

- Front Page
- Greater China
- China Business
- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Japan
- Korea
- Middle East
- Central Asia
- World Economy
- Asian Economy
- Book Reviews
- Letters
- Forum

War and Terror

The Complete Spengler

The Complete Henry C K Liu

The Best of Pepe Escobar

# Front Page

Aug 18, 2006

Find the picture that follows logically and learn your IQ...



Submit

## Great movie, pity about the Big Lie

By Ruth Rosen

When *World Trade Center* ended, I left the theater tense, my muscles aching. The superb directing and acting, coupled with still hardly imaginable scenes of death and destruction, had sent painful muscle spasms up my back, evoked tears, and left me, yet again, with searing and indelible images of that hellish morning of September 11, 2001.

I felt disoriented in the bright sunlight of a northern California afternoon. As my mind regained its critical faculties, however, another kind of shock set in. I suddenly realized that Oliver Stone's movie reinforces the Big Lie - endlessly repeated by Vice President Dick Cheney, echoed and amplified by the right-wing media - that the attacks of September 11 were somehow linked to



Iraq or supported by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

It might surprise you that this Stone film is neither ideological nor conspiratorial, which in my view is just as it should be. Instead, it is a portrayal of what the men who braved hell and the families who anguished over their survival experienced.

*World Trade Center* gives September 11 a distinctly human face by following two New York/New Jersey Port Authority policemen and their families. We watch the men muster their courage to help evacuate people in one of the towers; we gasp as they are buried alive; we wince as heavy slabs of concrete crush their bodies; and we hold our breath as they struggle to keep each other going in the face of imminent death.

Expert editing brings us the anguish suffered by their wives, children and relatives. Some are in denial, others in shock. Some have faith; others are resigned to the men's deaths. They live in their own hell and we empathize with their

### NOTES AND QUOTES

**"You'd never know it from the news reports, but our enemy in Iraq is al-Qaeda, the same terrorists who killed 3,000 Americans on 9/11, the same terrorists from the first World Trade Center bombing, the USS Cole, Madrid, London and**

- Print this article
- Email this article
- Currency converter
- Comment on this article: Go to

THE EDGE  
Your world, your forum

### RELATED ARTICLES

[A preordained catastrophe](#) (Apr 13, '06)

### ChinaHighlights.co

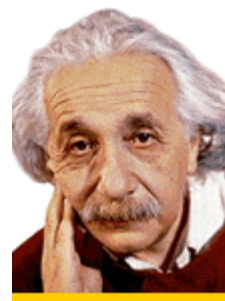
- China Travel
- China Tours
- Yangtze River Cruise
- Great Wall of China
- China Airline
- Map of China



- 80 - 100
- 101 - 120
- 121 - 130
- 131 - 160+

Click Here

Take the FREE IQ TEST



Tickle Your Brain

wrenching agony.

With a subtle touch, Stone shows us people all over the planet horrified by television images of the aircraft crashing into the towers. He reminds us that the people of the world expressed an outpouring of sympathy (since squandered by the administration of President George W Bush).

Meanwhile, Stone introduces us to one ex-marine who feels called by God to help rescue those buried alive. He gets his hair cut short, puts on his old uniform, and with all the authority of a former staff sergeant, does what he knows best - uses his military skills to save people's lives. Determined and angry, he insists that we must avenge this horrendous attack.

We also watch a group of Wisconsin police officers viewing the terrorist attacks on television. One screams out, "The bastards!" Stone, in other words, captures the desire for revenge already in the air.

And yet in none of these profoundly moving scenes is there even a mention of who might have committed this atrocity. Neither the name al-Qaeda nor Osama bin Laden is so much as whispered.

You might say, "But everyone knows it was al-Qaeda." And you'd be right, but do most Americans really know just who those terrorists were or that they had no connection to Iraq - that not a single one of them even came from that country?

It doesn't sound very important until you realize that various polls over the past five years have reported that from 20% to 50% of Americans still believe Iraqis were on those planes. (They were not.) As of early 2005, according to a Harris poll, 47% of Americans were convinced that Saddam actually helped plan the attack and supported the hijackers.

And in February, according to a unique Zogby poll of US troops serving in Iraq, "85% said the US mission is mainly 'to retaliate for Saddam's role in the [September 11] attacks'; 77% said they also believe the main or a major reason for the war was 'to stop Saddam from protecting al-Qaeda in Iraq'".

"The Big Lie", first coined by Adolf Hitler in his 1925 autobiography *Mein Kampf*, was made famous by Joseph Goebbels, propaganda minister for the Third Reich. The idea was simple enough: tell a whopper (the larger the better) often enough and most people will come to accept it as the truth.

During World War II, the predecessor of the US Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Strategic Services, described how the Germans used the Big Lie: "They never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it."

This is, in fact, just what the Bush administration has been doing ever since September 2001. As a result, in 2005, an American Broadcasting Co/Washington Post poll found that 56% of Americans still thought Iraq had possessed weapons of mass destruction "shortly before the war", and 60% still believed Iraq had provided "direct support" to al-Qaeda prior to the war. In June, Fox News ran a story once again dramatizing the supposed links between September 11 and Iraq. And, as recently as last month, a Harris poll found that 64% of those polled "say it is true that

**many more."**

- From a TV advertisement placed by the American organization Families United for our Troops and their Families, in early 2006.

**"We rejected the ad because it's not true about our station ... We don't see a reason to let someone take an unfair shot at us."**

- TV station KSTP in Minnesota, rejecting the ad not because it was nonsense but because it was critical of the media.

Ads by Google

### [Iraq War -Do you Agree?](#)

Australia's Input to War An independent review by Crikey  
[Crikey.com.au/Politics](http://Crikey.com.au/Politics)

### [U.S. in Iraq? Pros & Cons](#)

Should the U.S. have attacked Iraq? Credible pros & cons in the debate  
[www.ProCon.org](http://www.ProCon.org)

### [Learn the lessons of Iraq](#)

Outgoing UK Ambassador to Iraq warns of pending civil war. More  
[www.thefirstpost.co.uk](http://www.thefirstpost.co.uk)

### [Islam - independent](#)

analysis from New Internationalist global award-winning magazine.  
[www.newint.com.au](http://www.newint.com.au)

Live and Work in the USA

Congratulations You've got 1 FREE YEAR participation!

50,000 winners will live and work in the USA!

Click Here To Apply Now!

American GREEN CARD Lottery

Get your Green Card with the US Green Card program



Saddam Hussein had strong links to al-Qaeda".

The Bush administration's Big Lie has worked very well. Cheney, the point man on this particular lie, has repeated it year after year. In a similar way, President Bush has repeatedly explained his 2003 invasion of Iraq, which had nothing whatsoever to do with September 11, by insisting that the US must fight terrorists in that country so that it does not have to fight them in the US. (It turned out to be something of a self-fulfilling prophecy.)

Neither these nor so many other administration statements had a shred of truth to them. Even Bush, who repeatedly linked Saddam to the terrorist organization behind the September 11 attacks, admitted on September 18, 2003, that there was no evidence the deposed Iraqi dictator had had a hand in them. But that didn't stop Cheney from endlessly repeating the Big Lie that justifies America's invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Most of the controversy over *World Trade Center* has focused on whether, as the fifth anniversary of the attacks approaches, it is still too soon for a cinematic depiction of these horrendous events. For some people, perhaps that may well be the case. I myself don't think it's too soon for such a film; but I do worry that, powerful and evocative as it is, it may, however inadvertently, only deepen waning support for the war in Iraq,

Despite the near flood of documentaries on the terrorist attacks heading toward the small screen this September, Stone's film, for many Americans, may end up being the definitive cinematic record of what it felt like to be inside the hellish cyclone known to them simply by the numbers "9/11".

To offer a faithful re-creation of that historical catastrophe, however, Stone owed viewers the whole truth, not merely a brilliant, graphic portrayal of what happened and how it affected the lives of some of those involved.

As it ends, a written postscript appears that describes what happened to the buried Port Authority policemen, their families, and the ex-marine who helped rescue them (whose last line is: "We're going to need some good men out there to revenge this").

We learn that the two men survived an unbearable number of surgeries and are living with their families. Next we read that the ex-marine rejoined and later did two tours of duty in Iraq. At that moment, I wanted to shout out, "Don't you mean Afghanistan?" Then I imagined the satisfaction Cheney and sore-loser Senator Joseph Lieberman would take in this not-quite-spelled-out linkage of September 11 and Iraq.

I kept waiting for what never came - even a note in the postscript reminding the audience of those who had actually committed the crime. This is where, by omission, Stone's film ends up reinforcing the Bush administration's Big Lie. You could easily have left the theater thinking that the saintly ex-marine had gone off to fight those who attacked the United States.

That evening, I wrote the words that should have appeared in the postscript: "Government officials later confirmed that the organization that plotted the destruction of the World Trade Center was al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, a Saudi, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian. Nineteen men executed the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Fifteen of them came from Saudi Arabia; the remaining four from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Lebanon. None of them came from Iraq."

What happened to Stone, the filmmaker who gave us *Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Wall Street* and *Nixon*? Despite his conspiratorial foibles in *JFK*, he has long been a movie-maker dedicated to raising tough questions about America's past. Where did his commitment to opening historical subjects for debate go? He was right not to politicize this film, but truth-telling required that he identify the terrorists. Truth-telling would have resulted in his helping to dismantle the Big Lie that has resulted in the deaths of so many American soldiers and Iraqi civilians, and has plunged

THE CITYKID  
FOUNDATION

CityKids' helps  
young people  
positively impact  
their lives,  
their communities  
and the world.



To learn more or get  
involved, check out  
[www.citykids.com](http://www.citykids.com).

CityKids uses the  
arts to engage and  
train young people  
to create positive  
and powerful  
solutions to issues  
impacting their  
lives. Young people  
learn to improve  
their own education,  
status, become  
agents for social  
change, take action  
community projects,  
and carry positive  
messages to their  
peers. And they have  
a great time doing it

THE CITYKID  
FOUNDATION

Iraq into chaos and civil war.

How could Stone leave it up to viewers to discover for themselves who committed this crime? And how could he leave the audience with the impression that there was a connection, as Cheney has never stopped saying, between September 11 and Iraq?

This is the tragic failure of Stone's *World Trade Center*. It undercuts the historical value of the film and reinforces the Biggest Lie of the past five years, still believed by far too many Americans - that in Iraq, Americans are fighting those who attacked their country.

*Historian and journalist Ruth Rosen, a former columnist for the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle, teaches at the University of California, Berkeley, and is a senior fellow at the Longview Institute. A new edition of her most recent book, The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America (Penguin, 2001), will be published with an updated epilogue in 2007.*

(Copyright 2006 Ruth Rosen.)

(Used by permission [Tomdispatch](#) )

[Ads by Google](#)

### [Family Care Foundation](#)

International humanitarian services for communities around the world.

[www.familycare.org](http://www.familycare.org)

### [Peace in the Middle East](#)

What is God's Plan for Peace? What role for the Jewish people?

[www.buybooksontheweb.com](http://www.buybooksontheweb.com)

### [Help Persecuted Churches](#)

CFI's Ministry Guide shows you how! Receive your free copy today.

[www.christianfreedom.org](http://www.christianfreedom.org)

All material on this website is copyright and may not be republished in any form without written permission.

© Copyright 1999 - 2006 Asia Times Online Ltd.

Head Office: Rm 202, Hau Fook Mansion, No. 8 Hau Fook St., Kowloon, Hong Kong  
Thailand Bureau: 11/13 Petchkasem Road, Hua Hin, Prachuab Kirikhan, Thailand 77110