

## Wagging the Moondoggie

By Dave [McGowan](#)  
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Adolf Hitler knew a little bit about the fine art of lying. In *Mein Kampf*, he wrote that: "If you're going to tell a lie, make sure it's a really fucking big one." OK, my German's not that great so that may not be an exact translation, but it captures the gist of what the future Fuhrer was saying.

He went on to explain that this was so because everyone in their everyday lives tells little lies, and so they fully expect others to do so as well (which is why, by the way, you should never lie about getting a blow job from an intern). But most people do not expect anyone to tell a real whopper. You know, the kind of brazen, outlandish lie that is just too absurd to actually be a lie.

The kind of lie that is so over-the-top that no one would dare to utter it if it wasn't in fact the truth. That is the type of lie, according to Hitler, that will fool the great masses of people, even when the lie is so transparently thin that it couldn't possibly stand up to any kind of critical analysis by anyone actually exercising their brain rather than just blindly accepting the legitimacy of the big lie.

Take, for example, the rather fanciful notion that the United States landed men on the moon in the late 1960's and early 1970's. That's the kind of lie we're talking about here: the kind that is so ingrained in the national psyche that it passes for historical fact, despite appearing to fly in the face of everything that transpired before and since the alleged events occurred.

I should probably preface this piece by noting that until fairly recently, had I heard anyone putting forth the drug-addled notion that the moon landings were faked I would have been among the first to offer said person a ride down to the grip store. However, while conducting research into various other topics, it has become increasingly apparent that there is almost always a few morsels of truth in any 'conspiracy theory,' no matter how outlandish that theory may initially appear to be.

With that in mind (and with a few hours to kill) I ventured onto a couple of websites that fearlessly claimed that the moon landings were indeed faked. And to be perfectly honest, I have no idea if much of the information presented was scientifically valid. Lacking a background in astronomy and rocket science, the explanations as to why the flights were technologically impossible went right over my head.

[For the scientifically minded, the theory seems to be that it is not possible for man to travel through the Van Allen radiation belt. If any attempt were made to do so, the astronauts would run the risk of returning to a planet occupied by apes speaking with British accents, lobotomized humans, and Charleton Heston screaming "it's a madhouse." But here I digress.]

Many of the arguments seemed convincing, though loading on the technical jargon can frequently convert a dung heap of disinformation into a convincing argument, or at least one that discourages dissenting views, lest the dissenter reveal his ignorance. There was, however, at least one rather provocative anomaly of the moon landings that doesn't require an advanced degree in aeronautics to understand.

This concerns the condition of the lunar surface directly beneath the landing module, also known as the *Eagle*. As was clearly visible in the photos and videotape beamed back to Earth, the moon's surface beneath the module was in pristine condition, as was the module itself. To which you may well respond: *Duh* ... why shouldn't the surface be undisturbed?

Glad you asked. The answer is that the lunar module was not placed upon the moon by the hand of God. It had to actually *land* there. And in order for it to land there in one piece, it had to make use of immensely powerful reverse-thrust rockets. Otherwise it would have made a landing roughly comparable to a piano falling out of a high-rise apartment building.

But, you say, isn't the gravitational pull of the moon considerably less than that of the Earth? Of course it is, though this doesn't render objects weightless. A massive metal structure still has a considerable amount of weight, even on the moon. Enough so that it cannot make a cat-like landing without the use of rockets to slow its descent. It would actually make more of a splat-like landing.

That is why in the artists' renderings of the landings (which obviously couldn't be filmed), an enormous blast of flame and fire is seen shooting out of the bottom of the module. This massive reverse force serves to counteract the effects of the moon's gravitational pull, thereby allowing the module to gently set down in the lunar dust unharmed and intact.

The problem is that - unless the landing surface was paved with say, concrete - an inordinate amount of material should have been displaced by the force of the rocket blasts as the module was setting down. You can easily verify this yourself. All you have to do is get hold of a Saturn V rocket (you know - the kind Werner von Braun and his team of fellow Nazi war criminals designed to power the Apollo missions), and head out to the desert.

Once you get there, hold the rocket aloft (you might want to wear gloves and an asbestos suit for this part) and fire that bad boy up, directing the blast towards the desert floor (you might also want to grab hold of a stationary object with your free hand and hold on real tight). The result should be, if you've done this correctly, a rather large crater and a blinding dust storm.

This will, of course, eventually settle, leaving a heavy coating of dust on you and your rocket. You may also notice that the blast has lent the desert floor a distinctive scorched look. The intense heat may even have fused the sand into something resembling a large sheet of glass.

The point here is that nothing of the sort was evident in the pictures beamed back from the moon. The lunar surface was, as noted, undisturbed and the module itself was as clean as if it had just rolled off the assembly line. It appears as though it did not land at all, but was rather set in place with a crane or other such device. And of course we all know that there were very few crane operators on the moon at that time.

How then did the module get there? Perhaps, you say, the surface was so compact that even the massive thrusts of the rockets could not dislodge it. That might be a reasonable explanation were it not for the fact that the astronauts themselves - who with the moon's reduced gravitational pull weighed in at about 20 pounds apiece (OK, so I just made that figure up, but you get the point) - made readily identifiable footprints from the moment their feet hit the ground.

It appeared, in fact, as though the lunar soil had roughly the same consistency as baby powder. And yet, amazingly enough, not a single grain of this soil was displaced by the landing of the module. Despite my initial skepticism, I had to admit that I had no logical explanation for this phenomenon, and was compelled to take a closer look at the Apollo program.

The first thing that I discovered was that the Soviet Union - prior to the time that we up and landed on the moon - was solidly kicking our ass in the space race. They launched the first satellite, sent the first man into space, sent the first woman into space,

performed the first docking maneuver in space, performed the first space walk, and landed the first unmanned rocket on the moon - a full decade before the Apollo 11 flight.

Everything the U.S. did, prior to actually landing on the moon, had already been done by the Soviets, who clearly were staying at least a step or two ahead of our top-notch Nazi team. The smart money clearly was on the Soviets to make it first to the moon, if anyone was to do so. They had a considerable amount of time, money, scientific talent and national pride riding on that goal.

And yet, despite the long odds, the Americans made it first. Not only did we make it first, but after thirty-one long years the Soviets apparently still haven't figured out how we did it. The question that is clearly begged here is: why? Why, even if we grant that the U.S. made it first, did the Soviets never match this feat?

Is it just that they were really poor losers? Perhaps the conversation went something like this:

Boris: Comrade, the Yankee imperialists have beaten us to the moon. What should we do?

Ivan: Let's just shit-can our entire space program.

Boris: But comrade, we are so close to success. And we have so much invested in the effort.

Ivan: Fuck it; if we can't be first, we aren't going.

Boris: But I beg of you comrade. The moon has so much to teach us, and the Americans will surely not share the knowledge they have gained with us.

Ivan: Nyet!

In truth, the entire space program has been from its inception little more than an elaborate cover for the research, development and deployment of space-based weaponry. For this reason alone, it is inconceivable that the Soviets would not have followed the Americans onto the moon, simply for the sake of their own national defense.

In fact, while we're on the subject, why has America not returned to the moon in nearly thirty years? Following the alleged landings, there was considerable talk of establishing a space station on the moon, and of possibly even colonizing Earth's satellite. Yet all such talk was quickly forgotten, and for twenty-eight years now not a single human has left the Earth's orbit.

Not a single human, that is, from any country on the planet. Again, the question that comes to mind is: why? Why has no nation ever duplicated this miraculous feat? Clearly, the technology is there. Technology has advanced to such a degree in the last three decades that virtually any industrialized nation currently has technology that is light-years beyond what the United States had in 1969.

And yet no one has made an attempt to once again land a man on the moon. Is this because we already learned everything we need to know about the moon? Of course not. That is an absurd supposition. Would it be possible to make six random landings on the surface of the Earth and come away with a complete and thorough understanding of *this* heavenly body? Again, of course not.

And are we to believe that the scientific community has come up with no new questions in the intervening decades that beg for answers? I should think not. Why then has not France, or Germany, England, Japan, or any of a number of other technologically advanced nations made any effort to reach the moon?

Why, for that matter, has not private industry made any effort to reach the moon. In this age of the mega-corporation, there are any number of private firms that have the financial resources to mount such an effort. And quite a profitable one it could be. There are, no doubt, any number of minerals, compounds, etc. that could be mined from the moon that are unavailable here on planet Earth. With the proper marketing, and of course a built-in monopoly, there are vast fortunes to be made, new frontiers to exploit.

But why, you may ask, would anyone go to such extremes to mount such an elaborate hoax? The most obvious answer is to reclaim a sense of pride that had been stripped away by America's having played follow-the-leader with the Soviets for an entire decade. While this undoubtedly played a large role, there are other reasons as well.

But before we look at those, we must first deal with the question of whether it would even have been possible to pull off such an enormous hoax. Could so many people have been duped into believing such an outrageous lie, if that in fact was what it was? Of course.

You have to remember that we are talking about the summer of 1969 here. Those old enough to have been there will recall that they - along with the vast majority of politically active people in the country - spent that particular period of time primarily engaged in frying on acid.

How hard would it really have been to fool all of you? I could have stuck a fish bowl on my head, wrapped myself in aluminum foil, and filmed myself high-stepping across my backyard and most of you would have believed that I was moon-walking. Some of you couldn't rule out the possibility that *everyone* was walking on the moon.

Returning then to the question of why such a ruse would be perpetrated, we must transport ourselves back to the year 1969. Richard Nixon has just been inaugurated as our new president. His ascension to that position is in part due to his promises to the American people that he will disengage from the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam.

But Tricky Dick has a bit of a problem on his hands: he has absolutely no intention of ending the war. In fact, he would really, really like to escalate the conflict as much as possible. But to do so, he needs to set up a diversion, some means of stoking the patriotic fervor of the American people so that they will blindly rally behind him. In short, he needs to wag the dog.

This has traditionally been done by, of course, embarking on some military endeavor. The problem for Big Dick is that a military mission is exactly what he is trying to divert attention *away* from. What, then, is a beleaguered president to do? Why, send Neil and Buzz to the moon, of course. Instead of wagging the dog, it's time to wag the moon-doggie.

Nixon's actions from the moment he takes office belie his pledges to the American people. In May, the press begins publicizing the illegal B-52 carpet bombing of Cambodia engineered by Henry Kissinger, arguably the most revered mass murderer of the late twentieth century. By June, Nixon is scrambling to announce the 'Vietnamization' of the war and a concomitant withdrawal of U.S. troops.

In truth, however, only 25,000 of the 540,000 U.S. troops then deployed are brought home. This ruse is, therefore, transparently thin and will buy the president little time. On July 14th, Francis Reitemeyer is granted Conscientious Objector status on the basis of a petition his attorney has filed which explicitly details the training and instruction he has just received in assassination and torture techniques in conjunction with his assignment to the Phoenix Program. The horrors of the war are beginning to emerge.

Just in time to save the day, Apollo 11 blasts off on July 16th, and - with the nation enthralled - four days later the *Eagle* makes its historic immaculate landing on the pristine surface of the moon. Vietnam is forgotten for awhile as America swells with patriotic

pride for having beaten the Evil Empire to the moon. The honeymoon is short-lived, however, for in November of 1969 Seymour Hersch publishes a story about the Phoenix Program's massacre of 504 civilians in the village of My Lai, bringing home to America the full savagery of the war in Southeast Asia.

It's time then for another moon launch, as Apollo 12 lifts off on November 14th, making another picture perfect moon landing before returning on November 24th. The country is once again entranced by the exploits of America's new breed of hero - its astronauts (or - as some websites refer to them - astro-nots).

All is well again until March of 1970, at which time a U.S.-backed coup deposes Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia and installs in his place CIA-puppet Lon Nol. Cambodia immediately jumps in the fray by committing troops to the U.S. war effort. The war is further escalated the next month when Nixon authorizes an invasion of Cambodia by U.S. and ARVN ground forces, another move engineered by noted war criminal Henry Kissinger.

Meanwhile, it's time for yet another moon launch. And not just any moon launch, either. This one is going to introduce the element of danger. The first two having gone off without a hitch, the American people are already adopting a 'been there, done that' attitude. The problem is that it looks just a little too damn easy.

In order to regain the attention of the American people, it has to be impressed upon them the terrible danger these men are putting themselves into. And so it is that on April 11th, Apollo 13 blasts off with Tom Hanks and some other guys on board and drifts about for the next six days placing the crew in mortal danger of being forever lost in space.

Now *that* gets our attention. So much so that when three Vietnam vets hold a multi-city press conference in New York, San Francisco and Rome on April 14th - attempting to publicize the ongoing Phoenix Program in which they had participated and have first-hand knowledge - nobody can really be bothered with it. It's hard to be too concerned about the fate of thousands of Vietnamese women and children when Tom and the boys are in trouble.

Awaiting the fate of the Apollo 13 crew, we all have our eyes glued to the TV as though we are watching the trial of a rich black man accused of murdering a white woman. When they make it back alive, against seemingly impossible odds, we are all so goddamned proud of them that we decide to give Tom another Oscar. And all is well again for the rest of the year.

The new year, however, brings the trial of Lt. William Calley on charges that he personally ordered and oversaw the mass murder of the inhabitants of My Lai. And on January 31st, Apollo 14 is launched and once again makes a flawless lunar landing. On February 9th, the Apollo team returns, and a few weeks later Calley is convicted of murder.

A few months after that, the *New York Times* begins publication of the infamous *Pentagon Papers*, revealing American policy in Vietnam to be a complex web of lies. Publication is quickly stopped by the Justice Department, but resumes once again as June turns to July.

This is quickly followed, on July 26th, by the launch of the Apollo 15. After yet another flawless mission that clearly demonstrates that America is the coolest nation on Earth, the astronauts return on August 7th, and the rest of the year passes uneventfully (unless you count the stormtrooping of Attica prison ordered by Governor Nelson Rockefeller that leaves 43 dead - but that's another story entirely).

On March 30, 1972, North Vietnamese troops mount a massive offensive across the DMZ into Quang Tri Province, revealing as lies the pompous statements by numerous Washington hacks that victory is near. Nixon and Co. respond with deep penetration bombing of North Vietnam and, for good measure, the illegal mining of North Vietnam's ports. They also respond by launching, on April 16th, another rocket to the moon - Apollo 16. On April 27th, the crew once again returns to a hero's welcome.

By the end of the year, peace appears to be close at hand. Beginning in October, Kissinger and David Bruce, a member of the Mellon family (as in Richard Mellon Scaife of the 'vast right-wing conspiracy'), are secretly negotiating peace terms with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam. In December, however, the talks break down, but not before Apollo 17 is launched on December 7th.

With the Apollo mission still a few days away from returning, the talks cease and Dick and Henry unleash a final ruthless carpet bombing campaign against North Vietnam, snuffing out countless thousands of civilian lives. Meanwhile, America warmly greets its returning astronauts.

Just five weeks later, the talks having resumed, a peace agreement is announced. A few days later a cease fire is in effect, thereby officially ending America's involvement in Southeast Asia. Though the CIA remains to continue directing the war by proxy, America's men and women in uniform come home. And the Apollo program - despite several additional missions having been planned and discussed - will never be heard from again.

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