

OPINION

## March Of The Conspiracy Theorists

By Bootie Cosgrove-Mather  
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*This column was written by **Sonny Bunch**.*

The terms "brain trust" and "Cynthia McKinney" do not roll off the tongue like "peanut butter and jelly." But that's how the press release advertised a series of "Brain Trust" panels moderated by Rep. McKinney this past weekend at the Congressional Black Caucus's annual legislative conference. The topic: "The 9/11 Omission: Did the Commission Get it Wrong?"

For the September 23rd meeting at the Washington Convention Center, McKinney assembled three teams of panelists to tackle issues related to "The Road to 9/11," "The Road Since 9/11," and "What the Commissioners Chose to Ignore." After each panelist addressed the 50 or 60 members of the audience, they were questioned by three experts from the "9/11 community," a group dedicated to exposing the government's malfeasance in regards to the terrorist attacks.

On their face, the topics of the panels were not totally ridiculous or far-fetched. After all, Rep. Curt Weldon, a Republican from Pennsylvania, has spent months informing the public about the Department of Defense program Able Danger. The intelligence gathering program may have identified Mohammed Atta and other 9/11 hijackers as threats in the months prior to the attacks, but the 9/11 Commission all but ignored the program in its final report.

Weldon was on the panel's itinerary, but did not appear at the event. (Weldon's office says they never confirmed the representative's appearance at the conference.) Judging from some of the other speakers and questioners at the event, it's no surprise that he wanted nothing to do with it.

McKinney has long lived on the lunatic fringe of leftist politics. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, she claimed that President Bush was aware of "numerous warnings of the events to come on September 11," and that by doing nothing he and his cronies could "make huge profits off America's new war."



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Voters in Georgia's 4th district were outraged. She was defeated by Denise Majette in the 2002 Democratic primary. But McKinney and her supporters saw a more sinister reason for her defeat. Her father appeared on an Atlanta TV station to explain why traditional campaign methods like gathering endorsements had failed his daughter: "Jews have bought everybody," he explained. "J-E-W-S."

McKinney reclaimed her seat in 2004 when Majette threw her hat in the ring for the Senate seat vacated by Zell Miller. McKinney has since picked up right where she left off; her "brain trust" panels were stocked with like-minded conspiracy theorists.

Wayne Madsen, author of the Wayne Madsen Report, was one of three questioners of the panelists. His hatred of all things George W. Bush, and love of all things conspiratorial, almost rises to self-parody. In a November, 2002 article in CounterPunch, a progressive newsletter, he had this convoluted analysis of Karl Rove's role in McKinney's reelection campaign:

*Undoubtedly, Rove was also behind the campaign to "get" Georgia Representative Cynthia McKinney who was the first nationally-known politician to question what Bush may have known beforehand about 9-11. She was defeated by a former Republican state judge who had supported the wacky Alan Keyes for President in 2000. Never mind, McKinney was "less with Bush" than Keyes, so it was more important to get McKinney*



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y theorists was also a questioner. Ruppert has long made  
 stance, that the CIA was responsible for flooding  
 America's inner cities with drugs in the 1970s and beyond. According to the biography supplied at the

conference, he has spent the last several years as "the point man in breaking major stories involving government foreknowledge [of 9/11], corruption and violations of the Constitution."

The panelists were of a similar bent. One of the featured speakers was David Ray Griffin. He spent his allotted time informing the audience that the Twin Towers collapsed not because two planes loaded down with jet fuel smashed into them at hundreds of miles per hour. Rather, a series of timed detonations brought down the buildings. Detonations placed by the government. "Hmm," the crowd murmured knowingly.

McKinney had also hoped that Senator Mark Dayton would appear at the panels. Dayton, a fellow Democrat, lambasted NORAD for its failures on 9/11 before a congressional hearing on the 9/11 Commission's report. Because he could not make it, McKinney played an audiotape of Dayton's impassioned testimony. After the tape stopped, McKinney ominously intoned that "shortly after his testimony, Dayton announced he wasn't running for the Senate again." Knowing murmurs again ensued.

When questions were allowed from the audience, one of the first was about Dayton's decision not to seek another term. Ruppert claimed that two words could explain why the Minnesotan wouldn't run again: Paul Wellstone.

Ruppert, it turns out, believes that Wellstone was killed for his outspoken opposition to the war in Iraq. And this is not the first time Republicans have murdered political opponents shortly before an election. The 2000 plane crash that took the life of Missouri Senate candidate Mel Carnahan was also a murder, according to Ruppert.

Barbara Rosenberg, a microbiologist and expert in biological weapons, suggested that the postal anthrax attacks were part of a government effort to test America's preparedness for a biological attack.

To complete the scene, even Ward Churchill made an appearance, and he was happy with what he heard. "I liked the overall tenor," the University of Colorado chairman said. "The straightforward delivery was refreshing."



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