

TITANIC – THE SHIP THAT NEVER SANK

One of the biggest insurance shams in history!

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Abstract: *The Story of RMS Titanic is known to everyone, how the largest moving object ever fashioned by the hands of men struck an ice berg in its maiden voyage and plummeted into the middle of the North Atlantic taking the lives of 1500 people with it. This Tragedy is well documented throughout the years in books, and in films, but no matter how many times this story is told, it never fails to capture our imagination.*

The RMS Titanic is an Olympic-class British passenger liner that started its maiden voyage on 10th April 1912 from Southampton to New York City. It struck an ice berg in the early hours of 15th April 1912 and sank into the ocean after an agonizing period of 2 hours and 40 minutes.

But what if Titanic never sank? What if the ship that sank was Titanic's sister ship RMS Olympic? And What if it was deliberately sunk?

Index Terms: Ship, Titanic, Conspiracy, Insurance.

A Twin Ship

Both Titanic and Olympic were built for the White Star Line Company by Harland and Wolff Shipyard in Belfast, Ireland. The chairman of the shipyard was William Pirrie. The shipyard built ships exclusively for White Star Line which was acquired by an American Financier J.P.Morgan's International Mercantile Marine Groups.

In the 20th century, most liners were immigrant ships with poor conditions and were often called coffin ships crammed with people. In 1907, during dinner at Pirrie's London home, the owner of White Star Line, J.BruceIsma and Pirrie came up with an idea to build 3 luxury star liners- RMS Olympic, RMS Titanic and RMS Britannic. They decided that Olympic and Titanic would look virtually identical.

On 14th June 1911, RMS Olympic made its maiden voyage under the command of Edward J Smith from the White Star Line. A week later still under the command of Smith, the ship suffered a stern collision in New York which almost cost the ship to sink. Barely after 3 months, on 20th September 1911, the ship collided with a Royal Navy Warship HMS Hawke. The ships were close enough for the powerful propellers of the Olympic drew in the Hawke which rammed into the starboard (right) side of the ship causing extensive damage to the Liner both above and below the waterline. Any accidents involving a Naval ship was investigated by an Admiral team who found fault with the Olympic while eye witnesses suggested otherwise. As a consequence of this ruling the insurers of the White Star Line declined to pay out on the claim.

The damage to the liner was very extensive, there was a triangular hole on the starboard side and a bigger hole below the waterline, there was distortion to the starboard propeller and moreover the keel (a steel structure along the base of the ship supporting the frame of the ship) was bent giving the ship a pronounced slant to the port (left) side. Coincidentally, some of the passengers of the Titanic claimed that they noted the ship had a permanent tilt to port side during the voyage.

The damage caused to the Olympic by the HMS Hawke was patched up in Southampton for a period of 2 weeks due to the serious damage. In October 1911, Olympic with temporary repairs limped back to Belfast for more permanent repair. Although, on the way to Belfast, some of the temporary repair works gave out.

In October 1911, Pirrie and J P Morgan were discussing the damage inflicted on the Olympic and Pirrie stated that the Olympic would not pass another Board Of Trade inspection again.

In Belfast, Titanic was near completion, but all works on the Titanic were ceased so that they would work on repairing the Olympic. It took seven weeks instead of the two weeks originally planned. The work included replacing one-third of the ship's starboard side with steel sheets. In order to make the Olympic sea-worthy again, a starboard propeller stamped with Titanic's number 401 was fitted to Olympic. And that was just the beginning of the problems for the Olympic.

In 24th February 1912, Olympic ran over a sunken wreck and threw her propeller blades once again on the starboard side placing an enormous stress on the already weakened liner. She once again limped back to Southampton on one engine arriving on 28th February. On 2th March 1912, she was back at Belfast having her propeller blades replaced, which should have taken only a few hours but the liner was there till 7th March 1912.

Titanic? Or its twin ship?

On close examination of the archive photographs, it is possible to see the minor differences that distinguishes both the ships-

- On the forward part of the sea deck, the Olympic had 16 portholes while the Titanic only had 14. Between the time of launch and her maiden voyage, Titanic had two more port holes.
- At the time of Titanic's launch, the windows in B deck were noted to be evenly spaced yet at the time of her maiden voyage the windows have taken an uneven appearance.

This gives the possibility that the two ships have been switched.

While the Olympic was open to inspection in Belfast and Liverpool, Titanic was not. Both the ships were taken in and out of the shipyard in Belfast during the patch up of Olympic. March 1912 was the last time Olympic and Titanic stood next to each other. And that was

when the decision to switch the ships could have been taken. The decision to switch the ships was taken between Morgan and Ismay in Pirrie's Belfast home.

Switching the ships would be an easy task considering there were no press poking around, photography was minimal and people believed everything they were told. The crockery, the linens and the menus were White Star Line standard issue which were interchangeable from ship to ship. Only the names on the bows and sterns of the ship, the names on the lifeboats and the 48 lifeboats had to be swapped. This task could be easily achieved using a very small crew, literally over a weekend. It was highly unlikely anyone would notice the difference.

White Star Line often used photographs of Olympic as the Titanic for advertisement and for press releases. Both the ships were floored with different linoleum tiles. Just the day before its maiden voyage, Ismay the owner of White Star Line ordered the floors to be carpeted in the Titanic.

Was this to cover up the worn out linoleum tiles of the Olympic?

Harland and Wolff shipyard was a vast workshop for many ships both completed and under process. Any unusual activity would rarely be noticed. Majority of the working class people could not question their employers. People were either bribed or bullied to doing what a company wanted. There was no social security for working class at that period. Hence it was advantageous for a company to dismiss families of workers or threaten to kill them if tried to spill a secret.

The Board Of Trade usually conducted inspections on the Olympic for many hours, sometimes even for two days checking piece by piece, interestingly the inspection for Titanic was completed on the first day just before lunch. By now the switch had taken place.

Edward J Smith the commanding officer in the Olympic had a bad work report. He sailed the liners as if they were large speedboats, trying to show-off, he had also caused severe loss to the White Star Line company when he wrecked few of the ships and also damaged the Olympic. It is believed that in April 1912 Ismay had invited EJ Smith back to sail when they decided to write off the Olympic. Ismay promised Smith that a ship under command of Stanley Lorde would wait for them. Though Smith tried to refuse, Ismay made him accept by telling that he owed the company for the loss he had incurred eventually Smith agreed on the term that he would get to decide his crew officers.

Role of the Coal Strike and Plan B

The year 1912 was a bad year for the shipping industries as Britain was in the middle of a coal strike. White Star Line struggled to find firemen and greasers to work below deck. Just two days before Titanic made its maiden voyage, two of the firemen refused to sign in and get on board of the ship which was to set sail across the Atlantic. They said they would wait to find work in another ship.

The question is, Where would they find a ship to work in, when thousands were laid off due to the coal strike? Did they know something?

Just a day or two before Titanic left the port of Southampton most of the first class passengers, mostly business associates of JP Morgan cancelled their tickets. Morgan himself had cancelled his ticket on the 11th hour even though he had the best suite on the ship. Thus on 10th April 1912, Olympic made its second maiden voyage while the Titanic under the name of Olympic started its working life with no fanfare. Olympics' first maiden voyage was fully subscribed, while it was only half full on its second maiden voyage, considering the fact that it was during the middle of the coal strike and people for queuing up to sail to America. It was as if the company did not want many people aboard the Olympic, now renamed Titanic. (From this point, the ship which is referred to as Titanic is actually its sister ship the Olympic)

The coal strike was an important part for another reason. Most ships were desperate for coal, many of the cargos and people were retained in Europe. But on 5th April 1912, just 5 days before Titanic, a ship known as the Californian left the port of London under the command of Stanley Lorde, mysteriously apart from the crew members; the ship was completely empty of passengers but was filled with coal. The Californian left for Boston in a hurry, but on the eve of 14th April 1912 it came to a dead stop in the middle of an ice field and ordered the ship to be on standby.

One of the worst scenarios that a sailor fears is fire at sea. Yet when the Titanic left the port, there was fire smoldering at the level 10 coal bunker. Instead of putting out the fire, the bunker was filled with 400 tons of coal. Captain Smith knew of it. The crew officers knew of it. Even the workers, who signed in half-heartedly, knew of it. The coal was burning for week before the Titanic left port. The inspector of Board Of Trade who inspected the Titanic denied all knowledge of it. Was the fire in the coal bunker, PLAN B? If everything else failed, they could tell the passengers that there was a fire in one of the bunkers, fill the ship with smoke and get the passengers off that way.

Disaster Strikes! Or was it done purposefully...

On the evening of the disaster the Titanic received six messages - three from other ships giving warnings and locations of icebergs, and the other three were from Californian which was concerned about giving off its location. The messages from the Californian were personally addressed to captain Smith as if telling the Captain that the ship was ready and waiting.

It was standard for captains of that period to run their ships at full speed through the ice field. Many ships had cruised on the ice field that evening, hence Titanic was not unique. Yet why had the Californian stopped right at the ice field? Had she reached her destination? Was she waiting to be called?

Any object large enough to damage a steel ship would be seen in plenty of time to avoid it. That evening one of the crew members climbed up the crow's nest while Smith retired to bed fully clothed as if knowing he could be called back. Officer Murdock was on the starboard side of the ship when saw the ice berg 800 yards away and ordered the ship to turn to port side when reversing the engines thus increasing the risk of collision which surely he would have known. Maybe Murdock, hand-chosen by Smith, wanted to give the ice berg a nudge. The Titanic was far enough from the ice berg that it could easily turn away at 400 yards and avoid the collision even if there was a delay in receiving the orders. But why didn't it turn away? Even if Titanic ran straight through the ice berg it would have stayed afloat, but would have killed a total of 280 passengers. In an emergency situation such as this, it was a bad idea to turn to port side and see the prone side. Apart from the people on the decks and those working in the bunkers, the impact made by the ice berg would have gone unnoticed by the other passengers. The vibration felt by the others was due to reversing engines.

The Captain and the officers were in the bridge in minutes, yet appeared calm as if they were in no danger. Some of the passengers came out of their cabins wanting to know why the engines had stopped. For the first 40 minutes after the collision there was no danger. The passenger and even some of the workers thought they were in an unsinkable ship.

- It was after 35 minutes, the first distress signal was fired into the sky.
- It was after 35 minutes, the CQD signal was sent out to the nearing ships mainly to the Californian.
- It was after 45 minutes, the pumps were started.
- It was after 45 minutes, the lifeboats were opened.
- It took an entire hour and 25 minutes for the first life boat to get into the water.

Smith's officers worked out the position of the ship and sent it to the Californian.

From the records it is clear that Titanic's navigator worked out a position that was 12 miles away from where they actually were, which turned out to be a fatal mistake. The position that was sent out would have put the Titanic in Californian's sight.

For 5 minutes Smith ordered the ship to move, for the last time, at half speed towards a ship whose lights were visible on the horizon expecting it to be the Californian, before the engine stopped completely. Some of the survivors claimed to see a ship 5 to 6 miles away from the Titanic. Smith assuming that the ship was Californian thought that the ship would sail to him.

Failed Rescue Mission

After Midnight, Titanic sent flares into the sky in colors red, white and blue, waiting for any ship to come to their rescue. Back in the Californian, Captain Lorde asked his officers if there are any flares in the sky to which they affirm that there is. When Lorde asks the color of the flares, the officers reported to him that the flares are white, thus Lorde assumes that the ship is not Titanic.

Lorde once again asked the crew how many flares were sent into the sky, to which he was reported there were only 8 all in white, while in fact, the Titanic had sent 18 flares probably upto 22 rockets including the colors red and blue, into the sky.

The ship which was seen by both the Titanic and the Californian was a small wooden ship named Samson. It fired the white flares to send a signal to the small fishing boats to come back. On questioning the Samson as to why it did not go to Titanic's rescue, it was revealed that Samson was conducting illegal seal fishing hence it did not go to investigate the wreck, and bring about trouble for themselves. One of the survivors stated that some of the officers said that the Californian would come to their rescue.

It was foolish in this situation to send the lifeboats half full when the officers knew that the ship was sinking, assuming that the ship they saw on the horizon would come speeding over. Meanwhile, Lorde was waiting in the Californian for colored rockets.

- It was nearly 1 AM, when Smith realized that the rescue that they were expecting would not materialize.
- By now the officers made sure that the lifeboats were sent full into the sea. And panic was starting to set in among the other remaining passengers.
- One of the passengers was Ismay who got into a lifeboat at the last minute.
- It was at 5.30AM when Lorde got the information that the Titanic had sunk into the Atlantic. By the time Californian had arrived at the wreck sight, another ship called Carpathia had already picked up the survivors and was on the way to New York.
- Out of 2224 members of the ship, only 710 were rescued.
- While the lives of 1514 people were lost at sea.
- Titanic was the first ship in living memory to sink as a result of collision with an ice berg.
- During court trails, Captain Lorde was made to look guilty for not assisting the Titanic, while Smith and the other officers who knew of the conspiracy couldn't be blamed as they were no longer alive. Even the owners of the ship couldn't be blamed.
- Although Lorde tried to open up many trails to clear his name. He was unsuccessful.

Reason for the swap

- The cost it took to build the original Titanic was \$10 million. For a brand new ship, it would be insurable for the same amount and even more.
- As for the Olympic it was beyond economic repair and it would be insurable for only a smaller amount. Thus the motive for switching the ships is clear.

Normally when the White Star Line insured their ships they took part of the risk on themselves. They believed that Lloyds of London would only be liable for \$7 and half million. But it was not so.

- Just one week before the Olympic, which we now know as the Titanic, left the port of Southampton, White Star Line upped the insurance on the vessel.
- And after exactly 5 days after the Titanic had sunken into the Atlantic, the Lloyds had paid off \$12 and half million as the ship's insurance.

The Titanic which sunk to a depth of 12,500 feet taking with it 1500 lives was a mere vessel for one of the biggest insurance scam in modern history.

Endgame

Being in the saline water for a century did not preserve the ship in museum condition. Corrosion has done its relentless work. It was noted by wreck discoverers that where the original black paint of the hull had flaked away, spots of grey could be seen. Grey paint was used only on the Olympic and not on the Titanic.

The explorers also found the number 401 engraved on the starboard propeller, the propeller replaced on the Olympic after a collision which threw away her previous propeller.

It was also discovered that a bulkhead was attached to the ship in a position that suggested a temporary repair had been made to strengthen the keel, maybe it was the keel damaged by colliding with the Hawke.

Another stunning evidence was made in 1986 by French Oceanographic Institution. They checked the name of the ship on the Bow of the ship. It was White Star Line tradition to engrave the name of the ships on the upper bow plates of the ship. However for the Titanic there

were iron letters riveted to the bow plates. During the passage of time, 2 of the iron letters had fallen off onto the seabed, revealing the engraved letter M and P.

The ship originally known as the Titanic continued successfully as the Olympic for another twenty five years before retiring in 1935. In World War I, the Olympic was requisitioned as a troop transport by a grateful British Government.

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