Telluride Film Festival. In the course of this exchange, he stated his view that Osama Bin Laden should be considered innocent until proven guilty. This was, he said, the American way. The intervention in Afghanistan, he maintained, had been at least to that extent unjustified. Something-I cannot guess what, since we knew as much then as we do now-has since apparently persuaded Moore that Osama Bin Laden is as guilty as hell. Indeed, Osama is suddenly so guilty and so all-powerful that any other discussion of any other topic is a dangerous “distraction” from the fight against him. I believe that I understand the convenience of this late conversion.

Deceit 31: Afghanistan after liberation

We turn to the facts that are deliberately left out, we discover that there is an emerging Afghan army, that the country is now a joint NATO responsibility and thus under the protection of the broadest military alliance in history, that it has a new constitution and is preparing against hellish odds to hold a general election, and that at least a million and a half of its former refugees have opted to return..[A] highway from Kabul to Kandahar-an insurance against warlordism and a condition of nation-building-is nearing completion with infinite labor and risk. We also discover that the parties of the Afghan secular left-like the parties of the Iraqi secular left-are strongly in favor of the regime change. But this is not the sort of irony in which Moore chooses to deal.

Deceit 32: John Ashcroft

Moore mocks Attorney General John Ashcroft by pointing out that Ashcroft once lost a Senate race in Missouri to a man who had died three weeks earlier. “Voters preferred the dead guy,” Moore says, delivering one of the film’s biggest laugh lines. It’s a cheap shot. When voters in Missouri cast their ballots for the dead man, Mel Carnahan, they knew they were really voting for Carnahan’s very much alive widow, Jean. The Democratic governor of Missouri had vowed to appoint Jean to the job if Mel won. M’Namee, *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Deceit 33: Representative Porter Goss

Defending the Patriot Act, Representative Porter Goss says that he has an “800 number” for people to call to report problems with the Act. Fahrenheit shoots back that Goss does not have such a number; the ordinary telephone number for Goss’s office is flashed on the screen.

You’d never know by watching Fahrenheit, but Rep. Goss does have a toll-free number to which Patriot Act complaints can be reported. The number belongs to the Committee which Goss chairs, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The number is (877) 858-9040.

Although the Committee’s number is toll-free, the prefix is not “800,” and Moore exploits this trivial fact to create the false impression that Goss lied about having a toll-free number.

As far as I can tell, the slam on Rep. Goss is the only factual error in the segment on the misnamed Patriot Act, and while there are a few good things in the Act, Moore’s general critique of the Act is valid. The Act does contain many items which had long been on the FBI wish-list, which do not have real relation to the War on Terror, and which were pushed through under the pretext of 9/11. Similar critiques are also valid for the Clinton “terrorism” bill which was pushed through Congress

in 1996. As for Moore's claim that the motive of the Patriot Act was to terrify the American people, I disagree, but it's a matter of opinion, and therefore beyond the scope of this report.

Deceits 34-35: Saddam Hussein never murdered Americans

Fahrenheit asserts that Saddam's Iraq was a nation that "had never attacked the United States. A nation that had never threatened to attack the United States. A nation that had never murdered a single American citizen."

Jake Tapper (ABC News): You declare in the film that Hussein's regime had never killed an American.

Moore: That isn't what I said. Quote the movie directly.

Tapper: What is the quote exactly?

Moore: "Murdered." The government of Iraq did not commit a premeditated murder on an American citizen. I'd like you to point out one.

Tapper: If the government of Iraq permitted a terrorist named Abu Nidal who is certainly responsible for killing Americans to have Iraq as a safe haven; if Saddam Hussein funded suicide bombers in Israel who did kill Americans; if the Iraqi police-now this is not a murder but it's a plan to murder-to assassinate President Bush which at the time merited airstrikes from President Clinton once that plot was discovered; does that not belie your claim that the Iraqi government never murdered an American or never had a hand in murdering an American?

Moore: No, because nothing you just said is proof that the Iraqi government ever murdered an American citizen. And I am still waiting for you to present that proof.

You're talking about, they provide safe haven for Abu Nidal after the committed these murders, uh, Iraq helps or supports suicide bombers in Israel. I mean the support, you remember the telethon that the Saudis were having? It's our allies, the Saudis, that have been providing help and aid to the suicide bombers in Israel. That's the story you should be covering. Why don't you cover that story? Why don't you cover it?

Note Moore's extremely careful phrasing of the lines which appear to exonerate Saddam, and Moore's hyper-legal response to Tapper. In fact, Saddam provided refuge to notorious terrorists who had murdered Americans-and therefore Saddam was an accessory to the murders. Saddam order his police to murder a former American President; they attempted to do so, but failed. Yet none of these aggressions against the United States "count" for Moore, because he has carefully framed his verbs and verb tenses to exclude them.

But even with Moore's clever phrasing designed to elide Saddam's culpability in the murders of Americans, Tapper still catches him with an irrefutable point: Saddam did perpetrate the premeditated murder of Americans. Every victim of every Palestinian terrorist bomber who was funded by Saddam Hussein was the victim of premeditated murder-including the American victims.

So what does Moore do? He tries to change the subject. Moore makes the good point that the US media should focus more attention on Saudi financial aid to Palestinian terrorists who murder Americans in Israel. On NRO, I've pointed to Saudi terror funding, as have other NRO writers. But pointing out Saudi Arabia's guilt does not excuse Moore's blatant lie about Saddam Hussein's innocence.

Deceit 36: Saddam's threats

Moore's pro-Saddam allegation that Saddam "never threatened to attack the United States" is true in the narrow sense that Saddam never gave a speech in which he threatened to, for example, send the Iraqi navy and army to conduct an amphibious invasion of Florida.

But Saddam did not need to make verbal threats in order to "threaten" the United States. He threatened the United States by giving refuges to terrorists who had murdered Americans, and by

funding terrorists who were killing Americans in Israel. Saddam gave refuge to terrorists who had attacked the United States by bombing the World Trade Center. Further: In 1991, a large number of Western hostages were taken by the hideous Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and held in terrible conditions for a long time. After that same invasion was repelled-Saddam having killed quite a few Americans and Egyptians and Syrians and Brits in the meantime and having threatened to kill many more.

Iraqi forces fired, every day, for 10 years, on the aircraft that patrolled the no-fly zones and staved off further genocide in the north and south of the country. In 1993, a certain Mr. Yasin helped mix the chemicals for the bomb at the World Trade Center and then skipped to Iraq, where he remained a guest of the state until the overthrow of Saddam..On Dec. 1, 2003, the New York Times reported-and the David Kay report had established-that Saddam had been secretly negotiating with the “Dear Leader,” Kim Jong-il, in a series of secret meetings in Syria, as late as the spring of 2003, to buy a North Korean missile system, and missile-production system, right off the shelf. (This attempt was not uncovered until after the fall of Baghdad, the coalition’s presence having meanwhile put an end to the negotiations.) Hitchens, Slate.

In short, the regime that sheltered the 1993 World Trade Center bombers was attempting to obtain nuclear weapons. Saddam may not have made verbal threats, but his actions spoke louder than words, and they were extremely threatening. Moore shows Secretary of State Colin Powell stating, “Saddam Hussein is determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb.” The film suggests that Powell was wrong, but the captured Iraqi documents prove that Powell was correct.

Deceit 37: Iraq and Al Qaeda

Moore makes light of the claimed Bush connection between Saddam and Al-Qaeda. But what about the meeting between hijacker Mohammed Atta and Iraqi Intelligence agents in the Czech Republic before 9-11? What about the Iraqi training camp in Salman Pak where Al-Qaeda used abandoned planes to train to hijack them? What about Ramzi Youssef, the Iraqi Secret Service agent and mastermind of the 1993 WTC bombing, who is the nephew of 9-11 Al-Qaeda mastermind, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed? What about Iraqi Intelligence and Secret Police (Mukhabarat) at a Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Al-Qaeda terror planning convention? These are just some connections, and there are others in “The Connection,” by Stephen Hayes, that you won’t see in Moore’s silver screen screed. Schlusel.

The book, which Schlusel cites, is Stephen F. Hayes’ *The Connection : How al Qaeda’s Collaboration with Saddam Hussein Has Endangered America* (NY, HarperCollins, 2004). Hayes is a writer for *The Weekly Standard* and much of his writing on the Saddam/Osama connection is available there for free; simply use the search engine and look for articles by Hayes.

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: “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.”

I agree with Hayes that there is significant evidence of Iraqi involvement in 9/11, but Moore deceptively cut the Rice quote to fool the audience into thinking she was making a particular claim which she actually was not.

Deceit 38: Iraq before liberation

Moore shows scenes of Baghdad before the invasion (read: liberation) and in his weltanschauung, it’s a place filled with nothing but happy, smiling, giggly, overjoyed Baghdadis. No pain and suffering there. No rape, murder, gassing, imprisoning, silencing of the citizens in these scenes. When

he exploits and lingers on the tears of a mother who lost her soldier-son in Iraq, and she wails, “Why did you have to take him?” Moore does not cut to images of the murderers/terrorists (pardon me, “insurgents”) in Iraq, or even to God; he cuts to George Bush. When the soldier’s father says the young man died and “for what?”, Moore doesn’t show liberated Iraqis to reply, he cuts instead to an image of Halliburton. Jarvis, *Buzz Machine*.

The most offensive sequence in “Fahrenheit 9/11”’s long two hours lasts only a few minutes. It’s Moore’s file-footage depiction of happy Iraq before the Americans began their supposedly pointless invasion. You see men sitting in cafes, kids flying kites, women shopping. Cut to bombs exploding at night.

What Moore presumably doesn’t know, or simply doesn’t care about, is that the building you see being blown up is the Iraqi Ministry of Defense in Baghdad. Not many children flew kites there. It was in a part of the city that ordinary Iraqis weren’t allowed to visit-on pain of death.

Iraq was ruled by a regime that had forced a sixth of its population into fearful exile, that hanged dissidents (real dissidents, not people like Susan Sontag and Tim Robbins) from meathooks and tortured them with blowtorches, and filled thousands of mass graves with the bodies of its massacred citizens.

Yes, children played, women shopped and men sat in cafes while that stuff went on-just as people did all those normal things in Somoza’s Nicaragua, Duvalier’s Haiti and for that matter Nazi Germany, and as they do just about everywhere, including in Iraq today. Foreman, *New York Post*.

Deceits 39-41: Invasion of Iraq

According to the footage that ensues, our pilots seem to have hit nothing but women and children. Labash, *Weekly Standard*.

Then-wham! From the night sky come the terror weapons of American imperialism. Watching the clips Moore uses, and recalling them well, I can recognize various Saddam palaces and military and police centers getting the treatment. I remember asking Moore at Telluride if he was or was not a pacifist. He would not give a straight answer then, and he doesn’t now, either. I’ll just say that the “insurgent” side is presented in this film as justifiably outraged, whereas the 30-year record of Baathist war crimes and repression and aggression is not mentioned once. (Actually, that’s not quite right. It is briefly mentioned but only, and smarmily, because of the bad period when Washington preferred Saddam to the likewise unmentioned Ayatollah Khomeini.) Hitchens, *Slate*.

Deceit 42: major coalition partners ignored

Q: You mock the “coalition of the willing” by only showing the tiny countries that have voiced support. But you leave out England, Spain, Italy and Poland. Why?

Moore: “This film exists as a counterbalance to what you see on cable news about the coalition. I’m trying to counter the Orwellian nature of the Big Lie, as if when you hear that term, the ‘coalition,’ that the whole world is behind us.” Patrick Goldstein, “Truth teller or story stretcher?” *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 2004.

If it is a “Big Lie” to mention only the powerful and important members of the Coalition (such as England and Australia), then it is an equally “Big Lie” to mention only the small and insignificant members of the Coalition.

Deceit 43: media attitudes

In very selectively edited clips, Moore poses the absurd notion that the main news anchors-Peter Jennings, Dan Rather, and Ted Koppel-wholeheartedly support Bush and the War in Iraq. Has Moore forgotten the hour-long Saddam softball interview Rather did just prior to the war, [or] Jennings’ condescending coverage? Schlüssel.

Jennings is shown delivering a broadcast in which he says, “Iraqi opposition has faded in the face of American power.” But Jennings was simply stating an undeniable fact, as he stood next to a map showing that Saddam’s army had collapsed everywhere, and all Iraqi cities were in Coalition hands. Despite what Moore implies, Jennings strongly opposed the liberation of Iraq. (Tim Graham, “Peter’s Peace Platoon. ABC’s Crusade Against ‘Arrogant’ American Power,” Media Research Center, March 18, 2003.)

Deceits 44-47: support for soldiers and veterans

Bush “supported closing veterans hospitals” says Moore. The Bush Department of Veteran’s Affairs did propose closing seven hospitals in areas with declining populations where the hospitals were underutilized, and whose veterans could be served by other hospitals. Moore does not say that the Department also proposed building new hospitals in areas where needs were growing, and also building blind rehabilitation centers and spinal cord injury centers. (For more, see the Final Report of the independent commission on veterans hospitals, which agrees with some of the Bush proposals, and with some of the objections raised by critics.)

According to Moore, Bush “tried to double the prescription drug costs for veterans.” What Bush proposed was raising the prescription co-pay from \$7 to \$15, for veterans with incomes of over \$24,000 a year. Prescription costs would have remained very heavily subsidized by taxpayers.

Bush, announces Moore, “proposed cutting combat soldiers’ pay by 33%.” Not exactly. In addition to regular military salaries, soldiers in certain areas (not just combat zones) receive an “imminent danger” bonus of \$150 a month. In April 2003, Congress retroactively enacted a special increase of \$75, for the fiscal year of Oct. 1, 2002 through Sept. 30, 2003. At first, the Bush administration did not support renewing the special bonus, but then changed its position

Likewise, Congress had passed a special one-year increase in the family separation allowance (for service personnel stationed in places where their families cannot join them) from \$100 to \$250. Bush’s initial support for not extending the special increase was presented by Moore as “cutting assistance to their families by 60%.” (Edward Epstein, “Pentagon reverses course, won’t cut troops’ pay,” San Francisco Chronicle, Aug. 15, 2003.)

Even if one characterizes not renewing a special bonus as a “cut,” Fahrenheit misleads the viewer into thinking that the cuts applied to total compensation, rather than only to pay supplements which constitute only a small percentage of a soldier’s income. An enlisted man with four months of experience receives an annual salary more than \$27,000. (Rod Powers, “What the Recruiter Never Told You: Military Pay.”)

In 2003, Congress enacted a Bush administration proposal to raise all military salaries by 3.7%, with extra “targeted” pay increases for non-commissioned officer. NCOs are lower-ranking officers who typically join the military with lower levels of education than commissioned officers. (Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, “Defense Department Targets Military Pay Increases for 2004,” American Forces Press Service.)

Deceits 48-51: Congressional children in war

“Not a single member of Congress wanted to sacrifice their child for the war in Iraq,” announces Moore, after accosting Congressmen to try to convince them to have their children enlist in the military.

Again, Moore’s phrasing is technically true, but duplicitous. Of course no-one would want to “sacrifice” his child in any way. But despite the impression left by Moore, Sergeant Brooks Johnson, the son of South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson, serves in the 101st Airborne Division. The Division fought in Iraq. Delaware Senator Joseph Biden also has a son on active duty. Earlier in the segment,

Moore does note that “only one” member of Congress has a child in Iraq, but this statement is overshadowed by Moore’s dramatic conclusion about “not a single member of Congress.”

How about Cabinet members? Fahrenheit never raises the issue, because the answer would not fit Moore’s thesis. Attorney General John Ashcroft’s son is on active duty. (Fahrenheit Fact.)

The editing of the Congressional scenes borders on the fraudulent: Representative Kennedy (R-MN), one of the lawmakers accosted in Fahrenheit 9/11, was censored by Michael Moore.

According to the *Star Tribune*, Kennedy, when asked if he would be willing to send his son to Iraq, responded by stating that he had a nephew who was en-route to Afghanistan. He went on to inform Moore that his son was thinking about a career in the navy and that two of his nephews had already served in the armed forces. Kennedy’s side of the conversation, however, was cut from the film, leaving him looking bewildered and defensive.

What was Michael’s excuse for trimming the key segment? Kennedy’s remarks didn’t help his thesis: “He mentioned that he had a nephew that was going over to Afghanistan,” Moore recounted. “So then I said ‘No, no, that’s not our job here today. We want you to send your child to Iraq. Not a nephew.’”

Kennedy lambasted Moore as a “master of the misleading” after viewing the interview in question. *Fahrenheit Fact*.

George Stephanopoulos, of ABC News, asked Moore about the selective cuts in the Kennedy footage:

Stephanopoulos: You have a scene when you’re up on Capitol Hill encountering members of Congress, asking them if they would ask their sons and daughters to enlist . in the military. And one of those members of Congress who appears in the trailer, Mark Kennedy, said you left out what he told you, which is that he has two nephews serving in the military, one in Afghanistan. And he went on to say that, “Michael Moore doesn’t always give the whole truth. He’s a master of the misleading.”

Moore: Well, at the time, when we interviewed him, he didn’t have any family members in Afghanistan. And when he saw the trailer for this movie, he issued a report to the press saying that he said that he had a kid in.

Stephanopoulos: He said he told you he had two nephews.

Moore: No, he didn’t. And we released the transcript and we put it on our Web site. This is what I mean by our war room. Any time a guy like this comes along and says, “I told him I had two nephews and one was going to Iraq and one was going to Afghanistan,” he’s lying. And I’ve got the raw footage and the transcript to prove it. So any time these Republicans come at me like this, this is exactly what they’re going to get. And people can go to my Web site and read the transcript and read the truth. What he just said there, what you just quoted, is not true.

This Week followed up with the office of Rep. Kennedy. He did have two nephews in the military, but neither served in Iraq. Kennedy’s staff agrees that Moore’s Website is accurate but insists the movie version is misleading. In the film, Moore says, “Congressman, I’m trying to get members of Congress to get their kids to enlist in the Army and go over to Iraq.” But, from the transcript, here’s the rest:

Moore: Is there any way you could help me with that?

Kennedy: How would I help you?

Moore: Pass it out to other members of Congress.

Kennedy: I’d be happy to, especially those who voted for the war. I have a nephew on his way to Afghanistan. This Week, ABC News, June 20, 2004.

So, while Fahrenheit pretended that Kennedy rebuffed Moore, Kennedy agreed to help Moore.

Fahrenheit shows Moore calling out to Delaware Republican Michael Castle, who is talking on a cell phone and waves Moore off. Castle is presented one of the Congressmen who would not sacrifice his children. What the film omits is that Rep. Castle does not have any children.

Are Congressional children less likely to serve in Iraq than children from other families? Let's use Moore's methodology, and ignore members of extended families (such as nephews) and also ignore service anywhere expect Iraq (even though US forces are currently fighting terrorists in many countries). And like Moore, let us also ignore the fact that some families (like Rep. Castle's) have no children, or no children of military age.

We then see that of 535 Congressional families, there was one (Brooks Johnson) with a child who served in Iraq. How does this compare with American families in general? In the summer of 2003, US troop levels in Iraq were raised to 145,000. If we factor in troop rotation, we could estimate that about 300,000 people have served in Iraq at some point. According to the Census Bureau, there were 104,705,000 households in the United States in 2000. (See Table 1 of the Census Report.) So the ratio of ordinary US households to Iraqi service personnel is 104,705,000 to 300,000. This reduces to a ratio of 349:1.

In contrast the ratio of Congressional households to Iraqi service personnel is 535:1.

Stated another way, a Congressional household is about one-third less likely than an ordinary household to be closely related to an Iraqi serviceman or servicewoman. In other words, the gap between the service rates of Congressional children and of other people's children is vastly less than the gap that Moore falsely suggests.

Of course my statistical methodology is very simple. A more sophisticated analysis would look only at Congressional and US households from which at least one child is legally eligible to enlist in the military. Moore, obviously, never attempted such a comparison; instead, he deceived viewers into believing that Congressional families were extremely different from other families in enlistment rates.

Moore ignores the fact that there are 102 veterans currently serving in Congress. Regardless of whether they have children who could join the military, all of the veterans in Congress have personally put themselves at risk to protect their country.

Deceit 52: Lila Lipscomb

Moore exploits the grief of Lila Lipscomb, the mother of a soldier who died in Iraq. She denounces Bush and the War. But there are many mothers and relatives of US soldiers, alive and dead, who served there who don't agree with her. Don't look for them in this agit-prop "film." Schlüssel.

Fahrenheit wallows in pity for Mrs. Lipscomb. "I was tired of seeing people like Mrs. Lipscomb suffer," he claims. Yet Moore's website takes a different view: I'm sorry, but the majority of Americans supported this war once it began and, sadly, that majority must now sacrifice their children until enough blood has been let that maybe, just maybe, God and the Iraqi people will forgive us, in the end.

Michael Moore, "Heads Up... from Michael Moore," MichaelMoore.com, April 14, 2004.

Deceit 53: Moore's pro-Saddam source

Washington Representative Jim M'Dermott appears in several segments. M'Dermott was one of three Congressmen who went on Saddam's propaganda tour of Iraq in Fall, 2002. The trip was funded by Life for Relief and Development (LRD), a "charity" which laundered money to terrorist group Hamas' Jordanian operation. LRD is funded in part by Shakir Al-Khafaji, a man who did about \$70 million in business with Saddam through his Falcon Trading Group company (based in South Africa). LRD's Iraqi offices were raided by US troops last week, and the Detroit-area "charity" is

suspected of funding uprisings, such as the one in Fallujah. Its officials bragged of doing so at a recent private US fundraiser.

Mr. Alkhafaji, one of two Americans named in Iraqi newspapers as a participant in Saddam's "Oil for Food" scam, gave Congressman McDermott \$5,000 in October 2002 for McDermott's legal defense fund in a lawsuit against him. Schluskel.

Deceit 54: celebrities

He shows Britney Spears saying she supports the President on Iraq. As if there weren't a host of brain-dead bimbo celebs, (Madonna, Sean Penn, Russell Simmons, Lenny Kravitz, Susan Sarandon, The Dixie Chicks, etc.), spouting off on the other side. Schluskel.

Deceit 55: Moore supports terrorists

In "Fahrenheit 911," Moore claims 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 says 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. Michael Moore, "Heads Up... from Michael Moore," MichaelMoore.com, April 14, 2004.

Deceit 56: Moore is working with terrorists to distribute his film

As reported in the trade journal *Screen Daily*, the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah is promoting Fahrenheit 911 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 (website requires registration). The story is discussed in Samantha Ellis, "Fahrenheit 9/11 gets help offer from Hezbollah," *The Guardian*, June 17, 2004; and "Moore film distributor OK with terror support: Exec says firm doesn't want to risk boycott of 'Fahrenheit 9/11' in Mideast," *WorldNetDaily.com*, June 22, 2004.

According to *Screen Daily*, Moore's film will open in mid-July on ten screens in Lebanon and two screens in Syria. Syria is a terrorist state which invaded Lebanon in the 1970s and controls the nation through a puppet government.

Moore accuses the United States of sacrificing morality because of greed: "The motivation for war is simple. The US government started the war with Iraq in order to make it easy for US corporations to do business in other countries. They intend to use cheap labor in those countries, which will make Americans rich." David Brooks, "All Hail Moore," *New York Times*, June 28, 2004.

Yet it turns out that the self-righteous Moore is the one who is accepting aid from a terrorist organization which has murdered and kidnapped hundreds of Americans. Just to avoid a boycott on a dozen screens in a totalitarian terrorist state and its colony?

Theoretically, it might be possible that Moore has no personal awareness that his Middle East distributor is working with terrorists. But such ignorance is unlikely for two reasons: First, Moore's "war room" staff monitors controversial articles about the film, and there could hardly be anything more controversial than making common cause with terrorists. Not only has the Hezbollah

relationship has been publicized in a leading film trade on-line newspaper, the Moore-Hezbollah connection has been reported one of the very most significant British newspapers, and in an important American on-line newspaper.

Second, Moore was personally questioned about the terrorist connection at a Washington, D.C., press conference. He at first denied the terrorist connection, but was then confronted with the direct quote from his distributor. He stonewalled and refused to answer. So the man who spends so much time getting in other people's faces with tough questions is unwilling to explain why is knowingly receiving aid from Hezbollah.

Recall the Moore quote from the beginning of this article: the September 11 attacks on the United States were insignificant. Recall that long after the release of an Osama bin Laden videotape demonstrating his responsibility for the September 11 attacks, Moore was asserting that the invasion of Afghanistan was wrong because Osama should be considered innocent until proven guilty. (As if a freely-given and videotaped confession were not proof of guilt.)

The conclusion of Fahrenheit quotes from George Orwell's 1984, the story of a totalitarian state perpetually at war. According to Orwell, the true purpose of the war was to perpetuate "a hierarchical society" based on "poverty and ignorance." The real purpose of war as "to keep the very structure of society intact." Fahrenheit applies Orwell's lines to the United States of today.

Moore's purported positions on some issues in Fahrenheit are different from his previous positions: whether people should have made a big deal about September 11, whether Osama bin Laden is guilty of the September 11 attacks, whether American families, including the Lipscombs, deserve to suffer the deaths of their children because they supported the war. But throughout Michael Moore's career, he has remained true to the central theme of Fahrenheit: capitalist America is the real terrorist state. Because America is a capitalist society, American use of force is necessarily evil.

Four days after September 11, Moore announced: "We, the United States of America, are culpable in committing so many acts of terror and bloodshed that we better get a clue about the culture of violence in which we have been active participants." (The statement has been deleted from Moore's website, but is available through the web archive service called the Wayback Machine.) This is the view of Fahrenheit 911: Iraq under Saddam was fine until America began terrorizing it.

Throughout American history, there have always been patriotic Americans who criticized particular war-time policies, or who believed that a war was a mistake and should be promptly ended. A much smaller number of Americans, however, hated America. They cheered for the fighters who were killing Americans. They belittled America's right to protect itself, and they produced propaganda designed to destroy American morale and to facilitate enemy victory. To advance their anti-American cause, they sometimes feigned love for the nation they despised.

Today, there are many patriotic Americans who oppose some or all aspects of the War on Terror. I am among them, in that I have strongly opposed the Patriot Act from its first days, have denounced the Bush administration for siding with corporate interests rather than with public safety by sabotaging the Armed Pilots law, and have repeatedly stated that the current Saudi tyranny should be recognized as a major part of the problem in the War on Terror, despite the tyranny's close relationship with America's foreign policy elite.

Do the many falsehoods and misrepresentations of Fahrenheit 911 suggest a film producer who just makes careless mistakes? Or does a man who calls Americans: "possibly the dumbest people on the planet" believe that his audience will be too dumb to tell when he is tricking them? Viewers will have to decide for themselves whether the extremist and extremely deceptive Fahrenheit 911 is a conscientious work of patriotic dissent, or the cynical propaganda of a man who gives wartime aid to America's murderous enemies, and who accepts their aid in return.

Dave Kopel is Research Director of the Independence Institute and an NRO columnist. He has previously written about the deceptions in “Bowling for Columbine.” Like Michael Moore, in 2000, Kopel endorsed and voted for Ralph Nader.