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The Best Conspiracy Theories (Lizard-People Are Running the World!)

By Lucas Graves 10.23.07 | 12:00 AM



Photo: Gene Lee

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funny shadows). A third of respondents to a 1970 poll thought something was fishy about mankind's giant leap. Today, 94 percent accept the official version... Saps!

The US Government Was Behind 9/11

Or Jews. Or Jews in the US government. The documentary *Loose Change* claimed to find major flaws in the official story — like the dearth of plane debris at the site of the Pentagon blast and that jet fuel alone could never vaporize a whole 757. Judge for yourself: After *Popular Mechanics* debunked the theory, the magazine's editors faced off with proponents in a debate, available on YouTube.

Princess Diana Was Murdered

Rumors ran wild after Princess Diana's fatal 1997 car crash, and they haven't stopped yet. Reigning theories: She faked her death to escape the media's glare, or the royals snuffed her out (via MI6) to keep her from marrying her Muslim

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Nasa Faked the Moon Landings

And Arthur C. Clarke wrote the script, at least in one version of the story. Space skeptics point to holes in the Apollo archive (like missing transcripts and blueprints) or oddities in the mission photos (misplaced crosshairs,

boyfriend. For the latest scenarios, check out www.alfayed.com, the Web site of her boyfriend's dad, Mohamed Al Fayed.

The Jews Run Hollywood and Wall Street

A forged 19th-century Russian manuscript called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" (virtually required reading in Nazi Germany) purports to lay out a Jewish plot to control media and finance, and thus the world. Several studies have exposed the text as a hoax, but it's still available in numerous languages and editions.

The Scientologists Run Hollywood

The long list of celebrities who have had *Dianetics* on their nightstands fuels rumors that the Church of Scientology pulls the strings in Tinseltown — vetting deals, arranging marriages, and spying on stars. The much older theory is that Jews run Hollywood, and the Scientologists have to settle for running Tom Cruise.

Paul Is Dead

Maybe you're amazed, but in 1969 major news outlets reported on rumors of the cute Beatle's death and replacement by a look-alike. True believers pointed to a series of clues buried in the Fab Four's songs and album covers. Even for skeptics, McCartney's later solo career lent credibility to the theory.

AIDS Is a Man-Made Disease

A number of scientists have argued that HIV was cooked up in a lab, either for bioweapons research or in a genocidal plot to wipe out gays and/or minorities. Who supposedly did the cooking? US Army scientists, Russian scientists, or the CIA. Mainstream researchers point to substantial evidence that HIV jumped species from African monkeys to humans.

Church's Fried Chicken Sterilizes Black Men

Sociologists call this decades-old urban legend a cultural echo of the very real syphilis study carried out on blacks in Tuskegee, Alabama. In another version, KFC is the culprit — and secretly run by the KKK. There's less controversy over whether the biscuits clog your arteries.

Lizard-People Run the World

If a science fiction-based religion isn't exotic enough, followers of onetime BBC reporter David Icke believe that certain powerful people — like George W. Bush and the British royals — actually belong to an alien race of shape-shifting lizard-people. Icke claims Princess Diana confirmed this to one of her close friends; other lizard theories (there are several) point to reptilian themes in ancient mythology. And let's not forget the '80s TV show *V*.

The Illuminati Run the World

The ur-conspiracy theory holds that the world's corporate and political leaders are all members of an ancient cabal: Illuminati, Rosicrucians, Freemasons — take your pick. It doesn't help that those secret societies really existed (George Washington was a Mason). Newer variations implicate the Trilateral Commission, the New World Order, and Yale's Skull and Bones society.

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