



Although John Farmer's "The Ground Truth" has attracted a lot of favorable attention, it is a deeply flawed book, containing misleading claims and providing an extremely one-sided account of 9/11.

Much of the attention received by the book has been prompted by misleading claims made by Farmer and his publisher. The book's dust-jacket calls it the "definitive account" of 9/11, but it actually deals almost entirely with only one question about that day: why the airliners were not intercepted.

Most provocatively, Farmer presents his book as a rejection of the "official" account of 9/11, which was given by "the government," by which he means primarily the FAA and the Pentagon. But this rhetoric is misleading for three reasons.

First, Farmer's book is a defense of the 9/11 Commission's report, which he calls "accurate, and true" (2), and the Commission was itself a governmental body: its chairman, Thomas Kean, was appointed by Bush; the other members were appointed by Congress; and the executive director, Philip Zelikow, was essentially a member of the Bush White House.

Second, the "official account of 9/11," as generally understood, is the Bush-Cheney administration's conspiracy theory, according to which the 9/11 attacks resulted from a conspiracy between Osama bin Laden and some members of al-Qaeda, and Farmer supports this theory.

Third, in rejecting the "official version," Farmer is referring only to the first version of the official account. It was replaced in 2004 by the 9/11 Commission's version, which since then has been the official version of the official account. In spite of his rhetoric, therefore, Farmer is defending the official account of 9/11 produced by the government in 2004, so the book is far less radical than it has been promoted as being.

Even more serious than the book's misleading rhetoric is its one-sidedness. Rather than

containing an impartial examination of various types of relevant evidence, this book by Farmer - a former prosecuting attorney - reads like a lawyer's brief: Besides citing a large number of facts that appear to support the Bush-Cheney conspiracy theory and trying to undermine some of the contrary evidence (which supports the alternative theory, according to which 9/11 was an inside job), it seeks to suppress, by simply ignoring, the enormous bulk of this contrary evidence.

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