

The world's top conspiracy theories

The death of Diana



The first Diana Conspiracy Site appeared on the Internet in Australia only hours after her death on August 31st, 1997.

Since then an estimated 36,000 Diana conspiracy websites have been set up – breathtaking by anyone's standards. Hypotheses range from pure James Bond ('it was all an MI6 plot to protect the monarchy') to farce ('it was a fiendish murder plot thought up by the world's florists to sell lots of flowers'). And most popular of all, Diana, Princess of Wales, isn't dead after all – that terrible car crash in Paris was an elaborate hoax to enable the Princess and Dodi Fayed to fake their own deaths so that they could live in blissful isolation for the rest of their lives.

Subscribers to this theory say that Diana was fed up with the intrusions into her private life and used the wealth and resources of the Fayed family to fake her death, and now she and Dodi are living on a small tropical island, communicating with her sons by satellite video conferencing. Think about it, they say, we never actually saw her body, did we?



You don't buy into any of these theories? Don't worry. There are plenty more to choose from.

For example, Paul Burrell, Diana's former butler, claims that the Princess predicted her own death in a car crash. Apparently, she was so frightened that ten months before her death she wrote to Burrell saying that a plot was being hatched by a member of the Royal family and her car's brakes would be tampered with and she would suffer serious head injuries. And all of this so that the Prince of Wales could marry again.

These theories multiply because it is so hard for us to believe that a princess, with all her wealth and bodyguards, could be killed by something as arbitrary and mundane as a traffic accident. Psychologically, we need conspiracy theories to make the tragedies of life more bearable. And the Internet helps feed the global paranoia.



The Apollo moon landings



For over 40 years rumours have been circulating that the Apollo moon landings were faked.

They say astronaut Neil Armstrong made no ‘giant leap for mankind’, they assert that the 1969 moon mission was a hoax to prove America won the space race, that the astronauts were ‘astro-nots’! The high point in the Great Moon Landing Conspiracy came on 15 February 2001, the date that Fox television broadcast a programme entitled ‘Did We Land on the Moon?’. This alleged that the whole Moon landing had been staged inside a film studio on a US military base somewhere in the Mojave desert.

The programmers claimed:

- 1** The US flag planted on the Moon’s surface is seen fluttering, and there is no breeze of any kind on the Moon.
- 2** The photographs taken by the astronauts do not include any of the Moon’s night sky, where there would have been a stunning array of stars on view.
- 3** The shadows in the pictures are clearly coming from more than one angle – an impossibility on the Moon, where the only light source is the sun, but more than plausible inside a film studio.



- 4 One of the famed Moon rocks brought back by the Apollo astronauts is marked with a tell-tale letter 'C', suggesting the markings not of some alien life force but of a film prop.

After the programme the Internet went crazy with theories and counter-theories. However, scientists have unanimously agreed that the conspiracy theorists don't have even the beginnings of a case. Too many things about the Apollo missions were impossible to fake, from the radio signals picked up at listening stations around the world, to the Moon rocks, which have been subjected to repeated geological analysis and clearly date back several millennia.

Finally there are the UFO 'nuts'. They actually do believe that astronauts went to the Moon, but that not only did they find a load of rocks but also widespread evidence of an ancient alien civilisation – a discovery so terrifying that NASA has been desperately trying to conceal it from the public ever since.