

2016 Media Excerpts

Kristeligt Dagblad
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She lost her nephew 15 years ago: September 11 split us

interview

SIDSEL NYHOLM WRITES FROM USA

<http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/udland/hun-mistede-sin-nevø-15-aar-siden-11.-september-splittede-os>

10 September 2016

Memories of the terrorist attack on the United States September 11, 2001 fade, but for Valerie Lucznikowska who lost his nephew in the attack, is the 15th anniversary tomorrow a bitter reminder of the discord which aftermath created in American society and in her own family.



"The militarism that was the answer to the attack on us, divided us as a people. There are some very fundamental differences in our world view," says Valerie Lucznikowska who lost his nephew during the terrorist attack.

She lost her confidence in the United States as a nation that puts freedom rights above all other considerations. Invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the revelations of the US use of secret prisons and torture, and the overall dilution of Americans' civil rights in the wake of the terrorist attack, disappointed her deeply.

She also lost most of his immediate family, as her activism for peace and understanding was met with displeasure by the more politically conservative relatives. As a member of the kin group September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows (September 11 Families for a peaceful future), whose purpose is to create a dialogue about alternatives to war, Valerie Lucznikowska by her own admission is disinterested in revenge...

Newsweek

MIDDLE EAST



THE DEADLY ATTACK: The World Trade Center Twin towers hours after the smoke and dust had cleared following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Up to 3,000 people were killed in the deadliest terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in recent history.

Fifteen years on, 9/11 victims' families demand justice.

By [Roshanak Taghavi](#)

September 7, 2016

Justice and security are on the minds of many Americans commemorating September 11 this week, as newly de-classified documents re-ignite the debate over Saudi Arabia's alleged involvement in the deadliest attacks in contemporary U.S. history — and congressional legislation is proposing to hold the Kingdom responsible in American courts.

U.S. Families: Unanswered Questions, 15 Years On

While families of many victims say they've come to terms with the loss of their loved ones, they still don't understand how the U.S. failed to stop the attacks from happening, and who exactly was at fault.

Cynicism and frustration have replaced the grief of those who lost someone in the 3,000 victims of that day, and many are still searching for answers.

“I [still] don’t understand how it happened,” says **Talat Hamdani**, whose 23-year old son, Salman, an Emergency Medical Technician and cadet with the New York Police Department, died during rescue efforts as the World Trade Center Towers fell. “The 9/11 Commission...connected the dots, but we are still missing some. Fifteen years later, I have healed, but you cannot let it go unpunished.”

Many families are pushing for the U.S. government to continue investigating the attack and determine what security breaches allowed it to happen.

“It is still astounding to me that nearly 15 years later, not a single person was ever fired, reprimanded or held accountable for what happened on September 11. And it remains even more astounding to me that the five men on trial are still sitting in Guantanamo Bay, even after four years of pre-trial hearings,” says **Colleen Kelly**, whose younger brother Bill was killed while attending a one-day breakfast conference in the World Trade Center’s North Tower.

THE DAILY NONPAREIL
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Bluffs family lost loved one on 9/11 in World Trade Center

Tim Johnson

tjohnson@nonpareilonline.com | Posted: Sunday, September 11, 2016 12:00 am



Emmet Tinley III

Emmet Tinley III holds a picture of his brother Mike standing alongside his daughters Lisa Kennedy, left, and Jenna Mather-Frueh, right, which was taken in New York on the Labor Day weekend before the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Although New York is more than 1,200 miles away, the Tinley family of Council Bluffs was personally touched by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Mike Tinley, 56, originally from Council Bluffs, was killed when terrorists flew the first jetliner into the north tower of the World Trade Center...

After the attacks, Kathleen Tinley joined a group called Sept. 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

“It was a group of family members that came together and really felt strongly that we didn’t want our loss to be used as a justification for violence against other people,” she said. “That was so much a part of why I had to go to Iraq – to meet individuals there and bring their stories back.”

In January 2002, she and other members of the group traveled to Iraq and met Muslim women and children who had been injured from the violence in that country. It was before the U.S. invaded Iraq.

“It was immediately after we went into Afghanistan, and then people started talking about al-Qaeda and the possibility of weapons of mass destruction,” she said. “People were still very raw with emotion and just wanted someone to pay. In going to Iraq, I wanted people to realize those who would be paying the highest cost were people who were completely innocent.”

The involvement helped Kathleen Tinley deal with the loss of her uncle, she said.

“Being with other people who lost someone they loved on that day was part of it, and being with people who lost people in totally different situations – because there was a connection,” she said.

She said she felt like she was somehow honoring her uncle by doing that. But there was one time during the visit when things got scary.

“We were this group of Americans in the middle of Iraq, and the children started coming out to see what was happening,” Kathleen Tinley remembered.

“All of a sudden, the air raid (siren) sounded. We loaded back into the van and went back to our hotel” but didn’t hear about any air strike occurring. “One of my favorite people I met there,” she said. “The only thing he wanted in life was to make sure his son was happy and his wife had a good life.”

When the group returned to the U.S., members spoke to the press and to the public, Kathleen Tinley said.

“We obviously didn’t prevent the war, but I couldn’t not try – I couldn’t not do anything,” she said.

She spoke to a lot of groups individually.

“I did a lot of speaking in front of small groups, large groups, political rallies, media work, international work,” she said. “From the people that approached me, I know there was an impact .. that people heard not just the story of my loss but of the things I experienced.”

She said she has seen many people’s attitudes change. “There’s so many people I’m really inspired by how much they have opened their eyes and how they have opened their hearts” to people of other religions.

Kathleen Tinley, a lifelong resident of Council Bluffs, also is troubled by the escalation of harsh rhetoric between people of different religions and ethnicities.

“The current election cycle is terrifying, because you know the power of words,” she said. “I’ve got to just remain hopeful that those who are trying to unite will stay motivated and keep up their efforts and, one by one, others will open themselves up. But it’s really terrifying the potential of what could happen if that continues.”

28 pages on 9/11 that should be made public

By Colleen Kelly

🕒 Updated 1:30 PM ET, Thu April 21, 2016



Story highlights

- Twenty-eight pages of 2002 congressional investigation into 9/11 remain classified
- Colleen Kelly: Families have been waiting 14 years to read what our government wrote

Colleen Kelly is co-founder of the [September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows](#). Her brother, William "Billy" Kelly Jr., died on September 11, 2001. The views expressed are her own.

(CNN)Twenty-eight pages. That's what we want. The families of those killed on September 11, 2001, want 28 pages made public from the 2002 Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities before and after the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001.

There has been widespread speculation that these pages concern Saudi Arabia, its wealthy citizens and the financing of terrorist operations. But whatever is actually contained in those 28 pages that were ultimately redacted from the report, the families have been waiting 14 years to read what our own government wrote. We don't want to wait one minute more.

Here's why:

We're tired of trade-offs. No one was ever disciplined, demoted, fired or held accountable in any meaningful way for the penetration of our national security on 9/11, or the loss of nearly 3,000 lives. True, Richard Clarke, former counterterrorism czar, had the decency to look family members in the eye and apologize publicly. "Your government failed you, and I failed you," [he told us before the 9/11 Commission that investigated the attacks](#). "We tried hard, but that doesn't matter because we failed you. And for that failure, I would ask, once all the facts are out, for your understanding and for your forgiveness."

Yet fact-finding proved difficult. The co-chairs of the 9-11 Commission, Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton, for example, [took to the opinion page of The New York Times](#) in 2008 to say that some in the CIA had "obstructed our investigation."

Meanwhile, the pretrial hearings of the five men accused of conspiring to plan and execute 9/11 are [mired in the swamps of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base](#). The facts of the case have not yet been presented. Almost 15 years after September 11, and there is still no trial date in sight. Yes -- you read that correctly. Five men. Fifteen years. No trial.

[Administration wrong about terrorism sponsor act \(Opinion\)](#)

In the intervening period, the American people have been distracted by a war, supposedly aimed at bringing down a bad guy, Saddam Hussein, who had nothing to do with the suffering of 9/11. So, we can spend billions on a disastrous war unrelated to September 11, but we cannot find a way to bring five suspects to trial?

For the family members of those lost who are American citizens, we have been asked since childhood to pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America "for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

But what exactly can justice mean if we don't have all the facts? Justice relies on truth, and truth rests on transparency. There may be some important truths in those 28 pages, and there may not. But we won't know until the documents are made public and our messy democracy can analyze and argue over its content. That is why I now choose to pledge allegiance to truth, wherever it leads and whether the final destination is a nation, an ideology or individuals. I invite you to join me.



There are, of course, some who would call 9/11 family members naïve, claiming we don't understand the world order, international relations or geopolitical maneuvering. Maybe they are correct. But those critics might themselves be missing the most important point: that the primary and fundamental function of the state is to protect its citizens. Not its image, nor its economic interests, not even its allies. And on that key point, the United States collectively failed in that role on September 11.

We cannot allow such a failure again. But to understand what went wrong, then we must have all the factual information available. That is why senators and representatives alike -- and our President -- should take bold and decisive steps to release those 28 pages. Immediately.

The Plan to Shut Gitmo and Turn It Into an Ocean Research Lab

Written by [Kate Lunau](#)

March 17, 2016 // 02:20 PM EST



Photo: [Joint Task Force Guantanamo/Flickr](#)

In December 2015, Julia Rodriguez travelled to Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. Rodriguez, whose brother Gregory died in 9/11, was invited to the US military base, all expenses paid, by the Department of Defense, after her name was picked in a lottery—part of a program to bring survivors and family members there to watch court proceedings.

“When my name came up, I’d been waiting for three years,” said Rodriguez, a history professor at the University of New Hampshire. “To be honest, I wasn’t even sure if I wanted to go.”

But she did go, with her mother, and for five days they sat in on the pretrial hearings of the “9/11 Five,” the alleged masterminds of the terrorist attacks that killed her brother—and provided justification for opening one of the most notorious detention centres in the world. (Gregory, who worked in the World Trade Center, had recently gotten married before he died. He was 31.)

At Guantánamo, where almost 800 men [have been held](#) over the past 14 years—91 detainees are still there—Rodriguez felt overcome by negativity. “It’s hard to separate out what happened to my brother, and thousands of others, from the war after, and the torture,” she said. “That was overwhelming.”

One of the most “jarring” aspects of the visit, she said, was the base’s oddly beautiful surroundings. “The air smells like flowers, and it’s on this bay,” Rodriguez told me.

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The area around [Guantánamo](#) is a nesting ground for the green turtle and hawksbill turtle (both endangered), and other native wildlife, like the Cuban iguana and the West Indian manatee. It’s home to a large rodent called the banana rat, and apparently to hordes of feral cats, which can cause problems. According to a 2002 government [report](#), the Navy has brought in US Wildlife

Services to help get the rats, cats, and other invasive species under control, as they were being squashed by cars and bungling up airplane runways.

“It’s such a beautiful spot,” Rodriguez said. “And there’s so much ugliness going on.”

A new paper, published Thursday in *Science*, proposes a way to “redeem the prison’s dark history,” by turning Guantánamo into a nature preserve, peace park, and ocean research station. A “[Woods Hole](#) of the Caribbean” jointly run by the US and Cuba...



Rodriguez, who is half-Cuban, is skeptical that the base will be decommissioned, although she’d like to see the detention center and hearings moved closer to home, for better transparency.

“I have always hoped that our country would reestablish diplomatic ties with Cuba,” she said. The relationship between these two countries is shifting, and with those changes could finally come a new future for Guantánamo.