

Introduction to 25th Anniversary Forum on SDEs and SCADs

Piers Robinson and Kevin Ryan

At the 25th anniversary of the crimes of September 11th, 2001, there remains an ever-increasing need for citizens to remember that those crimes remain unsolved. Much evidence points to the involvement of elements within U.S. government and industry however other governments are suspect as well.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the *Journal of 9/11 Studies* which, through the work of numerous volunteer authors, reviewers, and editors, has produced over 170 peer-reviewed articles and letters detailing 9/11 evidence.

To commemorate this year's dual anniversary, the *Journal* is establishing a forum on structural deep events (SDEs) and state crimes against democracy (SCADs). The originator of the SDE concept, Professor Peter Dale Scott, has cited the 9/11 crimes as an SDE and the originator of the concept of SCADs, the late Professor Lance DeHaven-Smith, listed 9/11 among the most prominent of SCADs.

Beyond the 9/11 case, Peter Dale Scott uses the SDE concept and related ideas to analyze the confluence of opaque political and economic forces and organized crime, and how they employ deception and manipulation to advance their agendas (e.g. Scott, 1993, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015). The assassination of JFK is another example of what Scott identified as a structural deep event. DeHaven-Smith used the SCAD concept to highlight the criminality involved in well-known events such as the 1970's Watergate controversy and the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s (DeHaven-Smith 2006, 2010, 2014; DeHaven-Smith and Witt, 2009). His approach serves to remind us that what we are dealing with involves "deliberate and intentional wrongdoing by powerful actors" (Robinson and Ryan, 2024).

By bringing to light the roles that "deep politics", criminality, deception, and propaganda play in the world, the SDE and SCAD concepts serve as frameworks through which researchers can better understand how power is exercised in the contemporary world. Because of their conceptual and analytical rigor, they also serve to push back against the oft-repeated smear that any investigation of political deception can be discounted as "conspiracism" or "conspiracy theory." These terms of abuse have hobbled serious inquiry over the years and served as a propaganda technique to silence critical questions.

Building on this existing body of work, the purpose of this forum is to serve as a starting point for a series of conceptually grounded analyses exploring SDEs and SCADs beyond the 9/11 event, although of course 9/11 will always remain an important focus for the *Journal*. Awareness of 'deep state' activities—ranging from the assassinations of the '60s and '70s, through 9/11 and COVID-19, to current controversies about Israel's actions in Gaza and the recent assassination of

Charlie Kirk—is at a very high level, and there is a real need for rigorous scholarship on these issues. We are also interested in the refinement and development of the SDE and SCAD frameworks, for example through strengthening methods of identifying agency (or intentionality), understanding better how transnational, or global, deep politics has become, and continuing to identify and bring to light contemporary SDEs and SCADS. Perhaps the most needed intellectual effort concerns developing approaches to identifying patterns to state-sponsored crimes that would allow citizens to recognize them as they are occurring. There is much work to do.

The forum launches this September, the 25th anniversary month, with a Foreword from Peter Dale Scott, along with the re-publication of two articles that Professor Scott finds among his best 9/11-related work. At the same time a new article from Professor Matthew Witt, one of Lance DeHaven-Smith's early collaborators on SCADs research, will be published. A series of articles will then be introduced throughout the remainder of 2026. These will address various subjects related to SDEs and SCADS and we will build the forum over time with further articles.

As state-sponsored crimes continue to go unnoticed and unpunished, the frequency and likelihood of them occurring increases. Detailed scholarship that reveals the truth behind these crimes can lead to a critical mass of public consciousness that could end in bringing about justice and an end to the cycle of corruption.

The *Journal of 9/11 Studies* will endeavor to remain a reliable source for such scholarship.

References

- Robinson, Piers and Kevin Ryan. (2024) "A Plausibility Probe of 9/11 and COVID-19 as 'Structural Deep Events'", *Journal of 9/11 Studies*.
- Scott, Peter Dale. 1993, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
- Scott, Peter Dale. 2003, *Drugs, Oil, and War: The United States in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Indochina*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).
- Scott, Peter Dale. 2008, *The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire, and the Future of America*, (University of California Press).
- Scott, Peter Dale, (2010) *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection, and the Road to Afghanistan* (Roman and Littlefield).
- Scott, Peter Dale. 2011, 'The Doomsday Project, Deep Events, and the Shrinking of American Democracy' *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 9(4): 1-8.

Scott, Peter Dale. (2012) 'Systemic Destabilization in Recent American History: 9/11, the JFK Assassination, and the Oklahoma City Bombing as a Strategy of Tension', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 10(39)[2]: pp:1-18.

Scott, Peter Dale. 2015, *The American Deep State: Wall Street, Big Oil, and the Attack on US Democracy*, (Rowman and Littlefield).

deHaven-Smith, Lance. (2006) 'When political crimes are inside jobs: Detecting states crimes against democracy', *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, 28(3): 330-355).

deHaven-Smith, Lance. (2010) 'Beyond Conspiracy Theory: Patterns of High Crime in American Government' *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(6): 795-825.

deHaven-Smith, Lance. (2014) *Conspiracy Theory in America*

deHaven-Smith, Lance, and Matthew T. Witt (2009) 'Preventing State Crimes Against Democracy' *Administrative Review*, 41(5): 527-550.

Scott, Peter Dale. 2015, *The American Deep State: Wall Street, Big Oil, and the Attack on US Democracy*, (Rowman and Littlefield).

deHaven-Smith, Lance, and Matthew T. Witt (2009) 'Preventing State Crimes Against Democracy' *Administrative Review*, 41(5): 527-550.