



## Episode 692: Why Are Those 28 Pages on 9/11 Classified?

Guest: Brian McGlinchey

**WOODS:** I've been reading 28Pages.org since I knew we were going to talk. I knew a little something about this 28 page thing, but not a whole lot. I was quite surprised by the comments by Thomas Massie, Congressman Massie from Kentucky. You know, he's a pretty sober and restrained individual in his rhetoric, and he is blown away by the contents of the 28 pages. Let's start off with what these 28 pages actually are. These are not pages redacted from the 9/11 Commission Report. I think people probably think that's the case. What are these 28 pages from?

**MCGLINCHEY:** You're right; that's a very common misperception, that they're from the Commission Report. They're actually from an inquiry that came before that. Before the 9/11 Commission, there was a joint inquiry conducted by the two intelligence communities of Congress, and this inquiry was looking specifically into intelligence community activities before and after the attacks. And they did their analysis and investigation in 2002, interviewing many, many witnesses and going through government files and so forth. And that work culminated in a report spanning more than 800 pages.

Now, throughout those 800 pages, there's various redactions of a name or a place or a date, but then suddenly you get to this last chapter of the report, and the entire chapter is completely blanked out. So in the context of all those other small redactions, it's quite extraordinary. And this chapter deals specifically with the topic of foreign government connections and support, indications of that, of the 9/11 hijackers.

**WOODS:** What I found interesting in particular when looking at this was indeed the bipartisan set of testimonials we have from people who have read the 28 pages, because apparently by and large if you're a U.S. congressman you can go in there and read them. You can't take notes; you can't have anybody with you; you can't have any electronics with you, and they monitor you, but you can read the 28 pages. And I have to say, maybe my Catholic listeners will get the reference, but trying to get to the bottom of what this is all about reminds me of the mystery surrounding the third secret of Fatima. There would be this handful of people who had seen the third secret of Fatima, and they would slightly hint at what it was all about, and based on those hints people were trying to reconstruct what it was.

And in the same way, we get these leading hints as to what's in there and we're trying to reconstruct what it is. But I think it's clearer what's in the 28 pages than in the third secret of Fatima, because the references to Saudi Arabia are so open and blatant and repeated in the testimonies; how could it not be about Saudi Arabia and its government?

**MCGLINCHEY:** Yes, that's one thing that's pretty clear, and in particular, former Senator Bob Graham, he was Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and co-chaired that inquiry that produced the 28 pages. He's been the most outspoken in pointing that finger, and he said that the 28 pages point a very strong finger to Saudi Arabia as being the principle financier of the 9/11 attacks. So you don't get much stronger than that. So yes, every indication is that this is linking the 9/11 hijackers to Saudi Arabia.

**WOODS:** All right, now even though we have — and I'd like you to read a few of them in a few minutes. Even though we have testimonies about these 28 pages with hints as to their content from people who are fairly respectable people, yet it still seems I bet to some people as if there's something weirdly conspiratorial about all this, and I want you to explain why there's nothing oddball about asking for these 28 pages and why it does seem like something's going on here.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Right, yeah, sometimes I'm asked, "Is this a conspiracy theory?", and I say, no, this is really a transparency theory, a theory that the American people deserve to have information about an attack that was devastating in its own right, but then when we look at the implications of policy decisions, both at home and abroad, that have flown from that, they're enormous, and we all deserve to know exactly what happened, was led and what enabled the 9/11 attacks. And as you say, there are many, many sober individuals who are championing this cause: former senators, former members of the 9/11 Commission, significant figures in media, the editorial boards of many newspapers. This is a very nonpartisan quest for transparency and the government sharing information that we all should have.

**WOODS:** All right, give me some examples of things that have been said. Give me the actual quotations from people who have read these 28 pages.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Absolutely. You mentioned Thomas Massie at the beginning as being a very measured individual in his rhetoric and so forth. And it was watching his press conference that actually initially sparked my interest in this. And seeing him say that the 28 pages, the experience of reading it was "shocking." He said, "I needed to stop every couple pages and try to rearrange my understanding of history. It challenges you to rethink everything."

**WOODS:** Yeah, now, that is a fairly arresting quotation. He's not saying, oh, you know, it's a whole lot of hoopla about nothing; don't get your hopes up; there's no valuable information to be found here.

**MCGLINCHEY:** That's right. Another big congressman, Walter Jones, who is the leader of the declassification drive in the House of Representative, he said, "It probably took me a good hour and a half to read the pages, because I would have to reread certain parts of it that I just couldn't believe that I was reading."

**WOODS:** Yeah, now, when you mention that he's leading the effort in the House to declassify it, let's talk about that. What exactly can they do? Can they simply recommend that the president release this information? Is there some way that they can force him to do it? What exactly is going on?

**MCGLINCHEY:** There are a number of avenues of attack on this. The main drive right now in the House is House Resolution 14, and listeners can read the text of that at [28Pages.org](http://28Pages.org). It urges the president to declassify the pages, so it is a sense of the House, it is the body urging the president to do that. That's up to 70 cosponsors. That wouldn't force it, but it would exert strong political pressure on the president to do that.

But there are other avenues. There are rules by which either the House or Senate can declassify information, even over the objection of the president. There's a very rarely if ever used muscle, but it's an option and it's out there. Congressman Jones, in addition to the H. Res. 14, has introduced H. Res. 779 this month. That one calls on the chair and ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee to just personally declassify the 28 pages by putting them into the Congressional Record. Listeners may recall that the Pentagon Papers were classified, were starting to be leaked by *The New York Times*, and then Senator Mike Revell actually entered them into the Congressional Record, put them into public view under the protection of the Speech or Debate Clause. So that's another avenue that could be out there.

Right now, though, we're really hoping — the shortest line to having these pages declassified is simply for the president to go ahead and authorize that. Now, on that front we are in the midst of a review, an intelligence community declassification review that the president allegedly requested in the summer of 2014. I say "allegedly," because it really tests one's credulity to think that it could take two years now to review just 28 pages of information, but we are now awaiting that. They had said that they expected the review to be complete by the end of June, and as you know, we're in July now, and there'll be a press conference on Capitol Hill tomorrow to draw attention to that to reaffirm the demands to get these 28 pages released.

**WOODS:** In your FAQ over at [28Pages.org](http://28Pages.org), you have the basic question, among others, "What do the 28 pages cover?" And I just want to read your answer for the listening audience:

"According to the introduction to the chapter — which is itself an unclassified version of the actual introduction — the 28 pages cover the joint congressional inquiry's development of information 'suggesting specific sources of foreign support for some of the September 11 hijackers while they were in the United States.'"

And then it looks as if basically the entire chapter has been blacked out. Whose decision was it to blackout that entire chapter?

**MCGLINCHEY:** That was the decision of George Bush, George W. Bush. There were months of negotiations between the staff of this joint congressional inquiry and the administration over how much redactions there would be back and forth, and the Bush administration just would not yield on this chapter dealing with indications of foreign government support for the 9/11 hijackers. As your listeners may well know, there are close ties between the Bush administration — Bush personally even — and the royal family of Saudi Arabia.

**WOODS:** Now, can we know that we're only talking about Saudi Arabia here?

**MCGLINCHEY:** We can't know anything for certain. I believe there may be additional countries implicated perhaps. Sometimes you see some — again, getting back to you referring to Fatima and the analysis of all these comments, sometimes you see plural references by people referring to these 28 pages. It's not clear if they're just being intentionally vague.

**WOODS:** "Plural references" meaning "governments" with an "s."

**MCGLINCHEY:** Exactly. But you know, they might just be intentionally vague with that, like saying "some people" or something like that. But it's not clear — it is pretty clear, though, that the overwhelming weight of this chapter deals with Saudi Arabia.

**WOODS:** All right, now of course I can anticipate what one of the objections will be: we can't let you know about what we have learned about possible funding sources for the attacks, because that would jeopardize national security. I want to ask you that after we thank our sponsor.

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So what is the response to the claim that national security might account for why they don't want us to have this information?

**MCGLINCHEY:** Well, the best response is from people who have read and wrote the 28 pages, and they say that is absolutely not justified. They say 95% of this chapter in this report could be declassified without any concern for national security. The rationale for this classification has evolved over time. Originally it was to protect sources and methods for national security, just as you said, and recently we see comments about the 28 pages as being, well, it's uncorroborated information that's unvetted. That's an entirely different rationale that's now being floated about.

**WOODS:** I see, okay, so it's not credible in some way.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Yeah, the national security justification is not credible.

**WOODS:** Yeah, exactly, but to claim that the information itself is not credible sort of leads you to wonder what it was doing in the report. Why do they have this whole chapter, how did it make it through?

**MCGLINCHEY:** Exactly — it's a report of over 800 pages and no one has ever made those kind of aspersions about the rest of this report, and suddenly you're supposed to get to this chapter that's just a flimsy grab bag of information? Yeah, that's not the case at all. This is information that came from FBI and CIA documents that the inquiry discovered.

**WOODS:** Do you know if Senator Rand Paul is one of the people who has read the 28 pages?

**MCGLINCHEY:** He has read the 28 pages, and he has introduced a Senate counterpart to that House Resolution 14 called Senate Bill 1471 that likewise urges the president to declassify the pages.

**WOODS:** Okay, now, let's talk about this a bit more. Why couldn't Senator Paul — or for that matter, any of these people, Thomas Massie, anybody — why couldn't they just give a speech telling us everything that's in the 28 pages? I think that's what people listening to this will wonder. Isn't there an obvious solution to this? Somebody just tells us what's in there.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Exactly. Under the Speech or Debate Clause, members of Congress would indeed be protected from any criminal prosecution by revealing any information that's in the 28 pages. Now, there's a couple considerations that go beyond that, which is, number one, they can't take physical custody of the 28 pages. They're locked in a secure facility in the basement of the Capitol. So then they would have to recount as best they could I guess the highlights of the 28 pages from the floor of the House or the Senate.

They would be protected from prosecution if they did that; they would not be protected from consequences. And one of those consequences could well be that they never again are granted access to read classified information. Now, anybody who on Capitol Hill is really driven to want to expose this classified information is probably the kind of person who would really value having continued access to other classified information, so that they can stay informed and monitor the executive branch and so forth. So it's not just as easy as saying we'll just go read it, because there could be repercussions from that.

**WOODS:** Okay. It does seem to me that there — you would think there would be at least one person who would just be a martyr for the cause and say, you know what, it wouldn't be the end of the world if I did something productive and left political life and went to the private sector and just did this for my country. Why isn't there an Edward Snowden in this case? There's nobody will just tell us what's in — if it's that important that it's just shaking Thomas Massie to his core, then why doesn't he say

maybe there's more important things than my congressional career? I don't mean to put him on the spot; I just use him as an example.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Exactly. Um —

**WOODS:** And of course I don't expect you to answer that. I guess that's more rhetorical than anything else. But if we're talking about something that's this important, then I don't see why your congressional career matters more than us having this information.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Right. And maybe these people are wanting to go as hard in the paint as they can right now using other avenues, using pressure on the president, using resolutions and that type of thing to bring about some political pressure. And there have been some indications that there's reason for optimism in this. There have been statements by the administration saying we do expect some degree of declassification. We had the CIA director this month saying, I think the pages should come out; "I think it's a good thing that they come out." So I think we're seeing some hints that there will be a declassification, hopefully a complete declassification. We recoil a little when hear them talk about some degree. Again, just about every word, according to people who have read these 28 pages, should be able to come out, except perhaps for a few names of a source or two.

**WOODS:** Brian, I don't know how any of this works, in terms of government documents, but isn't there a possibility that they could release a falsified version of the 28 pages and we'd never know?

**MCGLINCHEY:** That's a great question and one that's often asked. The good thing is if we have people on Capitol Hill who have read the 28 pages and were struck by them, we've got people from the joint inquiry, Senator Graham who chaired it, we've got watchdogs. The people who are advocates on this issue are the people who have read the 28 pages, so if somebody tried a last-second swap of the most compelling and important aspects of this, our watchdogs at Capitol Hill would know that.

**WOODS:** Let's suppose it does say something that implicates the Saudi government in some way in the attacks of 9/11. I don't understand the national security argument — I'm sure — if I had half the idea of what's really going on behind the scenes I would be shocked, but if the claim is it could undermine in general the idea — I'm sure there are other claims, that ways we gather information might be made obvious in the 28 pages, whatever. But I could also see them saying that it would undermine the status that Saudi Arabia enjoys as a great and important and unquestioned ally of the U.S. But it seems to me that begs — in the traditional sense of the term "begging the question" — that begs the whole question, because the 28 pages themselves may show Saudi Arabia to be not so good an ally, so this argument collapses in on itself.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Exactly. Last summer when he was on the campaign trail, somebody asked Senator Lindsey Graham, one of the most hawkish people on terrorism, if he had read the 28 pages. He confessed he had not. And when asked if he would declassify them, he said he would hesitate to do so if it would hurt Saudi Arabia. And it gets back

to the circular logic of our national security establishment on this: well, we don't want to do anything to hurt the Saudis; they're our key ally. Well, to the extent that they are implicated in the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil, are they indeed that ally? That's really the fundamental question that underlies all of this.

Now, you get to the question of why, beyond national security, why is this protection of Saudi Arabia apparently afoot. And really it's part of an enormous pattern across both parties, across many branches of Congress of protecting this relationship with Saudi Arabia at all costs. And that points to the influence that Saudi Arabia has in this question, and the more I've been involved in this issue and in this campaign, the more I — every day, I uncover, oh, there's another connection to Saudi Arabia. The chairman of one of the largest Republican super PACs is a registered lobbyist for Saudi Arabia. Donald Trump's newly promoted campaign manager was a registered agent of Saudi Arabia. The money that flows into our think-tanks comes from Saudi Arabia. You've got multimillion-dollar contributions to the Clinton Foundation from Saudi Arabia.

So the connections — that, plus the enormous weapons deals that are done with — the intelligence community's close relationship. Sometimes they call Saudi Arabia an ally; sometimes I think the better term where the CIA is concerned is a coconspirator. This is not an exercise in history, by the way, getting these 28 pages out. It's very relevant to today. Senator Graham says by shielding Saudi Arabia from scrutiny of its role in 9/11, we've only encouraged them to continue funding and promoting extremism around the world and giving way for the rise of the menace of ISIS that we're facing today.

**WOODS:** Brian, I'm curious about your own background. What is your background, and how did you come to be so involved in this issue?

**MCGLINCHEY:** My background originally — I was an Army officer for four years. I worked in financial services, then became a freelance copywriter, and two summers ago I just happened to come across video of Thomas Massie in a Capitol Hill press conference describing the 28 pages and his reaction to it. And at that time, and I guess as initially you and Ron Paul talk about often, I had personally been on a quest to find my role, my niche, what can I do to help make things better. And foreign policy has been an issue of mine of great interest; transparency has been an issue of mine. I started researching the topic of 28 pages; I saw a void out there. There was really no single website with information, reliable, well-sourced information, ongoing reporting, original documentation and so forth. And so I decided this'll be it for me right now. I'm going to leap in and make this my avenue of attack, be a little brushfire of liberty out there.

**WOODS:** Well, it's tremendous. Tell people the website again, and what do you want people to do after listening to you talk right now. What's the action step you want them to take.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Okay, come to [28Pages.org](http://28Pages.org). We have resources there to help you take action, and it only takes minutes. We've got the enormous influence of the intelligence

community and Saudi Arabia on one side, and it's the American citizens on the other, in terms of pressuring the president. There's this declassification review going on right now. They'll tell you it's a national security review. It's really a political review. They're measuring political cost and benefits of declassifying these pages, so we need to exert as much pressure as possible. So come to [28pages.org](http://28pages.org), click the "Take Action" button. We can guide you through making a quick phone call to your member of the House, your senator, the White House. If you prefer sending a written message, we can facilitate that as well. The other thing I would say is stay plugged in on this issue. This is a kick-the-can exercise by our government. They keep deferring this. It's been 13 years since this report was created, so stay connected. Follow us on Twitter, @28Pages. You can also like our page on Facebook from our website. So stay hooked in, stay interested, and share this information with those in your social circles to build awareness of this, so that we can really bring this about ahead of this 15th anniversary of the attacks that's coming up very soon.

**WOODS:** I'm going to link to everything you just mentioned – the social media, the site itself – over at [TomWoods.com/692](http://TomWoods.com/692), which is our show notes page for today. Brian, best of luck with this. You took me from somebody who knew, I don't know, a half a sentence worth about this stuff to somebody who I feel like I could now hold my own in a discussion with someone on it, so I'm grateful to you. You have indeed found an important niche, and we all appreciate it. Thanks so much.

**MCGLINCHEY:** Thank you, Tom.