

Theorising Truth

What Happened at Canary Wharf on 7th July 2005?

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Abstract

This paper uses three different theories of truth to consider claims broadcast in two documentaries about the London bombings of 7th July 2005: *7/7 Ripple Effect* and the BBC's *Conspiracy Files: 7/7*. *7/7 Ripple Effect* argues that the alleged bombers were not in central London when the bombs exploded, and supports this with press reports of shootings at Canary Wharf. To test this claim, press reports from Canary Wharf were retrieved using a search of the Nexis UK News Database for the period 7th to 30th July 2005. Further searches were made using Google to locate blogs and discussion forum archives from 7th July 2005. The findings are assessed using three different theories of truth. When adopting a correspondence theory of truth, it is just plausible that the evidence found supports the theory implicit in the BBC documentary. The theory presented in *7/7 Ripple Effect* is also plausible. When deploying a coherence theory of truth, the thesis put forward by the government and BBC collapses due to low probability that four men would choose the same targets, at the same time, and on the same day as a simulated crisis management exercise organised by Visor Consultants. The thesis put forward in *7/7 Ripple Effect* remains coherent with available evidence. A social constructivist (critical) perspective identifies cultural and political interests that influence the selection and interpretation of available evidence. While the paper concludes that both documentaries construct truth that supports their political outlook and agenda, the theory advanced in *7/7 Ripple Effect* is better able to explain anomalies in the official account as well as the evidence of a crisis at Canary Wharf on the same day.

About the author

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Introduction

On 7th July 2005, at 09.48 US Eastern Standard Time, a CNN breaking news report was filed with a news service giving details of a conversation between a reporter and Brian Paddick of the Metropolitan police (CNN, 2005). In this conversation, a reporter asked Brian Paddick:

"Can you tell me -- the rumors that a police sniper shot dead a suicide bomber at Canary Wharf -- do you know anything about that?"

Paddick responded:

"We have no reports of any police sniper shooting at anybody today."

The time stamp on the CNN report indicates that the news summary was posted at 13.48 GMT. At least one press agency and media outlet were aware of an alleged shooting at Canary Wharf on the morning of 7th July. These alleged shootings have now become central to an alternative theory about 7/7 presented in an internet documentary called *7/7 Ripple Effect* (Hill, 2007). The documentary has become the subject of a controversy, not only for its content, but also because it was sent to the judge in a trial of alleged 7/7 conspirators. The campaign to publicise the documentary resulted in an attempt to extradite the documentary maker, John Anthony Hill, a 60-year old man born in Sheffield and living in Ireland, on the basis that he fabricated evidence to pervert the course of justice (O'Hara, 2009).

The popularity of *7/7 Ripple Effect* prompted the BBC to devote an episode of its *Conspiracy Files* series to issues raised by the internet documentary (BBC, 2009a). In the first section of the paper, the core theories of the BBC and John Hill's documentaries are set out. The second section considers the first of two divergences in these theories: the train that the alleged suicide bombers caught from Luton to King's Cross London. The third section then focuses on the second divergence: press reports that a 'crisis' occurred at Canary Wharf, allegedly involving the shooting of several terrorists. As these reports form part of the evidence provided by John Hill in support of his theory, both the evidence presented in *7/7 Ripple Effect*, and evidence from a further search for press reports of shootings, are set out in some detail. Section four critically analyses the evidence presented using correspondence, coherence and social constructionist theories of truth. The final section sets out conclusions, and assesses the BBC claim that *7/7 Ripple Effect* is distributing a divisive message.

1. Theoretical Perspectives on the Events of 7th July 2005.

On 7th July 2005, four bombs exploded in London. Three bombs exploded simultaneously on different underground tube trains at 08.50. A fourth bomb exploded on a bus roughly an hour later, at 09.47 (Reid, 2009). There are nine hypotheses regarding the events of 7/7 that have been set out at the website <http://julyseventh.co.uk> (see Appendix A). The BBC documentary *Conspiracy Files* is closest to the third of these: the bombings constituted "homegrown and autonomous action by four British Muslims with no mastermind". Hill's documentary is closest to the eighth hypothesis listed: it claims that "the four men were chosen or lured in to be patsies in a classic 'false flag operation'" involving one or more of the intelligence services.

Although the BBC documentary was a *response* to *7/7 Ripple Effect*, it largely reasserts the views expressed in the government's own report. It is, therefore, worth starting with the version of events that is best known to most people, and which has been reported widely in the media and BBC news outlets. The Euro-Med News site summarises this version as follows:

...four British Muslims - Mohammad Sidique Khan, 30, Shehzad Tanweer, 22, Jermaine Lindsay, 19, and Hasib Hussain, 18 - blew themselves up using home-made explosives, killing 56 and injuring 700 on three Tube trains and a double-decker bus. They had travelled on a mainline train from Luton into King's Cross Thameslink Station in London, each carrying a heavy rucksack of explosives.

It is a version of events that has been endorsed by a high-level Parliamentary inquiry and a government report, both published in May 2006 ten months after the event, based on 12,500

statements, a police examination of 142 computers and 6,000 hours of CCTV footage. The report insisted that the bombers acted on their own, constructing explosives from chapatti flour and hair bleach mixed in the bath at a flat in Leeds, Yorkshire, where all four had family and friends.

Anders (2009), <http://euro-med.dk/?p=9593>

A key element of the evidence in the official government report (House of Commons, 2006:4) is the claim that the four Muslims were caught on CCTV at 07.21 entering Luton train station to catch the 07.40 train to London King's Cross. The report proceeds to claim that the Luton train arrived in London at 08.23, that the four men were caught a few minutes later on CCTV footage at 08.26, then three of them caught tube trains before blowing themselves and the trains up at 08.50.

2. Diverging Accounts of Train Times

An inaccuracy in the House of Commons report has become central to Hill's alternative thesis. It was later established that the 07.40 train from Luton was cancelled on 7th July. An acknowledgement of the error was made by Dr John Reid in parliament (BBC, 2006). He amended the official account to claim that the four Muslims caught a train at 07.25, which arrived at King's Cross at 08.23.

The BBC's *Conspiracy Files* and *7/7 Ripple Effect* draw different inferences from the error in the House of Commons report. The BBC documentary uncritically accepts the government claim that the alleged bombers caught an earlier train. Surprisingly, it does not comment on the claim in *7-7 Ripple Effect* that the four men caught the next available train (at 07.56). If the alleged terrorists missed the 07.40 train, they could not have got to London in time to catch the trains they allegedly bombed.

Figure 1: Alleged Bombers Arriving at Luton



The amendment of the official version has not ended the controversy over train times. The government had already placed in the public domain photographic evidence showing the alleged bombers entering Luton train station at 07.21:54. This time is reasonable for a group of people aiming to catch a train at 07.40. It is problematic, however, for a group planning to catch a train due to leave at 07.24. On the day, the 07.24 train left Luton at 07.25: a web-site campaigning for a judicial inquiry states the problem as follows:

Source: <http://www.julyseventh.co.uk/7-7-cctv-evidence.html>

Let us consider an earlier train, which left Luton station at 07.25, and arrived into King's Cross Thameslink at 08.23 am; thus, its journey took 58 minutes. This scenario would give the four young men barely three minutes to walk up the stairs at Luton, buy their tickets in the morning rush-hour and then get to the platform. Some have suggested that Lindsay German from Aylesbury had arrived early and bought the four tickets in advance...to make this feasible. But, from King's Cross Thameslink, it takes a good seven minutes to walk through the long, underground tube passage which includes a ticket barrier, to reach the main King's Cross station, in the morning rush-hour with large rucksacks – in no way could they have been captured on the 08.26am alleged CCTV picture.

This major breakdown of the official story came about through the testimony of a commuter who wished to remain anonymous: she arrived at Luton station that morning at 7.25am, and testified that she had no train to catch until 7.58am, because the 7.30am and 7.40am trains from Luton were cancelled on July 7th. She could only get a slow train at 7.58am from platform 3 to King's Cross, which didn't arrive there until 8.43am. It was so packed that many could not get onto the train at Luton.

<http://www.julyseventh.co.uk/july-7-luton-kings-cross-train-times.html>, accessed 3rd October 2009.

The same web-site provides details of information provided by Vicky Hutchinson, working at the Transport Security Directorate, of the times that the tube trains left King's Cross:

- the Eastbound Circle line train (204) left King's Cross at 08:35.
- the Westbound Circle line train (216) left King's Cross at 08:42
- the Piccadilly Line train south left King's Cross at 08:48

Figure 2 – Alleged Bombers Parking at 7.20am (BBC Documentary).

7/7 The Conspiracy Files vs Ripple effect - part 1 of 6



★★★★☆ 31 ratings

3,125 views

The BBC *Conspiracy Files: 7/7* documentary accepts the claim that the alleged bombers caught the 07.25 train from Luton. The credibility of this claim, however, is called into question by the CCTV image broadcast in the BBC documentary which shows the bombers parking at 07.19:49. In the official government report, the time given for the bombers *entering the station* is 07.15.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcl5LYvFZA>, timeframe 03:21.

This is a considerable contradiction as the official government report states that a Micra arrived at Luton at 6.49 and parked next to a Brava. The men are then reported to have spent 25 minutes by their cars preparing before entering the station at 7.15:

The 4 men get out of their respective cars, look in the boots of both, and appear to move items between them. They each put on rucksacks which CCTV shows are large and full. The 4 are described as looking as if they were going on a camping holiday.

House of Commons, 2006, p.3

The question arises how the four men could have spent 25 minutes in the car park preparing for their journey and yet be recorded on a CCTV camera near the platform 2 minutes after the CCTV camera recorded them parking a car. The question becomes more urgent as a result of the BBC documentary showing two frames of CCTV footage of the men entering Luton station. The timestamp on the CCTV images is deliberately blurred out so the viewer cannot use these images to corroborate the time that the four men entered Luton station:

Figure 3 – Men Entering Luton Station (BBC Documentary)

7/7 The Conspiracy Files vs Ripple effect - part 1 of 6



★★★★☆ 31 ratings

3,125 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcl5LYvFZA>, timeframe 03.25

The BBC documentary also claims to provide evidence in support of the government position that the alleged bombers were caught on CCTV footage at King's Cross at 08.26. BBC series producer Mike Rudin responded to a request for clarification by writing that:

...there is evidence to suggest [the alleged bombers] did catch the delayed 0725, which would have arrived in time for them to carry out the attacks. Crucially there is CCTV footage from Kings Cross Station showing all four men at 0826...

Rudin (2009)

Unfortunately, no date or timestamp is visible on any of the Luton or King's Cross CCTV footage (see Figure 4). As a result, it is not possible to confirm Rudin's claims that the men arrived at King's Cross at 08.26am using the broadcast by the BBC.

Figure 4 – Obscured Timestamps, Luton and King's Cross

7/7 The Conspiracy Files vs Ripple effect - part 1 of 6



★★★★☆ 31 ratings

3,125 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcl5LYvFZA>, timeframes 03.27, and 03.48 to 03.53.

These are by no means the only problems with the official report and BBC documentary. Further timestamp anomalies occur when CCTV footage is shown that is claimed to be one of the tube trains exploding (also shown on Sky News, 2008). The timestamp on this video image is 07.46:45am, over an hour before the trains actually blew up. Even accounting for a failure to adjust for British summer time, the timings are several minutes out.

Other anomalies are not materially important to the second core departure between the theories. In the BBC programme, having accepted the account of the government (that the men caught the 07.25 train from Luton and arrived in London at 08.23), the programme makers make no attempt to refute the claim in *7/7 Ripple Effect* that the men could not have arrived in London until after the tube trains had left King's Cross. *7/7 Ripple Effect*, however, assumes that the four men were not on the trains that blew up.

3. Evidence that "Suicide Bombers" Went to Canary Wharf

7/7 Ripple Effect, by rejecting the thesis put forward in the BBC documentary that the men exploded bombs and died, has to account for what happened to the four men during the remainder of the day. It puts forward an argument that the men were recruited to an event organised by Peter Power, a former PR officer for the Metropolitan Police, who simulates terrorist attacks for clients to practice their crisis management skills. The information in the following paragraphs is drawn from the documentaries, and multiple sources collected together at <http://julyseventh.co.uk/july-7-terror-rehearsal.html#cbc> (accessed 3rd October 2009).

Both documentaries show Peter Power appearing on several TV programmes on the morning of 7th July 2005 claiming to have been running a crisis management simulation for a 'client' based on a scenario of four bombs going off in London at precisely the same locations and times. *7/7 Ripple Effect* includes video footage of Peter Power's involvement in an earlier BBC Panorama programme made during 2004, in which public figures examine how the media should cover a terrorist attack involving three tube trains and a truck in central London. There is, therefore, no dispute between the two documentary makers that Power was running a mock terrorism exercise in London on the same day, or that he specialised in terrorist crisis management techniques. The theoretical dispute centres on whether the Muslim men were *bone fide* bombers, or patsies recruited to participate in Peter Power's simulation exercise to take the blame for the real bombings.

Power has admitted that he recruits people to make videos, including people who role play different parts in the simulated crisis, so that the simulations he runs are as realistic as possible (J7, 2008). The *7/7 Ripple Effect* claims that it is plausible that the four Muslim men were part of Peter Power's simulation, but offers nothing more than circumstantial evidence to support this view. Power is interviewed in the BBC documentary and rejects a claim that a 1,000 people were involved in a simulation that day. Instead, he claims that the simulation was a 'run through' with only six people in a control room. This retraction is problematic in light of eye-witness evidence from Daniel Obachike who saw people acting out their injuries and the provision of medical help near Tavistock Square after the bomb blast on 7th July (Jones, 2007). Within 15 seconds of the bomb blast, Obachike saw an actor covered with bandages, surrounded by cameras and helpers, being filmed as he was taken away from the scene. The person was filmed leaving *before any ambulances or medical staff had arrived at Tavistock Square* and images later appeared in press and TV reports. This suggests that the coverage was planned in advance. So, even if Peter Power did not hire people to participate in his 'real life' simulations, an eye-witness account confirms that a terrorist simulation involving many more than six people took place in London on 7th July 2005 (Obachike, 2007).

The thesis put forward by *7/7 Ripple Effect* is that the four Muslim men, having been recruited to participate in the simulation, realised that the explosions were real. They found themselves contemplating that they were intended to die in the 'simulation', and that they had survived only through luck as a result of train delays and cancellations at Luton. Consequently, they became fearful for their own lives. Hill (2007) sets out the rest of his thesis in Chapter 5 of *7/7 Ripple Effect*¹:

The phones are all not working, first of all because they were jammed, and then shut down by the authorities, so they cannot phone anyone to tell them what has happened. What can they do to prevent themselves from being wrongly blamed for the explosions? What would you do in that situation?

He then draws attention to reports of shootings at Canary Wharf:

On one of the early TV news broadcasts that day, a newsreader announced that a report has come in, that three of the terrorists involved in the bombings have been shot and killed, by the anti-terrorist branch of the police, at Canary Wharf, in the Docklands area of London's East-end. The announcement was made only once, and never repeated, for obvious reasons. How could suicide-bombers possibly have survived the tube-train bombings, and then been in the Docklands to be shot?

Hill theorises that they were trying to take their story to the media in the Dockland's area to avoid being framed for the bombings:

In a New Zealand Herald newspaper article it says that two people were shot dead outside the HSBC building, and in Canada's Globe and Mail Newspaper only one. There is another newspaper report, that the police shot a suicide bomber outside the Credit Suisse First Boston Bank...

Checking these claims provided the motivation for writing this paper. The author found they exist as *bone fide* news reports in overseas publications. Following this, a search of Nexis UK, a database used by universities to research news stories, was undertaken. This revealed a number of other reports in US, Canadian, New Zealand and UK newspapers. Further to this, Google searches found verbatim blogs and discussion forum archives that comment on these events. These add support to claims that a serious 'crisis' occurred at Canary Wharf. Table 1 summarises the news stories that surfaced at the time of the alleged shooting.

Table 1 – Reports of Activity at Canary Wharf, 7th – 10th July 2005

Date / Time	Source	Text of News Report
7 th July, 11.49 GMT	"Pammy" Ceroc Scotland Forum	"My cousin works at Canary Wharf and they are now evacuating there, not sure if "just in case" or if they have heard something is up..."
7 th July, 12.13 GMT	"Gus" Ceroc Scotland Forum	"Its very odd in Canary Wharf at the moment. The offices are usually a lively place ... today there is no laughter, no smiles ... a sombre place. We're in a very real crisis situation, we've been informed that the entire Wharf is locked down, no one comes in, no one leaves ... not that there is any transportation to take you anywhere."
7 th July, 12.28 GMT	"DavidB" Ceroc Scotland Forum	"I'm in Canary Wharf, and most people still seem to be at work. There are loads of police and security around, and all the buildings are doing ID checks at the entrances. There was a rumour that to (sic) police stopped a suspected bomber getting to canary wharf, but not heard anything else about that yet."
7 th July, 12.34 GMT	"Europhobia" Internet Blog	"Someone here at work has just been phoned by a guy he knows in Canary Wharf (I know, it's a bit removed – but I trust him). He says marines have shot a man there who they think to have been a suicide bomber".
7 th July, 9.48 EST, (13.48 GMT)	CNN Breaking News	"QUESTION: Can you tell me -- the rumors that a police sniper shot dead a suicide bomber at Canary Wharf (ph). Do you know anything about that? [BRIAN] PADDICK: We have no reports of any police sniper shooting at anybody today."

Date / Time	Source	Text of News Report
7 th July, 11:34 EST (16.34 GMT)	Kate Rook, reporter GlobeAndMail.com	A Massive Rush of Policemen “From the 18th floor of Canary Wharf in London, Canadian Brendan Spinks could see a massive rush of policemen outside the building Thursday after the city was rocked by terrorist attacks. The Internet in his office had just gone down when Mr. Spinks, an investment banker at HSBC, saw a flurry of police cars and yellow-vested men outside. Reports of attacks carried out by suicide bombers were rife, and in one unconfirmed incident police shot a suicide bomber outside the 42-floor banking tower...”
8 th July	Lucy Hyslop, reporter Vancouver Sun , Final Edition Lucy Hyslop, Senior Editor, Daily Telegraph, Canary Wharf.	“Canary Wharf, the tallest building in London and my office, was sealed off completely to the public and all routes in and out were secured. Office workers, some fearing another 9/11-style attack, decided to turn back and begin the long walk home. Rumours and misinformation were rife. I had one call from a friend reporting that two suicide bombers had been shot dead at Canary Wharf, another woman said her policeman husband had been sent to the area to wait just in case of further attacks.”
8 th July	James Starnes, reporter Ottawa Citizen , Final Edition	“The radio is saying they shot dead a suicide bomber at Canary Wharf and that's right opposite my apartment across the river (Thames).”
8 th July	John Walsh, reporter The Independent , London	Terror In London “Farouz, a business technician in Docklands...had heard the rumours. ‘Someone at work was saying a suicide bomber had been shot dead by police just outside the Tower. But the police are denying it,’ he added darkly.”
8 th July	Steve Nowotty, Huntsville Times (Alabama)	Bombing Turned Thoughts to Mum “Everyone had their story. Another colleague, Nicola, had returned late from holiday, and been forced to cancel a meeting. She was lucky - she would have been on the Tube in rush hour. Nicola's best friend was working in Canary Wharf - London's answer to the World Trade Center. She called in the afternoon, still in the building. Her office had been told not to leave, and rumors were flying. Someone had been shot. Maybe a suicide bomber. No one was sure.”
8 th July	News, The Evening Standard (Palmerston, New Zealand)	London Based Kiwis Send Messages Home “Felicity Lawlor, formerly from Auckland, emailed her sister in Rongotea this morning to say she arrived at work to hear about an explosion in the Underground...“Ms Lawlor said there were ‘lots of crazy rumours flying around’ like a suicide bomber having been shot dead outside Canary Wharf.”
8 th July, 9.03am	Susan Percy, New Zealand Herald , Messages Bulletin Board	London Bombing “One man said he had heard that police marksmen had shot a potential suicide bomber at Canary Wharf but I haven't seen that reported by the news channel.”
9 th July	News Section The News Zealand Herald	News “A New Zealander working for Reuters in London says two colleagues witnessed the unconfirmed shooting by police of two apparent suicide bombers outside the HSBC tower at Canary Wharf in London. The New Zealander, who did not want to be named, said the killing of the two men wearing bombs happened at 10.30am on Thursday (London time). Following the shooting, the 8000 workers in the 44-storey tower were told to stay away from windows and remain in the building for at least six hours, the New Zealand man said. He was not prepared to give the names of his two English colleagues, who he said witnessed the shooting from a building across the road from the tower.”

Date / Time	Source	Text of News Report
9 th July	Simon Houpt The Globe and Mail (Canada)	Citizens of the World Report "On Thursday, editors across London dealt with the same issue. At the Times Online, news editor Mark Sellman noted that a number of tips came in that turned out to be false. "You're in a very hot point, stuff was coming in but it's not necessarily reliable, and you have to check it out," he said. "There were urban myths, and you do have to ignore them. Someone said a suicide bomber was shot dead in Canary Wharf, and that was an urban myth."
10 th July	South London News	Suicide Bomber Neutralised in Canary Wharf, London "On Thursday 7th July, a suspected suicide bomber was shot dead by police marksman outside Canary Wharf, the financial district of London. It is believed he was 'neutralized' outside the Credit Suisse First Boston bank. Police are 'probing'. The 'suicide bomber' is believed to have been part of a co-ordinated team of other suicide bombers. The alleged bomber was killed on the same day of the central London terror attacks."
10 th July	Nigel Farndale, Sunday Telegraph (London)	We're Still New Yorkers "One thing about which all we rumour mongers were agreed was that a suicide bomber had definitely been shot by security forces while attempting to blow up Canary Wharf."
10 th July	News Section, The Observer	News "Down at Westminster, wild rumours - none of them true - were circulating: a police sniper had shot a would-be suicide bomber at Canary Wharf; troops were to be put on the streets; the casualties were higher than Madrid', when 191 died."

Further reports appear in UPI (USA), a UK news service for the City of London and the Daily Mail. These repeat earlier reports from other newspapers sources and do not add to the accounts already in the public domain.

The reports are contradictory. A Globe and Mail article quotes Mark Sellman, editor of the Times Online as saying the shooting was an 'urban myth'. The Observer also put out a statement saying that 'wild rumours' that a sniper shooting dead a man at Canary Wharf were untrue. These reports, however, do not appear until the 9th and 10th July, days after reports have already appeared in Canada (Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun), the USA (Huntsville Times, CNN News), New Zealand (Evening Standard, New Zealand Herald), the UK (Sunday Telegraph, The Independent, South London News, Ottawa Citizen) and internet blogs (Seroc Scotland Forum, Europhobia) that refer to 'unconfirmed' reports of a shooting.

Given the numerous press reports, Mike Rudin – series producer of the BBC Conspiracy Files - was approached to clarify why these press reports were not discussed in the programme on 7/7. He responded that:

Our team did look at the rumours of shootings at Canary Wharf. We spoke to a number of people who had been there on 7th July. No one witnessed any shootings. None of the comments you picked up on the web, nor any of the comments we looked at, named anyone who actually witnessed anything. We checked the story with Reuters, as the New Zealand Herald mentions "a New Zealander working for Reuters". However, Reuters never wrote up this story, nor did the Press Association, Associated Press or AFP. Nor could we find the New Zealander. We are left with nothing more than hearsay and rumour.

Rudin (2009)

The BBC response is helpful, but not entirely persuasive. Globe and Mail name Canadian Brendan Spinks as an eye-witness account of extensive police activity. Lucy Hyslop, who filed a report with the Vancouver Sun, describes the situation that day, as well as the lock down that occurred at Canary Wharf where she works. As a "senior editor" at the Daily Telegraph, she is an

accessible media source, and her story includes a claim that a friend called her regarding the shootings. James Starnes, a citizen reporter, is his own 'eye-witness' to a radio station that was carrying a story about a shooting. All these people could be traced to clarify what they witnessed first hand, and establish how the story broke. While the BBC response correctly states that no reporter, blogger or forum contributor claims to be an eye-witness to the shootings, the blogs and discussion forum contributions are verbatim *first hand* reports, carrying more credibility than second-hand BBC reports. Their credibility does not depend on endorsement or confirmation by a government or state authority.

With the exception of Times Online and the Observer, the reports that do exist are mutually reinforcing and consistent. The *number* of reports, and the multiple nationalities of the reporters sending reports to different papers in different locations is consistent with verbatim accounts in two internet blogs and a discussion forum. This adds credibility to, but does not confirm, the Reuters story. While no firm conclusions can be drawn about a shooting, there is less doubt that a serious incident occurred at Canary Wharf. There *are* named eye witnesses to establish that police activity occurred consistent with a lock-down in Canary Wharf in the aftermath of an alleged shooting. The incident, characterised as a 'very real crisis situation' by Gus on the Ceroc Scotland Forum at 12.18am on 7th July, was important enough to:

- Prevent anybody entering or leaving Canary Wharf for six hours
- Instruct staff to keep away from the windows
- Deploy large numbers of police and/or army personnel to Canary Wharf
- Cut off internet access.

When these points are considered together with the numerous reports, and bearing in mind the Reuters report claiming two eye-witnesses to the shootings, it is surprising that the government's official investigation makes no mention of anything occurring at Canary Wharf (House of Commons, 2006). In any future public inquiry, it will be necessary not only to trace people who were at Canary Wharf and the Credit Suisse building, but also to establish the conditions under which the police/security services allowed people to leave.

In the next section of this paper, three theories of truth are applied to the evidence to gain further insights. After describing correspondence, coherence and critical approaches to 'truth', each is deployed to briefly illustrate how the adoption of a particular philosophy of truth influences both findings and conclusions.

4. Theorising Truth

The challenge for any study purporting to seek the truth is not simply the process by which 'truth' is discovered, but also the theory of truth that underpins the research process. Johnson and Duberley (2000) set out contrasting theories of truth used by researchers to test the validity and robustness of their research findings. This section of the paper examines the findings presented above using theories of truth derived from positivist, interpretive and critical research traditions.

Positivist philosophy adopts a *correspondence theory of truth*, rooted in the assumption that a given theory can be objectively tested against known 'facts' (David, 2009). In the case of 7/7, applying a correspondence theory faces a number of problems. It is necessary to consider the accuracy and credibility of each piece of evidence as well as the predictive power of any hypothesis being tested. One technique that can assist in reaching firm conclusions is *triangulation* (the use of multiple data sources, or methods, to test a single proposition). Ultimately, truth in a correspondence sense depends on the extent to which a theory can account for all the known facts in a specific case. Studies in the positivist tradition may be conducted through deduction (testing evidence for correspondence with the predictions of a given theory), or induction (gathering data and showing how these correspond to a theory that is developed iteratively).

Studies grounded in an interpretative philosophy take account of variations in human perception (Hammersley, 1992). They recognise that there are cognitive processes that influence what we are

able to perceive, and that errors in perception may affect an individual's account. This philosophy accepts that – for individuals at least – truth is largely subjective. By applying a *coherence theory of truth*, a process can be developed that looks for commonalities and differences in various subjective accounts, then examines which accounts are mutually supportive and contradictory (Young, 2008). Either through the application of logic, or by selecting accounts that are mutually supportive, false accounts can be discarded to enable a truthful representation to emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Importantly, truth in a coherence sense does not rely entirely on empirical evidence. The likelihood that particular configurations of events could occur at the same or different times is taken into account, then used as evidence in support of, or against, a particular theory.

Critical research traditions share some common ground with interpretative philosophy, by accepting that variations in individual perception occur all the time. It differs, however, from interpretative philosophy by assuming that beliefs (i.e. the products of using an interpretive approach to social enquiry) are distorted by asymmetries in power and cultural processes. Critical research assumes that knowledge is constructed, in everyday life, to support prevailing assumptions (often referred to as a paradigm), and that these assumptions are infused with concepts and meanings from prevailing political thought and ideology (Gramsci, 1971; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Knowledge, therefore, is structured to support ideas that prevail at a particular time and place. To get closer to truth in critical research, the researcher needs to assess how power and political interests shape the production of knowledge so that their distorting influence can be made explicit through an analytical process called *deconstruction*.

Two branches of critical research (postmodernism and critical theory) use the additional knowledge generated through deconstruction in different ways. Postmodernism focuses on deconstructing the power relations and discourses that underpin a particular theory. Having done so, the researcher avoids privileging one account of truth over another to prevent closure of the debate. This also leaves the reader (or research participant) free to select the truth that is most credible to them (Aylesworth, 2005). Critical theory, however, adopts an objective ontology and uses the additional knowledge generated by the process of deconstruction to reduce the distorting effects of power. Having done so, a fresh assessment of the truthfulness of a particular theory can be undertaken with the goal of informing future action (Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Bohman, 2005).

In the pages that follow, the evidence uncovered in earlier parts of the paper is assessed using these theories of truth. In the first instance, we compare the evidence using correspondence and coherence theories of truth. The paper then considers the political and social context of the two documentary makers, and the political purposes and interests that their documentaries serve. This helps to reveal any distortions stemming from the power of the institutions publishing their work, or the ideologies they seek to advance.

Before this is undertaken, it is worth summarising the assumptions of the two documentaries regarding the events that occurred on 7th July 2005 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Timelines and Assumptions

7 th July 2005 – Time	BBC / Government Theory	7/7 Ripple Effect Theory
04.00 – 06.49	Four Muslim men travel from Leeds and Aylesbury to Luton with the goal of blowing up three tube trains and a bus, or four tube trains.	Four Muslim men travel from Leeds and Aylesbury to Luton with the goal of participating in a mock terrorist exercise organised by Peter Power of Visor Consultants.
06.49 – 07.22	Four men prepare for their journey to London in the car park at Luton.	Four men prepare for their journey to London in the car park at Luton.
07.22	Four men enter the station at Luton and catch the 07.25 train to King's Cross. (Amended theory, after discovery that the 07.40 train was cancelled on 7 th July).	The men enter the station at Luton and await the 07.40 train to London. The train is cancelled, and they have to travel on the delayed 07.48 service, which arrives in London at 08.43.

7 th July 2005 – Time	BBC / Government Theory	7/7 Ripple Effect Theory
08.23 – 08.30	The four men arrive at King's Cross Thameslink and walk to the King's Cross Underground where they are captured on a CCTV camera at 08.26.	The men are still travelling to London on the delayed 07.48 service.
08.30 – 08.49	One man catches the Eastbound Circle line at 08.35. One man catches the Westbound Circle line at 08.42. One man catches the Piccadilly line (southbound) at 08.48. One man goes to McDonald's and eats.	The men arrive at King's Cross Thameslink at 08.43. Three enter the underground to catch the trains that form part of the simulation exercise organised by Peter Power. One man goes to McDonald's and eats.
8.50	The three men on the tube trains trigger their bombs and blow themselves and the trains up, killing 57 people.	The three men cannot get into King's Cross underground due to three explosions, and panic when they realise that they are being set up to take the blame for the bombings.
8.50 – 9.47	Three men are dead. The fourth man catches a 91 bus to Euston, then a number 30 bus which is diverted into Tavistock Square. At 09.47, he detonates the fourth bomb blowing himself and the bus up.	Three men travel by bus to Canary Wharf to seek the protection of the press. The fourth (unable to contact the first three), locates the number 30 bus at Euston. It is diverted to Tavistock Square where it is blown up. It is unclear if the fourth man dies in the explosion.
9.48 – 10.30	The emergency services work to help the survivors of the bombings.	The three men arrive at Docklands. Two are shot outside Canary Wharf, and one is shot outside Boston First Bank, by the anti-terrorist branch of the Metropolitan Police.
Canary Wharf, after 10.30	(By inference, nothing of significance takes place at Canary Wharf).	(By inference, the security services / anti-terrorist squad, secure Canary Wharf and destroy evidence that the men have been 'neutralized').

Assessing the Evidence Using a Correspondence Theory of Truth

The principal issue for the Government / BBC theory is the timing of the trains at Luton. The initial theory – that the men caught the 7.40 train – would have satisfied most of the demands of a correspondence theory of truth. The only potential problem is the short time between parking the car and entering the station. Assuming that the government report on the men in the car park is misreported, or that the timing on the CCTV cameras may not be 100% accurate, it is plausible that a car could be parked, and passengers enter the station, with the CCTV timestamps shown. Entering at 7.22 gives the men ample time to ascend the stairs, obtain their tickets and walk to the relevant platform for the 7.40 train.

As soon as the train departure time is revised to 7.25, deploying a correspondence theory of truth is more problematic, and has a much more limited plausibility. In addition to the short time between parking and entering the station, the question arises whether four men planning to catch the 7.24 train to London to execute a terrorist attack would leave it as late as 7.22 to enter the station. In light of testimony from regular commuters that it takes 3 minutes to reach the platform, this appears to violate the level of correspondence needed to be claimed as true, unless firm evidence is provided that the clocks on the CCTV cameras were inaccurate.

If we factor in the official government account, the 'facts' correspond even less with the theory. A person recorded on CCTV as parking their car at 7.19:48 at Luton station, getting out and taking 25 minutes to move items from boot to boot with four other men, putting on "large and heavy" rucksacks, and then walking from the car park to the entrance, could not be captured on another

CCTV image at 7.21:54 entering Luton train station. Either the official account, or the camera evidence, must contain errors.

The theory put forward in *7/7 Ripple Effect*, on the other hand, violates one key piece of evidence provided by the BBC documentary. If the men caught a train at 7.56am from Luton, and arrived in London at 8.43am, how could they be caught on a CCTV camera at King's Cross at 8.26am? As no date or timestamp appears on the CCTV footage shown by the BBC, the CCTV evidence does not contravene correspondence truth: it could have been recorded at any time, even on another day. The time of the recording is as likely to be after 8.43am as 8.26am. As a consequence, the video footage could support either theory by confirming that the men reached King's Cross, London.

In assessing the evidence of activity at Canary Wharf, both theories are plausible. It is plausible that precautions would be taken to protect Canary Wharf by deploying police to the area, and that this would cause consternation and rumours amongst the staff working there. It is also plausible, if security services were behind the bombings, that they would track the three men to Canary Wharf and intercept them to ensure they do not reach the press.

The issue of correspondence gets more problematic once we consider the lock-down and alleged shootings near Canary Wharf. From the perspective of the BBC / Government theory, the lock down does not correspond with the idea that nothing of significance happened at Canary Wharf. Reports of a 'crisis' at Canary Wharf started to occur before the first media report of a shooting (see Table 1). Reports of a "massive rush of policemen" and a "flurry of police cars and yellow vested men", combined with instructions to "stay away from the windows" for "six hours" while the building was "locked down" so that "no one comes in, no one leaves": this indicates a specific security threat rather than a generic security operation.

In considering the *7/7 Ripple Effect* claims, the lack of official confirmation, and a lack of people coming forward as eye-witnesses (assuming the Times and Observer sought witnesses out) creates anomalies that undermine correspondence between its stated theory and 'facts'. However, this evidence is ambiguous: it is plausible that a rumour would circulate based on speculation; it is also plausible that a media blackout would be imposed in the event of a shooting that the government did not want reported as a matter of national security.

Assessing the Evidence Using a Coherence Theory of Truth

Having considered evidence using a correspondence theory of truth, we now switch to a coherence theory of truth. The difference between the two theories is a matter of perspective. Using a correspondence theory involves checking the details of an account at the micro level against known 'facts'. A coherence theory of truth considers whether sets of propositions are consistent with *each other*, whether they fit together and remain plausible. In short, coherence tests a series of propositions as a whole, rather than testing them one at a time, to arrive at a systemic (holistic) perspective on the plausibility of a theory.

The switch to a coherence theory of truth presents an immediate problem for the BBC / Government theory. Concern over the 'coincidence' of four bombers attacking London at the precise moment Peter Power was running a mock terrorism exercise led the BBC to record an interview with him in its rebuttal of *7/7 Ripple Effect*. Peter Power explains the coincidence as a product of good intelligence from previous attacks by the IRA.

While this may explain the issue of which locations were chosen, it does not explain why the four Muslim men and Peter Power would both choose the *same* targets. Put simply:

- *What is the likelihood that four men living in Leeds would travel to London on the same day, at roughly the same time, to the exact locations selected for a simulated terrorism exercise organised by Peter Power, if they had not been invited to participate?*

7/7 Ripple Effect calculates the odds of this occurring by chance as less likely than a person playing the UK National Lottery once in their lifetime and winning the jackpot. This being the case, the BBC / Government theory becomes incoherent and implausible. The key issue is whether it is

more likely that four terrorists could infiltrate the organisation of a person who makes his living from providing counter-terrorism training, or that a person making his living from counter-terrorism expertise could recruit four Muslim men to make his training materials appear as real as possible?

The issue is crystalised when we reverse the question and ask it from the theoretical perspective of 7/7 *Ripple Effect*:

- *What is the likelihood that four men agreeing to participate in Peter Power's mock terrorism exercise would travel to the same four locations on the same day, at roughly the same time?*

It is not just highly likely, it is almost certain. Occam's Razor applies.

Further incoherence is apparent when the press reports regarding Canary Wharf are considered as evidence. It is coherent (i.e. theoretically plausible) that reports would occur if the men travelled to Canary Wharf and were shot. The press reports are incoherent (theoretically implausible) if nothing occurred at Canary Wharf. On the other hand, the lack of first hand eye-witness accounts of the shootings is incoherent with the 7/7 *Ripple Effect* theory. This incoherence would be plausible if the six hour lock-down was part of an operation to ensure that everyone at Canary Wharf observed a press blackout under the Broadcasting Act and Civil Contingencies Act. Additionally, the evidence works both ways and remains ambiguous. If it is significant that nobody working at Canary Wharf came forward to *confirm* the shootings, it is also significant that no one came forward to *deny* them.

Lastly, for ethnic British people in particular, the notion that the British government (or one of its security agencies) would bomb its own citizens to bolster support for war may trigger a great deal of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person encounters two ideas or concepts that contradict each other. As a government bombing its own citizens violates the principles of liberal democracy (government by the people, for the people), there is a 'common-sense' impulse to discard any theory based on the idea. Nevertheless, both historical research on state violence, and increasing knowledge about 'false flag' terrorist operations, requires both researchers and investigative journalists to consider whether MI5 or another intelligence service could have organised the attack (see Shayler, 2007).

Assessing the Evidence Using a Social Constructionist Theory of Truth

In the case of social construction (as a critical philosophy), truth is not amenable to objective verification (Habermas, 1987). Instead it is treated as a product of historical, political and ideological contexts. The goal of a critical researcher is to question the legitimacy of truth claims by revealing the social relations and power asymmetries that inhibit full disclosure of 'facts', or which produce 'facts' that have no truth content (in a correspondence sense). In this paper, the switch to a critical perspective changes the focus to the truth that the documentary makers sought to construct through their programme making activities.

In the case of the BBC, its institutions are funded through a license fee that the UK government permits it to charge to everyone who has a television set. In return, the government can acquire editorial control of the BBC under provisions in the Broadcasting Act 1980 whenever there is a "national emergency". The definition of "emergency" was clarified further in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

In the United Kingdom, the Monarch, the Privy Council, or the Prime Minister can make emergency regulations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 if there is a serious threat to human welfare, the environment, or in case of war or terrorism. These regulations last for seven days unless confirmed otherwise by Parliament.

Wikipedia, "State of Emergency", last modified 27th September 2009.

John Hill, on the other hand, used internet video sharing sites to broadcast his homemade documentary. Such documentaries have the capacity to reach a wide audience. *Loose Change* about the 9/11 attacks is reported to have been viewed more than 40 million times on Google, and led to

the sale of more than 1 million DVDs². With news making powers in the hands of citizen journalists, the power of the state or private business to control the mass media is diminishing.

Limits on BBC journalists' power to criticise government became apparent after a row over Andrew Gilligan's report on the death of Dr David Kelly in the early stages of Iraq war (Wikipedia, 2009). Following the Hutton Report, Gavyn Davies (Chair of the BBC Board of Governors) and Greg Dyke (BBC Director General) were forced from their jobs (BBC, 2004). It is clear, therefore, that BBC documentaries that call into question the government's "war on terror" will trigger punitive action by the government. At times of national crisis, BBC outputs will not only be subject to government scrutiny, but also direct editorial control by government ministers.

The documentary made by John Hill, on the other hand, is free from both state and corporate influence. His work is influenced by a different set of interests. In the documentary, the narrator calls himself Muad' Dib (literally, 'educator' in Arabic, or alternatively 'the one with respect')³. In an interview, he states that this is taken from the film *Dune*. In the documentary itself, he talks about 'the hand of God', indicating some affiliation with religious thought. John Hill, who now goes by the name of Muad' Dib in everyday life, is actually a Sheffield born white man who moved to Ireland.

In interviews, he explains that *7/7 Ripple Effect* was motivated by a desire to prove that the four men alleged to be suicide bombers were innocent. The campaign took on a greater sense of urgency when three further men were charged with conspiracy to cause the bombings. As Hill states:

I did not make the film to prove the innocence of the three young Muslims who were on trial, but sent the DVDs months after it had been made, to prove their innocence. I made it to prove the innocence of the four dead patsies, and subsequently sent it to the court to prove that the three men on trial could not possibly be guilty of helping four other men to do something that the four other men did not do.

Hill (2009)

The DVDs were sent to the judge and jury of the trial by sending copies to the court marked for their attention. This prompted his arrest and detention, and an extradition request to the Irish government (BBC, 2009b). His warrant states that the maximum sentence he faces is 'life imprisonment' in England for fabricating evidence that might cause injustice (O'Hara, 2009). However, John Hill's first interview with Professor Jim Fetzer (Fetzer, 2009) claims exactly the reverse of this. It was motivated by a desire to *prevent* a miscarriage of justice. The following statement is particularly relevant:

*I mentioned to my friends that someone needs to make a film and one of them said, "somebody has made a film called **Mind the Gap**", and he's an ex-MI5 agent. I watched the film and he does a pretty good job in taking apart the official story and showing that it is all lies. And then there's **Ludicrous Diversion** which does a similar thing. But neither of the films put the whole thing together in a way that everyone could understand, that the average person in the street could understand. So I decided that if nobody else was going to do it, I'd have to do it. And so that's what we set about doing. My friends helped me with downloading video from the internet, and newspaper articles from the internet and all the rest of it. **You've seen the film so you know that I haven't fabricated anything – I've used all mainstream media and articles and TV footage.***

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCuzQCo6R1M>, accessed 6th October, 2009.

The BBC *Conspiracy Files* documentary is a direct response to the popularity of *7/7 Ripple Effect*. A statement making the BBC's intent clear appears on the BBC web-site promoting the series:

There have been three official reports into the bombings on 7th July, which claimed the lives of 52 people along with the four people identified as the bombers, and injured 784 others. The programme sees how conspiracy theories suggest four British Muslims were framed by the government, play on the fears of the Muslim community and spread a highly divisive and

damaging message. The Conspiracy Files: 7/7 examines the evidence in an attempt to separate fact from fiction.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/conspiracy_files/8107594.stm, accessed 6th October 2009.

The usefulness of this brief analysis is that it makes clear that neither documentary sets out to provide a balanced account, or to separate ‘fact’ from ‘fiction’. *7/7 Ripple Effect* sets out to prove the innocence of the four alleged bombers, and was later sent to the judge and jury in a trial where three others were facing conspiracy charges⁴. It had already prejudged the official government account. The BBC *Conspiracy Files* programme sets out to disprove (or undermine) *7/7 Ripple Effect* by proving it is “divisive and damaging”. It too, starts by prejudging John Hill’s account.

In the case of the BBC, we must remember that it is ultimately controlled by state officials and operates under laws that allow the government to take editorial control in the event of a terrorist attack. This means that the BBC is not in a position to declare itself ‘objective’, nor is it capable of separating fact from fiction on a matter that threatens the integrity of the state that allows it to exist. In the case of John Hill, the truth is constructed to challenge the account provided by the government. Even if constructed from public sources and persuasive, it selects evidence that supports specific political goals.

Conclusions

The purpose and contribution of this paper is to theorise the effects of applying different theories of truth in the evaluation of research findings. By using different theories of truth to structure critical analysis, the paper shows how both findings and theoretical conclusions can be affected. Further, it also shows that each theory of truth, when applied, reveals different insights into complex social activities. Far from these being in contradiction with each other, each application of a different theory of truth has the potential to reveal different domains of reality that exist concurrently. As such, the paper supports the argument for alethic pluralism on the basis that truth is not a stable concept across different domains of thought: using multiple theories of truth adds, rather than detracts from, the search for insight and knowledge (Darwin, 2004).

To summarise and conclude, this paper has presented two theories on the bombings that took place in London on 7th July 2005. The first was presented in the internet documentary *7/7 Ripple Effect* released in 2007. When this became popular, a BBC response titled *Conspiracy Files: 7/7* was broadcast in June 2009. Based on the evidence presented in this paper, it is by no means clear which documentary is spreading the most “highly divisive and damaging message”. Neither documentary can claim neutrality either in its starting premise, or its analysis of evidence. If *7/7 Ripple Effect* is ‘fabricated’, then the claim it is divisive would have some merit. However, this research has not found any instance of fabricated evidence: it is an example of critical journalism that draws wholly on public news sources to formulate a controversial, but plausible, theory. After deploying three different theories of truth to develop insights into new and existing evidence, it is the BBC / Government theory that has a lower level of correspondence with known ‘facts’, is incoherent to the point of being implausible, and is more likely to distort its reports because of institutional controls and political pressures.

If a government agency has deliberately escalated the “war on terror” through the use of ‘false flag’ terrorism, then the BBC’s continued defence of the official story will undoubtedly be more divisive and damaging than the claims published in *7/7 Ripple Effect*. Moreover, the large number of press reports uncovered during the research for this paper (outlining a ‘lock-down’ and ‘shooting’ at Canary Wharf) adds to the evidence base for the theory put forward in *7/7 Ripple Effect*. As a result, the case for a public inquiry outside the scope of the Inquiries Act 2005 continues to grow.

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Appendix A – Alternative Hypotheses

1. al-Qa'ida mastermind recruited British Muslims as suicide bombers
2. al-Qa'ida mastermind recruited British Muslims, but duped them in so far as the latter did not know they were going to die in the explosions.
3. Homegrown and autonomous action by four British Muslims with no mastermind.
4. Any of the above plots could have been monitored by one or more secret 'service' (MI5, MI6, CIA, Mossad, GIA) but they let it happen on purpose in order to exploit the subsequent situation.
5. The men thought they were going to strike a blow for Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc and go to Heaven as 'martyrs' because they had been groomed and encouraged and equipped by an al-Qa'ida mastermind who was actually working for one of the State agencies or a rogue network straddling one or more of them with their own agenda.
6. The four men thought they were going to be delivering drugs or money to various locations round London, but were deceived, set up and murdered along with the others on their tubes and bus when their back packs exploded.
7. As above but the men thought they were carrying dummy 'bombs' because they were participating in an exercise testing London transport's defences against backpack bombers.
8. The four men were chosen or lured in to be patsies in a classic 'false flag operation' or frame-up by a network involved with one or more of the intelligence services.
9. The original story of a 'power surge' was correct, if one understands the term 'power surge' outside of its implied electrical context.

<http://www.julyseventh.co.uk/alternative-hypotheses/index.html>, accessed 5th October 2009.

As a result of the research for this paper, Rory chose to add his name to a petition calling on the government to hold a public inquiry outside the scope of the Inquiries Act 2005, or to release the evidence that shows beyond a reasonable doubt that the official report into 7/7 is correct. The petition can be found at:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/j7truth/petition.html>.

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¹ The extracts are sourced from pages 5 – 6 of the documentary transcript uploaded to <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3900378/7-7-Ripple-Effect>.

² Source: Wikipedia, "Loose Change (film)", 5th October 2009.

³ See Yahoo Answers, <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071209095341AAg4c5>

⁴ All three men accused were eventually found 'not guilty'.