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Traces of explosives in 9/11 dust, scientists say

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Tiny red and gray chips found in the dust from the collapse of the World Trade Center contain highly explosive materials — proof, according to a former BYU professor, that 9/11 is still a sinister mystery.

Physicist Steven E. Jones, who retired from Brigham Young University in 2006 after the school recoiled from the controversy surrounding his 9/11 theories, is one of nine authors on a paper published last week in the online, peer-reviewed Open Chemical Physics Journal. Also listed as authors are BYU physics professor Jeffrey Farrer and a professor of nanochemistry at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

For several years, Jones has theorized that pre-positioned explosives, not fires from jet fuel, caused the rapid, symmetrical collapse of the two World Trade Center buildings, plus the collapse of a third building, WTC-7.

The newest research, according to the journal authors, shows that dust from the collapsing towers contained a "nano-thermite" material that is highly explosive. Although the article draws no conclusions about the source and purpose of the explosives, Jones has previously supported a theory that the collapse of the WTC towers was part of a government conspiracy to ignore warnings about the 9/11 terrorists so that the attack would propel America to wage war against Afghanistan and Iraq.

The next step, Jones said in a phone interview on Monday, is for someone to investigate "who made the stuff and why it was there."

A layer of dust lay over parts of Manhattan immediately following the collapse of the towers, and it was samples of this dust that Jones and fellow researchers requested in a 2006 paper, hoping to determine "the whole truth of the events of that day." They eventually tested four samples they received from New Yorkers.

One sample was from a man who had swept up a handful of dust on the Brooklyn Bridge, where he was walking when the second tower fell. As the journal authors note, "It was, therefore, definitely not contaminated by the steel-cutting or clean-up operations at Ground Zero, which began later. Furthermore, it is not mixed with dust from WTC-7, which fell hours later."

Another man collected dust in his apartment, about five blocks from the World Trade Center, on the morning of Sept. 12. There was a layer about an inch thick on a stack of folded laundry near an open window.

Red/gray chips, averaging in size between .2 and 3 mm, were found in all four dust samples. The chips were then analyzed using scanning electron microscopy and other high-tech tools.

The red layer of the chips, according to the researchers, contains a "highly energetic" form of thermite. While normal thermite (a mixture of finely granulated aluminum and an oxide of metal) can be incendiary, "super thermite" is explosive. He says there is no benign explanation for the thermite in the WTC dust.

Jones made headlines in 2005 when he argued that the rapid and symmetrical fall of the World Trade Center looked like the result of pre-positioned explosives. He argued that fires alone wouldn't have been hot enough to crumble the buildings; and that even if struck by planes, the towers should have been strong enough to support the weight of the tops as they crumbled — unless they were leveled by explosives.

Essentially forced to retire, Jones says he is now paying for research out of his own pocket. He

likens himself to Galileo and Newton, who stood by their consciences. "I would like to think I could stand up for the truth," he says.

The dust study vindicates his earlier theories, Jones says, but he has mixed feelings about the implications. "As a young student said to me a while back: 'It's exciting from a scientific point of view, because things are now making sense. But I feel sad for my country.'"

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