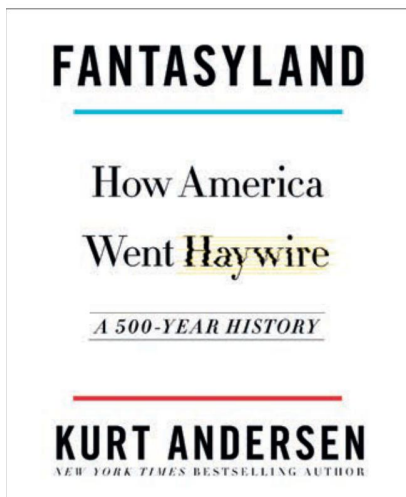


### 3 Fantasyland

Read the back cover of *Fantasyland*: explain in your own words what the book is about and what you have understood.



In this sweeping<sup>1</sup>, eloquent history of America, Kurt Andersen shows that what's happening in our country today – this post-factual, “fake news” moment we're all living through – is not something new, but rather the ultimate expression of our national character. America was founded by wishful dreamers, magical

5 thinkers, and true believers, by hucksters<sup>2</sup> and their suckers<sup>3</sup>. Fantasy<sup>4</sup> is deeply embedded<sup>5</sup> in our DNA.

Over the course of five centuries – from the Salem witch trials to Scientology to the Satanic Panic of the 1980s, from P. T. Barnum to Hollywood and the anything-goes, wild-and-crazy sixties, from conspiracy theories to our fetish for guns and

10 obsession with extraterrestrials – our love of the fantastic has made America exceptional in a way that we've never fully acknowledged<sup>6</sup>. From the start, our ultra-individualism was attached to epic dreams and epic fantasies – every citizen was free to believe absolutely anything, or to pretend to be absolutely anybody.

1 de grande envergure • 2 colporteur • 3 gullible, naive person •  
4 myth, folklore, imaginative desire • 5 ancré • 6 admitted



### 4 We, the paranoid

Watch the video and find information about:

- The origins of conspiracy theories and their role in politics.
- Jesse Walker's interest in conspiracy theories.
- Categories of conspiracy theories.
- Conspiracies and art (literature and movies).

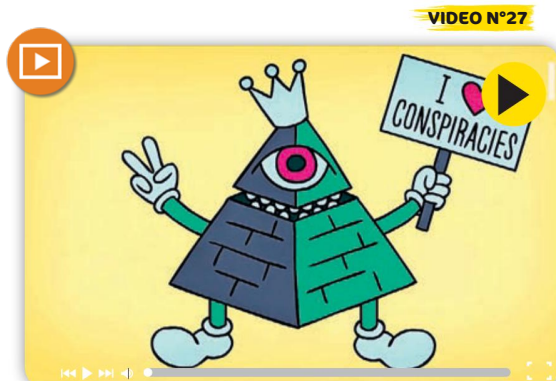
#### HELP!

##### Words

- debunk: *discréditer* (une théorie)
- entrenched: *ancré(e)*
- dramatically = a lot

- hoax /həʊks/ = joke
- grifter = swindler: escroc
- strand = element

### 5 Why do people believe in conspiracy theories?



A. Watch the first part of the video. Find information about:

- The statistics and results from the university poll;
- The 3 psychological factors described.

B. Watch the second part. Find information about:

- The 3 psychological factors described;
- The advice given.

C. Sum up the video in your own words. Explain why it is important to learn how to check information before spreading the word.