



# Hoaxes and Scams: A Compendium of Deceptions, Ruses and Swindles

*By Carl Sifakis*



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Brimming with astonishing, little-known, and elaborate practical jokes and money-making schemes, Hoaxes and Scams is the last word on notorious put-ons throughout history. In a handy A-to-Z format, it documents such deceptions as John Quincy Adams's nude press conference, Clifford Irving's "autobiography" of Howard Hughes, Hitler's diaries, and hundreds more.



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## **Hoaxes and Scams: A Compendium of Deceptions, Ruses and Swindles By Carl Sifakis Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #2804964 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Facts on File
- Published on: 1994-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 11.25" h x 8.75" w x 1.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 308 pages



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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

YA-An encyclopedia of the planned and unplanned fraudulent claims that have been accepted throughout history. Presenting famous, infamous, innocent, and little-known incidents, as well as false quotations, Sifakis provides information that is difficult to locate elsewhere. Concise, well-written entries give the history of the deceptions, why the public was vulnerable to them, and their effects. Cartoons, diagrams, and black-and-white photographs add interest. It is disappointing that the author didn't cite all of his sources-readers have to take it on trust that they are not victims of yet another hoax-but a bibliography is included. People and subjects are indexed. This volume will appeal to teens intrigued by crime and deception.

Claudia Moore, W.T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA

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From [Booklist](#)

Sifakis is responsible for numerous books on crime, eccentrics, assassinations, and gambling. Calling this volume "an alphabetical grab bag," he concentrates on hoaxes and scams. There is some overlap with his other works. At least 55 of the more than 700 entries in *Hoaxes* appeared in his *Encyclopedia of American Crime* (Facts On File, 1981).

In this latest work, the reader will find entries on medical quackery, art forgeries, and such famous fakes as Big Foot, Piltdown Man, and the Tasaday Tribe. Entries on con men have descriptions of how they scam their "mooches" or "marks." Everyday swindles, such as 50 automobile ploys by repair shops and service stations and such computer viruses as Michelangelo, are found next to Gulf War scams and real estate swindles. Sifakis has excluded subjects that might prove controversial. There is no mention of UFOs or such religious figures as the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

Entries are arranged alphabetically in natural phrases such as *Kangaroo Monster Who Terrorized Tennessee*. Occasionally there are *see* references from natural-language subject entries to perpetrators, for instance, "Ancient Coin Forgery--see Becker, Carl Wilhelm." There are two indexes, one for personalities and one for subjects, but most people will use this book for browsing. A selected bibliography contains only those works that contain stories the author claims to have verified independently. Black-and-white illustrations add interest.

Nonreference works in this vein are M. Allen Henderson's *Rip-Offs, Cons, and Swindles* (Paladin, 1986), which draws from news accounts of contemporary scams, and Jay Robert Nash's *Hustlers and Con Men* (Evans, 1976). This type of work is full of good-natured flimflam and avuncular advice on how to avoid scams. *Hoaxes and Scams* will provide many hours of entertainment in public libraries.

### Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carol Castaneda:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important for all of us. The book Hoaxes and Scams: A Compendium of Deceptions, Ruses and Swindles has been making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can

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#### **Robert Jackson:**

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