

# Adonis Mirror



12/31/2005

For Posterity

By Richard Leader

Many sociologists, armchair and professional, see September 11<sup>th</sup> as a watershed event: not simply for what it was, but in how it was experienced in real time by a rapt audience on the internet. The claim made is that it was the first major Western tragedy to unfold thusly, with virtual participants. Like the classic question of “where were you” when John F. Kennedy was killed, the fact that so many people can only answer “huddled in front of my computer” for September 11<sup>th</sup> is a point that many academic people-watchers find compelling, especially if they have already staked their careers on proving the superiority of internet based forms of communication.

As such, reporting on the online disaster-experience tends to prize its most salient features, focusing on the fairly rare occurrence of on-the-street reporting in all its immediacy, while glossing over the fact that much of the internet was incapacitated on September 11<sup>th</sup> due to the unparalleled level of bandwidth required to support the spike in traffic. That people turned to the “back-streets” of the web for information often had less to do with the superiority of those avenues (something that the blogs-as-revolutionary-media crowd has now taken and run with, despite the word “blog” itself being almost unknown in 2001) but proof of their also-ran status: people on that day really wanted nothing more than for the front page of CNN.com or BBC.co.uk to finish loading, giving them the security that comes with an authoritarian medium.

In order to cement their hypothesis, substantial efforts have been made to archive and catalog the content of the internet as it was on September 11<sup>th</sup> in order to preserve this information for posterity and locate it within the historic record. The Library of Congress, in association with Archive.org (a non-profit with very close ties to Alexa Internet, a casualty in the search-engine wars that survived by catering to the advertising industry before it was

absorbed into Amazon.com) and other corporate think-tanks has created virtual monuments to the day with websites such as September11.archive.org. The expectation is, twenty years from now, when people are asked “where they were,” they can point toward their own “participation” in the event, perhaps even to their own words on that day posted at various internet fora, allowing them to contextualize themselves in the tragedy. This contextualization might not always be accurate however, and the encouragement of it can hardly be considered apolitical but part of the same conservative nationalistic-fantasy that served to make the true injured party of the attack not New Yorkers but the masculine pride of men well removed from the danger.

While these think-tanks are normally fascinated with the subject of gender (or sex, the two typically treated as indistinguishable by these parties), endlessly pontificating on how women use the web to talk about babies with their girlfriends while men go on to create new and fantastic things, gender is strangely absent from the discussion of September 11<sup>th</sup>. As a pro-feminist, it is not the sentimental “threads” cataloguing images of international support on that day—American men being especially moved by a Palestinian girl placing flowers at a memorial—that held fast in my memory, but the endless dueling between males that occurred. I witnessed debates about who knew more, or even the absolute most, about airplane frames, steel construction, or the equations for Newton’s Second Law of Motion. I saw men who swore upon their sacred math that the towers would continue to stand, even as they burned, insulting anyone who feared for the worst as overly-emotional Luddites. The contemporary male response to a tragedy that they perceive as their own is affectations of dominance (much as they greet the misfortune of others with “dark-comedy”), something that is left out of reporting that would rather dwell upon the electronic messages of safety and relief exchanged between family members on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Feminists and those on the general Left are required to read between those lines, history itself having been constructed and col-

onized by masculinity: the rosy picture of internet relations in the wake of disaster—save for the overly-capitalized ravings of abject fools that can either be conveniently ignored or used to normalize the foolishness of men less abrasive—is one that protects male corporate interests and their financial and philosophical investments. Despite patriarchy’s somber maxims about repeating the past, it seems that each generation of men believes itself to have discovered violence for the first time. One man’s act of war is another man’s act of terrorism and thus not all calendar dates ring with infamy.

While liberal publications have been hammering home the point that President Bush “lied” about Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction for well over two years now, such efforts have been ineffectual. The Bush administration was able to shift the discussion to the *desire* to create and possess such weapons, the will to use them, and naturally towards the exigencies of an occupation already in progress. The Left is in a war of words that they cannot win: indeed, it does not—or should not—have the same arsenal of speech available to them (our language’s panoply of invective that targets minorities and their attributes), nor the same claim to masculinity, yet many Leftist males continue to labor under the belief that they can conquer in this arena and that doing so is necessary.

To better understand this, consider the reaction of many liberal men, especially white ones, when confronted by the contemporary display of a Confederate flag, typically used by conservatives to provoke a parallel masculine conflict of some sort; both in establishing the male-credibility of those who are first to fly it within their social group and of those who are first to tear it down, vis-à-vis their own set of peers. The standard response is something to the effect of “The South lost, get over it!” as if might had made right in that instance, as if had the Yankees been driven into cold depths of the sea it would have equally proven slavery to be manifestly moral. It would not have—and it is evidently not needless to say so.

Bush gambled on weapons of mass destruction: it came up

“tails” and he lost. The problem is not with him losing but with his right, his entitlement (and that of all Western Society), to be in a position to gamble in the first place. To focus merely on that loss, the nonexistent weapons and not the move towards war that election-minded Democrats rushed to sign on with, is to agree with patriarchal ideals and to suffer a struggle on their paradigm, one designed to serve a status quo of masculine power that requires the subjugation of others. Thus it is necessary to both remove oneself from this struggle and point out the illegitimacy of it and its fundamental irrationality.

To this end, I suggest that people dissatisfied with this paradigm look to the archives of the internet, in search of where they personally were in the early days of the invasion of Iraq. Look back to those days where every unopened can of paint in the desert was potential evidence, where people still ordered Freedom Fries, where things were said that the men in charge of preserving the world wide web’s contents as “historical evidence” would much rather the public forget. (Something that invariably makes this “Posterity Project” a much more difficult prospect than those searching the neatly organized archives created for September 11<sup>th</sup>.) Remind people of this, of the premature masculine assaults that occurred and those, even worse, that certainly would have happened had Bush’s coin toss had come up “heads,” somehow justifying his decision to ignore evidence and embrace the less than credible.

This, of course, runs the risk of playing their game—if done for the wrong reasons and only to highlight the absurdity of their wrongness given the advantages of hindsight—but on the other hand, it does display how mild the force the Left has been able to bring to bear in their “Bush lied” treatises, compared to the tirades they would have suffered had Bush lucked into telling the truth by accident. That alone should demonstrate the futility of playing the game by the rules of patriarchy.

For my own contribution, I offer portions of a “thread” from a technology forum that I participated at during that time period. The text is unedited for spelling or content and the time stamps are preserved.

**Topic: Ooppps... the french must learn to like crow...**

**Patrick Cox:**

March 23, 2003 07:54 PM

The US has just sized a chemical weapons factory and the commanding general of that local program. Details are still sketcy, BBC says several hundred 155 and 205mm shells filled with a nerve agent. It’s a 100 Acre complex!

Not sure how this is possible, Iraq said they didn’t have it and the French said so too. The senior inspector who searched that area and town said ‘huh’ (he’s on CNN right now, under the microscope and SQUIRMING).

**Terry Penrod:**

March 23, 2003 08:14 PM

That is a VERY interesting turn of events Patrick. What will the French say if this is confirmed beyond all doubt? A 100 acre chemical weapons factory right smack dab in the middle of a country that “has no such weapons or weapons programs” is a pretty significant piece of damning evidence. It also indicates that we may uncover a great deal more dirty little secrets around Iraq as time goes on. Secrets perhaps like records or reliable witnesses that can finally tie them directly or indirectly to known terrorist organizations.

Of course we may never know the whole truth as so many of Saddam's own people have been eliminated by him and others are still sympathizers. We also may never find super secret underground caches way out in the desert. But just this ONE example will prove that they did and probably still do exist.

Cheers, Terry

**Patrick Cox:**

March 23, 2003 08:18 PM

Two generals, now the Pentagon is moderating their language to say it's a suspected chemical weapons production site. The general are cooperating and providing details on that facility and hidden caches (which if true, will show to the world that Saddam did not destroy their weapons). The BBC says there are now separate reports about siezed chemical warheads outside of Basra... apparently they ran the two together out of confusion.

**Patrick Cox:**

March 23, 2003 08:21 PM

Additionally, Centcom is now saying that they have firm intel that at least two of the defending Republican Guards divisions south of Baghdad have chemical weapons and large caliber soviet and south african artillery capable of firing them with orders to use them. Psyops units are bombarding the heck out of them telling them not to.

**Terry Penrod:**

March 23, 2003 08:22 PM

It hardly matters which report is verified Patrick. Either one or both will prove that Saddam has been lying through his teeth all along and planning who-knows-what?

EDIT: P.S. That was a response to your first reply Pat.

Cheers, Terry

**Mr. Bigglesworth:**

March 24, 2003 10:08 AM

From what I saw on MSNBC last night (Sunday), the building they found was not on the UN inspectors' list and US intelligence had no idea it was there. I think this is going to be a smoking gun. I also imagine that if the general captured isn't talking, he will be on his way to Egypt shortly for some "convincing".

**Killrtech99:**

March 24, 2003 10:32 AM

Yeah, some nice solid evidence would make a delicious "I told you so" sandwich.