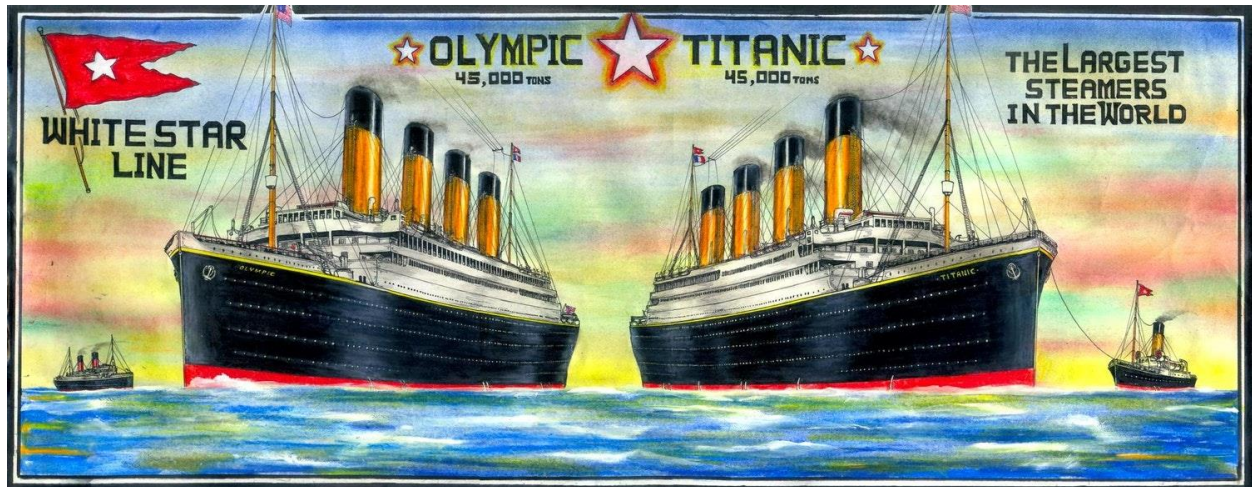


Conspiracy – The Titanic Never Sank

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It is easy to go about our everyday lives in an unquestioning sort of way, accepting what we are told. However, think about this statistically: what are the odds that all the stories we believe are completely true? Quite low, in my estimation. It is therefore not unreasonable to consider – on occasion – alternative narratives to these commonly held beliefs.

The historical event I want to call into question here is the sinking of the RMS Titanic. The popular version of this story goes as follows: on April 10th, 1912, the Titanic set sail on her maiden voyage. At 11:40PM, five days later, the ship hit an iceberg which tore a hole through both the outer and inner hull, causing the Titanic to sink in under three hours. Without going into more detail, this story seems pretty airtight. It could be true. Or maybe not.

As it turns out, the RMS Titanic was the third member of a fleet of large British passenger liners manufactured by the White Star Line company (WSL). The WSL was owned by a group called the International Mercantile Marine Company (IMMC), which was headed by J. P. Morgan, famous American Wall Street millionaire. One of the other WSL ships, the RMS Olympic, was built to nearly identical structural specifications as the Titanic, making them – at least superficially – identical. Several years earlier, in 1911, the Olympic was involved in a minor accident – she struck the Royal Navy ship HMS Hawke, causing damage to the hull. At this point, the construction of the Titanic wasn't yet complete, so the IMMC had no ships in the water and were losing money. Because the court found the Olympic guilty of the collision, the insurers (Lloyds of London) refused to pay for the repairs. Although the collision was minor, the costs of properly repairing the ship outweighed the benefits.

This is where the story becomes conspiratorial. In a desperate attempt to recoup costs of construction of the Olympic from the insurance company, Morgan ordered that surface level repairs were done on the ship, just enough for it to sail. Then, the names of the Olympic and the nearly finished Titanic were switched. Finally, the "Titanic" (which was actually the Olympic) was deliberately sunk. This

way, the damaged (and now sunk) Olympic could collect the full insurance amount, and the fully operational Titanic could continue to sail without repair charges.

There is some evidence for this “switch theory.” Several crew members and passengers reported that the ship “listed to port” in the water, which means “leaned to the left.” This matches with how the Olympic would have had to tilt to avoid taking on water after her collision with the Hawke. Also, all other White Star Line ships had their names engraved on the hull, while only the Titanic had its name riveted on top of the hull. What about Morgan, the owner of the IMMC and of the ship itself? While having previously purchased a ticket, Morgan cancelled his admission shortly before the day of departure.

There also exists evidence against the switch theory. However, its merit does not come from being irrefutable, but rather for providing an alternative account to a familiar story. It is important that we allow such accounts to have themselves heard, or else we risk our platforms devolving into echo chambers. Don’t be afraid to question.