

CRAIG DAVID IS A CLONE!



JK ROWLING ISN'T REAL!



DEMI LOVATO HAS A TWIN!



# Why do we believe **CELEBRITY** CONSPIRACY THEORIES?

KATY PERRY IS JON BENET RAMSEY!



BEYONCE HAD A FAKE BUMP!



From pretend babies to faking their own deaths – the wilder the story, the more we want it to be true

**H**ave you heard the one about Craig David being a clone? At the end of last year, the singer was forced to answer a bizarre rumour that the *real* Craig David had died after his second album, and he was a stunt double. And that's not the only mad conspiracy theory doing the rounds. There's the one about Beyoncé locking Sia in a basement. And the one about Louis Tomlinson's baby being fake (oh, and Beyoncé had a pretend pregnancy while we're at it).

Singer Katy Perry is tragic child star Jon Benet Ramsey, and Michael Jackson is still alive (and probably living somewhere with Tupac and Elvis Presley). The internet seems to be awash with articles that have headlines like, "Were Sandy and Danny from *Grease* really DEAD THE WHOLE TIME?" and "This new theory about *Toy Story* will BLOW YOUR MIND." But where the hell do these things come from, why do we share them – and why, after enough late-night clicking, do we start to believe them?



We had a few ideas, but we thought it was better to ask an expert. Enter Karen Douglas, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Kent, who told us that it all comes down to our obsession with celebrities being superhuman.

"These sorts of stories put forward unusual and thought-provoking explanations for major events that typically have much more mundane ones," she explains. "For example, Princess Diana's death being just a terrible accident doesn't seem like an adequate explanation for such a significant occurrence."

Basically, then, the God-like status we give celebs makes us think nothing 'normal' could happen to them. Like, for instance, dying, having a baby, or writing an amazing book that everyone loves – did you know people think JK Rowling isn't a real person and *Harry Potter* was written by a team?

## MAD WORLD

But could the reverse also be true – that a lot of stuff that goes on with celebrities is so incredible that, say, a theory about OJ Simpson being Khloé Kardashian's real dad doesn't seem *that* mad. Think about it: there were rumours for months about Khloé's stepdad Bruce Jenner transitioning, and then the world was introduced to Caitlyn. Why, then, would other seemingly outlandish whispers necessarily be fake? It's little wonder, for example, that there are gazillions of rumours about the sexuality of various celebrities when it's been revealed that Hollywood stars of the '50s and '60s – and even boy band members of the '90s and noughties – were actively encouraged to stay in the closet.

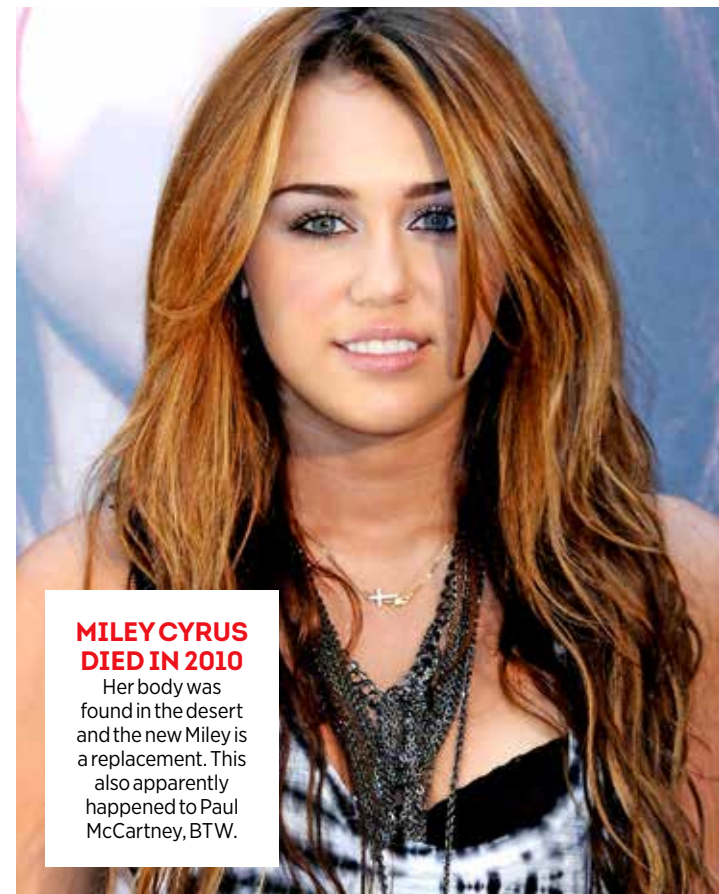
"One of the reasons these theories are popular is because



Diana: it was an accident, people

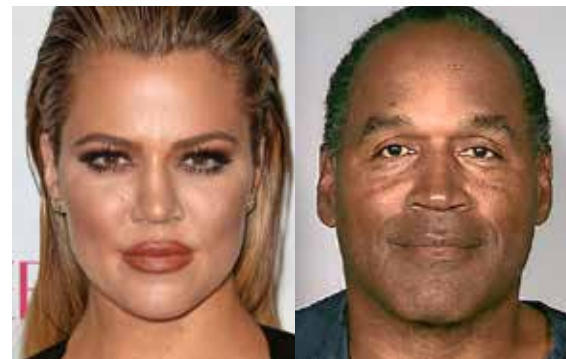
# WANT MORE?

SEEING AS YOU LOVE THEM SO MUCH, HERE ARE MORE OUTLANDISH THEORIES...



## MILEY CYRUS DIED IN 2010

Her body was found in the desert and the new Miley is a replacement. This also apparently happened to Paul McCartney, BTW.



## KHLOE'S DAD IS NOT HER DAD

As we learned for *American Crime Story*, Robert Kardashian was OJ Simpson's defence lawyer. But what you might not know is a whole lot of people think mum Kris and OJ got it on and produced Khloé.



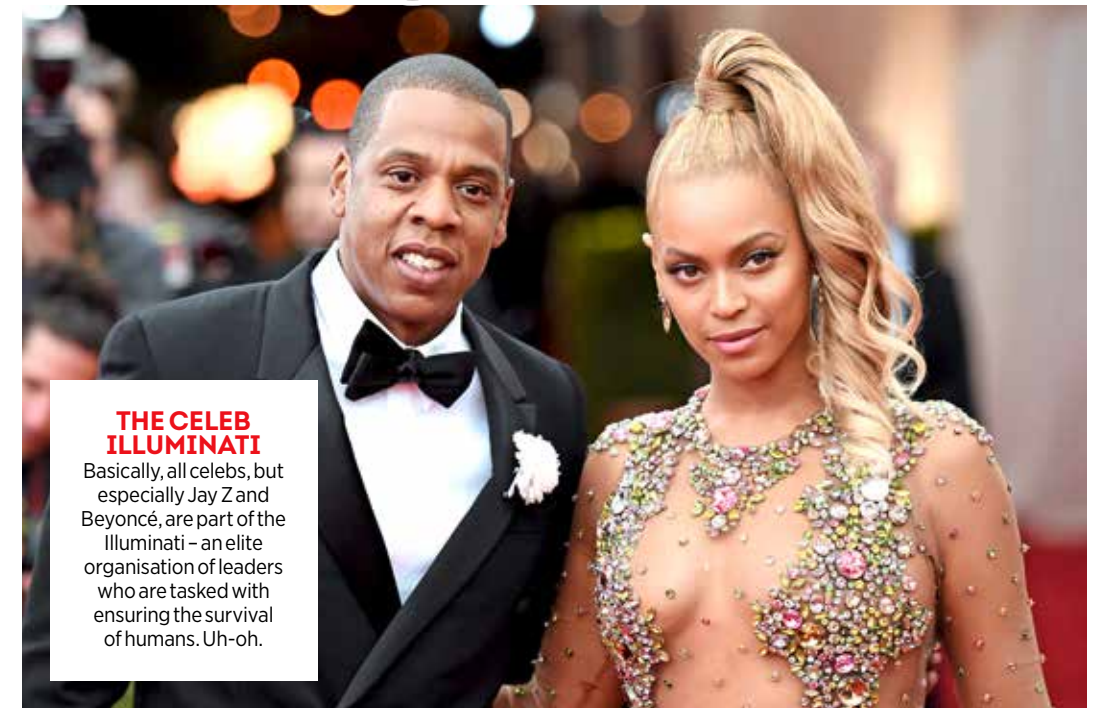
## PIPPA MIDDLETON WORE A FAKE BUM ON WILLS AND KATE'S WEDDING DAY

This one's pretty self-explanatory, and we can only assume it's based on the idea that no one who is related to the royals could be that hot.



## NICOLAS CAGE AND KEANU REEVES ARE IMMORTAL VAMPIRES

There are so many pictures dedicated to this, that we're full-on converts. Look, don't these old-timey photos look just like them? And no way are they doctored...



## THE CELEB ILLUMINATI

Basically, all celebs, but especially Jay Z and Beyoncé, are part of the Illuminati – an elite organisation of leaders who are tasked with ensuring the survival of humans. Uh-oh.

conspiracies *do* happen," says Karen. "Knowing this can influence our belief in other theories – if that one was possible, then these others are, too. The celebrity world is interesting and weird things often happen, which may fuel our belief that conspiracies are occurring, even when they're not."

Celebs themselves could unwittingly be adding fuel to the fire. These days, autobiographies and social media allow stars to set the record straight or give us the

real truth, meaning more and more celebs are lifting the curtain separating them from us and revealing snippets of what's behind. "Knowing some salacious details – but not having the whole picture – makes the celeb world ripe for conspiracies," says Karen. "When we have only a little bit of an idea about what's going on, it feels uncomfortable. People want answers when issues are important to them, and conspiracy theories can provide them."

## GOING VIRAL

And what is the point of being a conspiracy theory if no one is going to share you? While we've always had isolated people

who believe in Area 51, aliens and big, bad governments, the rise of social media means it's easier than ever to make a wild story spread.

For months, darker corners of the One Direction fan base were posting online about Louis Tomlinson's baby being a surrogate (or just a total fake) because no one could know the real truth: that he was in a relationship with bandmate Harry Styles. How did *that* snowball out to the rest of us so quickly? Well, the next stage of that particular story is that it was noticed by sensation specialists BuzzFeed. They compiled it into an article, which quickly gathered almost 2 million views. This brought



Louis borrowed a baby for this snap

ALPHAPRESS.COM; GETTY IMAGES.COM; REX FEATURES; SPLASHNEWS.COM; WIREIMAGE.COM

the belief to a wider audience of people, who shared it with their friends and the cycle continued.

A study released in January last year explored the behaviour of Facebook users from 2010 to 2014, and looked at how they

when it backs up our own beliefs. The same study found that efforts on Facebook to debunk a theory are typically ignored, meaning logic has long gone out the window.

Of course, there could be another reason we share

## 'Everyone wants to be the first with the gossip'

spread this kind of material. One of the things they found is that we're more likely to group with like-minded people online, and that when we're among these like-minded friends, even baseless conspiracies spread more rapidly. In short, we believe what our mates say, especially

conspiracies, no matter how mad they might be, and it's simply that we all want to be the first with the gossip. Everyone loves to say, "Have you heard about..." and be met with an excitable, "Nooooooo", right? And when it comes to conspiracy theories, it's exactly the same.

"Some researchers have suggested that part of the appeal is that they allow people to feel that they are in possession of information that other people don't have, which creates a feeling of power and control," says Karen.

So, most of us might not really believe that Demi Lovato has a secret twin, that Justin Bieber is a reptile, or that Keanu Reeves and Nicolas Cage are actually vampires who have been alive for hundreds of years without ageing (although that one could be true...), but it's fun to tell everyone, especially if they're hearing it for the first time. And, wow, was it fun when we told a whole pub Megan Fox has been replaced by a robot...

■ RHIANNON EVANS