
He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has **made Judges dependent on his Will alone**, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and **sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.**

He has **kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies** without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has **combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws**; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For **protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit** on the Inhabitants of these States:

***For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, **establishing therein an Arbitrary government**, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and **declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us** in all cases whatsoever.

He is at this time **transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries** to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, **to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren**, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

The American concept of “separation of powers” is also based on the conspiracy theory that those with unchecked power will abuse it. By creating 3 branches of government, the Founding Fathers hoped to reduce abuse of power.

Political science professor Lance deHaven-Smith has documented in a soon-to-be-released book that conspiracy theories were considered as American as apple pie all through American history ... up until very recently.

The father of modern economics – Adam Smith – also believed in conspiracy theories. As the New York Times notes:

Smith railed against monopolies and the political influence that accompanies economic power ...

He saw a tacit conspiracy on the part of employers ”always and everywhere” to keep wages as low as possible.

But the centrality of conspiracy theories in Western civilizations goes back much further ...

The Magna Carta – signed in 1215 – was based on the conspiracy theory that the claim of the “Divine Right” of the king and his men to do whatever they wanted was false and oppressive.

Indeed, the entire idea of democracy – going back to ancient Greece – is based on a conspiracy theory as well: that leaders who make decisions without input from the public will not treat the people as well as if they have a chance to vote. This is another form of “separation of powers”, as it creates checks and balances between the decision-making power of the government and that of the people.

Arguably, Western civilization would never have gotten off the ground with the core idea that those in power need to be checked and reined in, or they would abuse the people.

But Aren’t Conspiracy Theories Nutty?

You may have heard that conspiracy theories are nutty. But the truth is that conspiracies are so common that judges are trained to look at conspiracy allegations as just another legal claim to be disproven or proven based on the specific evidence:

Federal and all 50 state’s **codes** include specific statutes addressing conspiracy, and providing the punishment for people who commit conspiracies.

But let’s examine what the people trained to weigh evidence and reach conclusions think about “conspiracies”. Let’s look at what American **judges** think.

Searching Westlaw, one of the 2 primary legal research networks which attorneys and judges use to research the law, I searched for court decisions including the word “Conspiracy”. This is such a common term in lawsuits that it overwhelmed Westlaw. Specifically, I got the following message:

“Your query has been intercepted because it may retrieve a large number of documents.”

From experience, I know that this means that there were potentially millions or many hundreds of thousands of cases which use the term. There were so many cases, that Westlaw could not even start processing the request.

So I searched again, using the phrase “Guilty of Conspiracy”. I hoped that this would not only narrow my search sufficiently that Westlaw could handle it, but would give me cases where the judge actually found the defendant guilty of a conspiracy. This pulled up exactly 10,000 cases — which is the maximum number of results which Westlaw can give at one time. In other words, there were more than 10,000 cases using the phrase “Guilty of Conspiracy” (maybe there’s a way to change my settings to get more than 10,000 results, but I haven’t found it yet).

Moreover, as any attorney can confirm, usually only appeal court decisions are published in the Westlaw database. In other words, trial court decisions are rarely published; the only decisions normally published are those of the courts which hear appeals of the trial. Because only a very small fraction of the cases which go to trial are appealed, this logically means that the number of guilty verdicts in conspiracy cases at trial must be much, much larger than 10,000.

Moreover, “Guilty of Conspiracy” is only one of many possible search phrases to use to find cases where the defendant was found guilty of a lawsuit for conspiracy. Searching on Google, I got 3,170,000 results (as of yesterday) under the term “Guilty of Conspiracy”, 669,000 results for the search term “Convictions for Conspiracy”, and 743,000 results for “Convicted for Conspiracy”.

Of course, many types of conspiracies are called other things altogether. For example, a long-accepted legal doctrine makes it illegal for two or more companies to conspire to fix prices, which is called “Price Fixing” (1,180,000 results).

Given the above, I would extrapolate that there have been hundreds of thousands of convictions for criminal or civil conspiracy in the United States.

Finally, many crimes go unreported or unsolved, and the perpetrators are never caught. Therefore, the actual number of conspiracies committed in the U.S. must be even higher.

In other words, conspiracies are committed all the time in the U.S., and many of the conspirators are caught and found guilty by American courts. Remember, Bernie Madoff’s Ponzi scheme was a conspiracy theory.

Indeed, conspiracy is a very well-recognized crime in American law, taught to every first-year law school student as part of their basic curriculum. **Telling a judge that someone has a**

“conspiracy theory” would be like telling him that someone is claiming that he trespassed on their property, or committed assault, or stole his car. It is a fundamental legal concept.

Obviously, many conspiracy allegations are false (if you see a judge at a dinner party, ask him to tell you some of the crazy conspiracy allegations which were made in his court). Obviously, people will either win or lose in court depending on whether or not they can prove their claim with the available evidence. But not all allegations of trespass, assault, or theft are true, either.

Proving a claim of conspiracy is no different from proving any other legal claim, and the mere label “conspiracy” is taken no less seriously by judges.

It’s not only Madoff. The heads of Enron were found guilty of conspiracy, as was the head of Adelphia. Numerous lower-level government officials have been found guilty of conspiracy. See this, this, this, this and this.

Time Magazine’s financial columnist Justin Fox writes:

Some financial market conspiracies are real ...

Most good investigative reporters are conspiracy theorists, by the way.

But Our Leaders Wouldn’t Do That

While people might admit that corporate executives and low-level government officials might have engaged in conspiracies – they may be strongly opposed to considering that the wealthiest or most powerful might possibly have done so.

But powerful insiders have long admitted to conspiracies. For example, Obama’s Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Cass Sunstein, wrote:

Of course some conspiracy theories, under our definition, have turned out to be true. The Watergate hotel room used by Democratic National Committee was, in fact, bugged by Republican officials, operating at the behest of the White House. In the 1950s, the Central Intelligence Agency did, in fact, administer LSD and related drugs under Project MKULTRA, in an effort to investigate the possibility of “mind control.” Operation Northwoods, a rumored plan by the Department of Defense to simulate acts of terrorism and to blame them on Cuba, really was proposed by high-level officials

But Someone Would Have Spilled the Beans

A common defense to people trying sidetrack investigations into potential conspiracies is to say that “someone would have spilled the beans” if there were really a conspiracy.

But famed whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg explains:

It is a commonplace that “you can’t keep secrets in Washington” or “in a democracy, no matter how sensitive the secret, you’re likely to read it the next day in the New York Times.” These truisms are flatly false. They are in fact cover stories, ways of flattering and misleading journalists and their readers, part of the process of keeping secrets well. Of course eventually many secrets do get out that wouldn’t in a fully totalitarian society. But the fact is that the overwhelming majority of secrets do not leak to the American public. This is true even when the information withheld is well known to an enemy and when it is clearly essential to the functioning of the congressional war power and to any democratic control of foreign policy. The reality unknown to the public and to most members of Congress and the press is that secrets that would be of the greatest import to many of them can be kept from them reliably for decades by the executive branch, even though they are known to thousands of insiders.

History proves Ellsberg right. For example:

- One hundred and thirty thousand (130,000) people from the U.S., UK and Canada worked on the Manhattan Project. But it was kept secret for years
- A BBC documentary shows that:

There was “a planned coup in the USA in 1933 by a group of right-wing American businessmen The coup was aimed at toppling President Franklin D Roosevelt with the help of half-a-million war veterans. The plotters, who were alleged to involve some of the most famous families in America, (owners of Heinz, Birds Eye, Goodtea, Maxwell Hse & George Bush’s Grandfather, Prescott) believed that their country should adopt the policies of Hitler and Mussolini to beat the great depression”

Moreover, “the tycoons told General Butler the American people would accept the new government because they controlled all the newspapers.” Have you ever heard of this conspiracy before? It was certainly a very large one. And if the conspirators controlled the newspapers then, how much worse is it today with media consolidation?

- 7 out of the 8 giant, money center banks went bankrupt in the 1980’s during the “Latin American Crisis”, and the government’s response was to cover up their insolvency. That’s a cover up lasting several decades
- Governments have been covering up nuclear meltdowns for fifty years to protect the nuclear industry. Governments have colluded to cover up the severity of numerous other environmental accidents. For many years, Texas officials intentionally under-reported the amount of radiation in drinking water to avoid having to report violations
- The government’s spying on Americans began before 9/11 (confirmed here and here. And see this.) But the public didn’t learn about it until many years later. Indeed, the the New York Times delayed the story so that it would not affect the outcome of the 2004 presidential election

- The decision to launch the Iraq war was made before 9/11. Indeed, former CIA director George Tenet said that the White House wanted to invade Iraq long before 9/11, and inserted “crap” in its justifications for invading Iraq. Former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill – who sat on the National Security Council – also says that Bush planned the Iraq war before 9/11. And top British officials say that the U.S. discussed Iraq regime change one month after Bush took office. Dick Cheney apparently even made Iraqi’s oil fields a national security priority before 9/11. And it has now been shown that a handful of people were responsible for willfully ignoring the evidence that Iraq lacked weapons of mass destruction. These facts have only been publicly disclosed recently. Indeed, Tom Brokaw said, “All wars are based on propaganda.” A concerted effort to produce propaganda is a conspiracy

Moreover, high-level government officials and insiders have admitted to dramatic conspiracies after the fact, including:

- Supporting terrorists to promote geopolitical goals
- Supporting false flag terror

The admissions did not occur until many decades after the events.

These examples show that it is possible to keep conspiracies secret for a long time, without anyone “spilling the beans”.

In addition, to anyone who knows how covert military operations work, it is obvious that segmentation on a “need-to-know basis”, along with deference to command hierarchy, means that a couple of top dogs can call the shots and most people helping won’t even know the big picture at the time they are participating.

Moreover, those who think that co-conspirators will brag about their deeds forget that people in the military or intelligence or who have huge sums of money on the line can be very disciplined. They are not likely to go to the bar and spill the beans like a down-on-their-luck, second-rate alcoholic robber might do.

Finally, people who carry out covert operations may do so for ideological reasons — believing that the “ends justify the means”. Never underestimate the conviction of an ideologue.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that some conspiracy claims are nutty and some are true. Each has to be judged on its own facts.

Humans have a tendency to try to explain random events through seeing patterns ... that's how our brains are wired. Therefore, we have to test our theories of connection and causality against the cold, hard facts.

On the other hand, the old saying by Lord Acton is true:

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.

Those who operate without checks and balances – and without the disinfectant sunlight of public scrutiny and accountability – tend to act in their own best interests ... and the little guy gets hurt.

The early Greeks knew it, as did those who forced the king to sign the Magna Carta, the Founding Fathers and the father of modern economics. We should remember this important tradition of Western civilization.

Postscript: The ridicule of **all** conspiracy theories is really just an attempt to diffuse criticism of the powerful.

The wealthy are not worse than other people ... but they are not necessarily better either. Powerful leaders may not be bad people ... or they could be sociopaths.

We must judge each by his or her actions, and not by preconceived stereotypes that they are all saints acting in our best interest or all scheming criminals.