

10 GRAND DECEPTIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

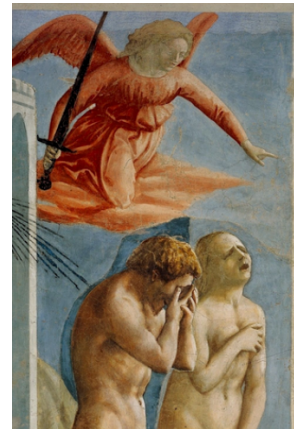
by Chuck Weiss

"All warfare is based on deception." - Sun Tzu

Chinese military general, strategist, and author of The Art of War

1. **The Garden of Eden:** In his war against God, the Devil took the form of a snake and deceived Eve into believing that little harm would come from learning of Good and Evil. When I was a young boy I wondered why God would make learning anything a sin. Evidently, the snake got Eve to wondering much the same thing.

The story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden represents our loss of innocence. By learning of Good and Evil, we became capable of choosing either. With an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other, we can decide which one to listen to. When Eve took a bite of that apple she chose knowledge over ignorance, and we gained free will as a result.



Expulsion from the Garden of Eden

2. **The Trojan Horse, c.12th or 13th Century BC:** A united Greece landed on the shores of Troy determined to take the city, but its thick walls and three-tiered system of defense precluded an easy victory. Finally realizing the city was unassailable, the Greeks devised a cunning deception instead. They pretended to withdraw their forces and lift the siege. Outside the city gates they left a large wooden horse they had constructed, as a gift of apology to the Trojans.

Troy was the trading capital of the Mediterranean and controlled much of its commerce, so it

would have seemed plausible that the Greeks were seeking a reconciliation. Troy was also famous for the horses they bred and Hector, their greatest warrior, was known as the "Tamer of Horses." Hence a horse was selected as the appropriate offering.



The Trojan Horse

The Trojans took it as intended, a gift to their gods, and felt it symbolized their victory after the long siege.

They brought the horse through the gate and into their city, not knowing that a small band of handpicked soldiers was hidden within its hollow frame. After

nightfall, when most everyone was asleep, they opened

the trap door, dropped to the ground, and ran to the gate where they overpowered the few guards that remained there. The Greek army waiting outside flooded through, setting fire to anything that would burn, and killing anyone they encountered.

Homer's story of Troy and its war with Greece was long thought to be based on myth, but in 1870 German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann discovered the ancient city in the northwest corner of modern-day Turkey, and begun excavation of the site the following year. It continues to this day, and have thus far revealed that Troy was destroyed and rebuilt at least

nine different times. The city, labeled Troy VIIb, was found to have been completely decimated by fire c.950 BC.

- The Battle of Bannockburn, 1314:** The decisive battle in Scottish history when the Scots under Robert I, defeated the English king, Edward II. Edward had assembled an army of some 13,000 infantry, roughly 3,000 cavalry and a contingent of Welsh archers. Robert had a much smaller force, comprised of perhaps 7,000 infantry and several hundred light cavalry. To deceive Edward as to the real numbers he faced, Robert had his men and camp followers hoist their laundry as banners, so as to mimic thousands of additional troops.



The Battle of Bannockburn

- Charles Lindberg's Tour of the Nazi Luftwaffe in 1936:** When Charles Lindberg, America's new aviation's hero, was invited to inspect Nazi Germany's new air force, he was grandly deceived. Lindberg was taken to an airbase where he inspected dozens of Luftwaffe attack aircraft. While he was being driven to the another base for the next inspection, the planes he had just reviewed (which comprised the entire Nazi Air Force at that point) took to the skies and landed at the second airbase in time to line up for another inspection before Lindberg arrived. He, of course, believed he was viewing an entirely different fleet of planes.



Goering (right) presents Lindbergh with a sword

Lindberg spent days visiting airbases, inspecting the same planes over and over again. When he returned to America, he preached noninterference in Europe's disputes because, in his expert opinion, no nation could ever defeat the Luftwaffe.

- Operation Himmler:** a series of two dozen or more special operations undertaken by the Nazi SS, intended to create the appearance of Polish aggression against Germany, and to justify Hitler's planned invasion of Poland. The most famous of these is known as the Gleiwitz Incident.

What we know about this deception comes from the affidavit of Alfred Naujocks, an SS official, at his Nuremberg Trial. He testified that he organized the operation under orders from Reinhard Heydrich, a high-ranking SS officer and a principal architect of the Holocaust, and Heinrich Müller, head of the Gestapo.

On August 31, 1939, SS personnel dressed in Polish uniforms attacked and seized the radio station at Gleiwitz, Germany. After broadcasting anti-German rhetoric they killed everyone and withdrew, leaving behind the body of Franciszek Honiok, a farmer, known for his sympathies with Poland. He had been arrested the previous day and dressed to look like a

Polish soldier. He was shot dead, and left at the scene so that he appeared to have been killed while attacking the station. His body was later displayed as evidence of the attack.

Several prisoners from a concentration camp were also appropriately dressed, then killed and left at the scene. This detail was supplied with the testimony of Erwin von Lahusen, a General in the Abwehr (the German military intelligence service). He stated that he was told by Wilhelm Canaris, another high-ranking member of the Abwehr, that prisoners from a concentration camp had been disguised as Polish soldiers and ordered to attack the radio station.

On September 1, 1939, the day after the Gleiwitz massacre, Hitler went on the radio and declared war against Poland, citing the many fraudulent provocations that Operation Himmler had provided.



Germany Marches into Poland



An Inflatable Tank

6. The Ghost Army: The World War II US Army Tactical Deception Unit of 1,100 men, whose mission it was to deceive Hitler as to the true size and location of Allied forces. Officially known as the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, the Ghost Army carried out more than 20 deception campaigns, using inflatable tanks, sound trucks, and fake radio transmissions, some of which helped mask final preparations being made for the D-day invasion.

- 7. Operation Mincemeat:** The British wartime deception in 1943, meant to convince Hitler that the allies were going to launch their invasion of Southern Europe on the beaches of Greece instead of Sicily. The body of Glyndwr Michael, a vagrant who had recently died, was taken from the hospital in London where he expired and dressed in the uniform of a major in the Royal Marines. Mr. Michael was renamed William Martin, and outfitted with all the “pocket litter” need to make the ruse believable, photo ID, a letter from his girlfriend, her photo, theater ticket stubs, etc. A briefcase full of fraudulent documents describing an Allied plan for the invasion of Greece was handcuffed to his wrist. The corpse was taken by submarine to the coast of Spain and released into the sea, where the strong currents there washed it ashore.

The body, with its briefcase, was discovered by fishermen who transported it to Huelva, a village nearby, and delivered it to the authorities there. The town’s coroner did an inspection to determine the cause of death, and concluded that the British courier died with water in his lungs, the result of drowning. (One of the reasons that Mr. Michael’s body was selected to use in the deception was because he had died from eating rat poison, the effect of which is to produce water in the lungs.)

At the time, Spain was under the leadership of fascist dictator, Francisco Franco, who had declared his neutrality during the war, although most nations considered it marginal at best. As British intelligence had hoped, Spain turned the briefcase over to the Nazis for their careful scrutiny. The Abwehr conducted a thorough, forensic inspection and then returned

the briefcase to Franco, who then had it delivered to the British embassy (supposedly unopened) as a gesture of Spain's neutrality.

The contents of the briefcase were determined to be genuine. Hitler took the bait and shifted his defenses to Greece, leaving Italy largely undefended.

When the allies landed in Sicily their casualties were light, having met little resistance, and they secured the island in a third of the time budgeted for the campaign. Thousands of lives are estimated to have been saved because of the ruse.

The remains of William Martin were interred at the cemetery in Huelva. In 1998, his gravestone was amended to read, "Glyndwr Michael served as Major William Martin, RM."



The Landing in Sicily

Two movies have been made about this deception, the first in 1956 (forty years before the body used was identified in 1996 as Glyndwr Michael) called *The Man Who Never Was*, and another one in 2021 titled *Operation Mincemeat*.

- 8. Operation Bodyguard:** The deception in support of the much anticipated invasion of Europe (D-Day), meant to convince the Nazis that it would take place somewhere other than on the beaches of Normandy, the logical military choice. It was an elaborate plan, taking its name from a remark Churchill made to Stalin at the Teheran Conference in 1943, "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

Bodyguard was comprised of several important elements. It relied on signals intelligence gathered by a select team of cipher experts stationed at Bletchley Park who had broken the secret coding system used in Nazi transmissions. Reports from Bletchley Park used the codename **Ultra** that designated them as having a higher security classification than any in existence previously.

Another factor was the **Double-Cross System**, a counter-espionage and deception operation used during the war. Nazi agents in Great Britain, who were either captured or simply gave themselves up, were turned and used as double agents to "double cross" their superiors by including disinformation in the reports they transmitted back home.

Ultra and Double-Cross were used to support the key component of Bodyguard, **Operation Fortitude South**, meant to convince Hitler to shift his defenses from Normandy to Pas-de-Calais, in the north of France. It was also crafted to make the actual invasion at Normandy appear to be a diversionary tactic, so that Hitler would keep his army in the north for as long as possible, in anticipation that the real assault would be there.



Quicksilver's Dummy Tank
(Enlarge to see detail)

A major part of Fortitude South was a sub-operation called "**Quicksilver I**." A fake army was created (officially called the First United States Army Group) and "stationed" in south-east England, near the strait of Dover and directly across from Pas-de-Calais. It was supposedly under the command of George Patton, the one Allied General the Germans feared most. To give the illusion that the nonexistent army was preparing to cross the channel, dummy tanks and landing

craft were constructed and made to look convincing at a distance, even from overflights by enemy aircraft.

By D-Day (June 6, 1944), the German Fifth Army had been moved to the northern region of France to meet what Hitler thought would be the real Allied invasion of Europe. Some units did land at Calais to simulate the real invasion, keeping the Fifth Army positioned there. It wasn't until a full month later that some of its units were dispatched to the south to meet the Allied forces, who by then had established strong positions inland after landing at Normandy.

Although it took another eleven months before Germany finally surrendered, both sides had long understood that if the Allies succeeded in establishing a foothold in Europe, Germany would lose the war. Because of Operation Bodyguard, D-Day was a huge success that not only saved thousands of lives, but also guaranteed the Nazis would ultimately be defeated.

9. **The Gulf of Tonkin Incident (August 4, 1964):** The attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats on two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin that was used to convince Congress to pass legislation allowing President Johnson to use military force in Vietnam. It has long been maintained that there were two different attacks by North Viet Nam, on two different days. The first was on August 2, 1964 against the USS Maddox that did happen, and a second attack on August 4th against both the Maddox and the USS Turner Joy, which most assuredly did not. It wasn't until 41 years later, however, that it was proven to be a deception on the part of President Johnson (with help from the NSA) to force America to go to war.

By July of 1964, less than a year after the assassination of President Kennedy, the situation between North and South Viet Nam had gotten very tense. South Viet Nam was launching a series of raids against its northern neighbor, using electronic intelligence the USS Maddox was gathered while patrolling off North Viet Nam's coast. Hanoi considered US cooperation with the South to be interference in their civil war, and they responded.

By August 1st, North Vietnamese patrol boats were tracking the Maddox as it moved across its coastline and knew its whereabouts. The destroyer left the area when it intercepted radio traffic indicating they were preparing to attack, but it returned the next day and resumed its patrols.

During the daylight hours of August 2nd, the Maddox was approached by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats of the 135th Torpedo Squadron. When the Maddox fired warning shots, the boats attacked using torpedos and machine gunfire. In the engagement, one aircraft was damaged (launched from the carrier, USS Ticonderoga, to assist the Maddox), but no US servicemen were killed or wounded. The three North Vietnamese torpedo boats were damaged, with four of their crewmen killed and another six wounded.

The next day, August 3rd, the USS Turner Joy (also equipped with electronic spy equipment) joined the Maddox, and together they continued their intelligence gathering mission. This time they had new orders, specifically to patrol no more than 11 nautical miles from the North Vietnamese coast, apparently to "show the flag" because of the attack two days earlier.



The USS Maddox

(Those orders were meant to be a direct provocation, because North Viet Nam's territorial waters had never been in dispute. The North Vietnamese had always claimed, since 1945 when the country was founded, that they extended 12 nautical miles beyond its shores.)

On the night of the August 4th, both ships opened fire on radar targets thought to be North



The USS Turner Joy

Vietnamese torpedo boats. The radar blips had been preceded by communications that were initially interpreted by the Maddox and Turner Joy to mean that an attack was imminent.

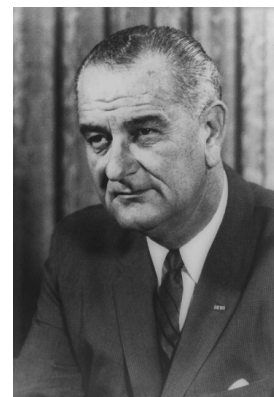
Captain John Herrick, Commander of the Maddox task force, reported that the two ships were under attack, and for two hours they fired on radar

targets while performing evasive maneuvers. (During the attack there were no additional North Vietnamese transmissions, as would be expected during an engagement, and although the Navy was to later claim that two torpedo boats had been sunk, no wreckage or dead North Vietnamese sailors were ever found at the scene.)

In a followed-up cable soon after the "attack," Captain Herrick stated, *"Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by Maddox. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action taken."*

[emphasis mine] An hour later the captain sent another cable, reasserting his suspicion that the attack never actually happened.

Later that very night, not waiting for a daylight inspection of the area or a complete review of the facts (as Captain Herrick had suggested), President Johnson interrupted television programming across the nation to announce that North Viet Nam had just attacked two US destroyers "on the high seas," implying that they had been in international waters. Less than a week later, on August 10th, both houses of Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized Johnson to use military force in Southeast Asia without a declaration of war.



President Johnson

It was long suspected that the second attack never occurred, and that the resolution was based on faulty intelligence, but there was no evidence which suggested that Johnson or the NSA had intentionally misinterpreted the North Vietnamese radio transmissions of August 4th to deceive Congress and the American public. The history of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident had to be rewritten, however, with the release from the Johnson Library of almost 200 documents and transcripts related to the two attacks.

Among the most damning was a Top Secret internal study by the NSA, authored by Robert J. Hanyok, titled *"Skunks, Bogies, Silent Hounds, and the Flying Fish: The Gulf of Tonkin Mystery, 2-4 August 1964."* It had been previously published in the classified *Cryptological Quarterly* in early 2001, but later declassified in 2005. The study concluded that, although there had been an attack on August 2nd, the attack on the Maddox and Turner Joy on the 4th did not happen, despite claims to the contrary.

Hanyok found that the North Vietnamese communication intercepts that would have refuted the narrative of a second attack were kept out of the reports the NSA sent to the Pentagon and White House, and that the messages that were forwarded contained "severe analytic errors, unexplained translation changes, and the conjunction of two messages into one translation." Other important intercepts, known to exist, mysteriously disappeared.

He also concluded that the radio traffic of August 4th, which had initially been thought to be about an immediate second attack, was really about retrieving the three torpedo boats damaged two days earlier, and their continued monitoring of the two US destroyers.

Hanyok's final assessment was that President Johnson used the faulty signals intelligence to support retaliatory air strikes, and to pressure Congress for a resolution that would give him freedom to act military in Vietnam.

The sole purpose of the NSA has always been to gather and interpret signals intelligence. Although in his report Hanyok didn't specifically accuse the NSA of a coverup, its tampering with the August 4th intercepts is proof that Johnson used the agency to craft his deception.

The actions of the Maddox and Turner Joy were meant to provoke a military response, which it did on August 2nd. When the two destroyers started firing at phantom attack boats two days later, Johnson called it a "second attack" that (together with the first) warranted military action in retaliation. His eagerness to escalate tensions between the US and North Viet Nam led to a terrible war, and America's first military defeat with over 58,000 servicemen dead.

10. **The Mona Lisa (c.1505):** The painting of a Renaissance lady by Leonardo De Vinci that has sparked the curiosity of millions for centuries. Who was this mysterious woman with the beguiling smile? The master kept records of all the models who posed for him, but there's no mention of anyone who posed for this particular painting. Many names have been suggested, but it wasn't until 1988 that the puzzle was finally solved beyond doubt.

It was long been known that as a security precaution De Vinci wrote his notes in a script that only he could decipher. He used it only for something that he wanted no one else to read, while the public writings he authored were written normally. Later, when his notes were held in front of a mirror, it was discovered that De Vinci had written them in reverse. He evidently had the unique ability to see things in a mirror-image of their actual appearance.

In 1988, computers were used to finally solve the Mona Lisa mystery. Dr. Lillian Schwartz of Bell Laboratories scanned a self-portrait of De Vinci. After it was manipulated digitally, reversing the image and reducing it to the size of the Mona Lisa, she superimposed it over the painting. The facial characteristics of each were shown to be an exact match.



The Mona Lisa

The Mona Lisa was De Vinci's favorite painting. He carried it with him wherever he traveled. In fact, some thought that the artist must have had a secret love affair with his model. Now we know that De Vinci WAS the Mona Lisa, a deception that lasted for over 500 years!

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