

Conspiracy theories surrounding the apollo 11 landing



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- Phillip Scott

Apollo 11 Landing: Fact or Fiction?

Did the United States successfully land on the moon on July 20, 1969? Were astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin the first humans to walk on the surface of the moon? There are groups of people who would have us believe NASA faked the Apollo 11 landing and its accompanying moonwalk. They claim NASA staged and recorded this event in a studio or desert location and much of their proof of this is in the photographs and videos NASA provided to the public. There are many reasons why they believe it was a hoax. Some believe it was technically impossible to land on the moon in 1969, so the United States staged the landing to win the race to the moon against the Soviet Union (Braeunig). Others believe it was a hoax designed just to irritate the Soviet Union (Runde). They derive most of their claims from the photographs that NASA made available to the public. These conspiracy claims are simply untrue and have been easily refuted and explained by those familiar with NASA's space programs and the science of space.

The late Bill Kaysing, a former document cataloger at Rocketdyne, is the person many would consider the father of the moon landing hoax (Braeunig). He and other advocates of this conspiracy theory based their claims on many things, but they primarily point at perceived anomalies in the Apollo 11 photographs (Braeunig) and the inability to view the landing site on the moon's surface using telescopes (Than). Their claims are erroneous, misguided and foolish. There are many experts from NASA and the private sector who have proven beyond a doubt that their claims are false.

For example, Mr. Kaysing claimed the shadows in the photographs are not parallel to each other, indicating multiple light sources must have been present when they took the photographs (Plait, Fox Television and the Apollo Moon Hoax). The response to this claim is simple. While the sun is the only natural light source on the moon, its light reflects off the moon's surface, the lunar module, and even the astronaut's white space suits, so it appears as multiple light sources were present. However, as Dr. Phil Plait explains "Each object casts one shadow, so there can only be one light source" (Plait, Fox Television and the Apollo Moon Hoax). This, as well as elevation differences on the moon's surface, is why the shadows do not always appear parallel to each other (Braeunig).

Mr. Kaysing also claimed the American flag looked as if it was flapping or waving in the wind and that would not be possible on the moon. On the Fox television show *Conspiracy Theory: Did We Land on the Moon?*, Kaysing stated "This must have been from an errant breeze on the set. A flag wouldn't wave in a vacuum" (qtd. in Plait, Fox Television and the Apollo Moon Hoax). According to Dr. Plait, "In a vacuum or not, when you whip around the vertical pole, the flag will 'wave', since it is attached at the top. The top will move first, then the cloth will follow along in a wave that moves down. This isn't air that is moving the flag, it's the cloth itself" (Plait, Fox Television and the Apollo Moon Hoax).

Another of the conspiracy claims is that stars should be visible in the dark sky of the images. However, the bright conditions on the moon's surface and the subjects that the astronauts photographed required them to use fast exposure settings on their cameras (Than). This limited incoming light and <https://assignbuster.com/conspiracy-theories-surrounding-the-apollo-11-landing/>

prevented the recording of the stars on film. These hoax theorist should remember that the astronauts were photographing their activities on the surface of the moon, not trying to capture pictures of the stars from the surface of the moon (Braeunig).

As for the claim that the landing site and the hardware purportedly left at the site should be visible using Earth-based telescopes, it is simply not possible. “ No telescope on Earth or in space has that kind of resolving power” (Than). As Dr. Plait further explains, “ Even with the biggest telescope on Earth, the smallest thing you can see on the surface of moon is something bigger than a house” (qtd. in Than). There are many technical reasons why this is so, but as Dr. Plait explains, “ the ability for a telescope to resolve an object is, as you’d expect, directly related to the size of the mirror or lens” (Plait, Moon Hoax: Why Not Use Telescopes to Look at the Landers? Bad Astronomy). This makes it impossible to resolve something as small as the landing site or the equipment left there using Earth-based telescopes. Even with the Hubble Space Telescope, with its 94 inch aperture, “ the smallest object that can be resolved by HST is about 300 feet” (Braeunig). However, in 2009, NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, orbiting at an altitude of 15 miles above the moon’s surface, captured some outstanding images of all the Apollo landing sites. The images of the Apollo 11 landing site show the equipment they left there and even the tracks the astronauts left as they walked from the lunar module to the location of the various equipment items and even to a nearby crater (SPACE. com Staff). Still, the conspiracy theorist refute all the proof offered and continue to believe this was all a hoax. These conspiracy theorist have many other claims that the Apollo 11 landing was a conspiracy and

various experts have refuted and explained every one of them. However, these conspiracy theorist continue to believe the United States created this hoax to fool the world. The only proof that might change their beliefs would be for one of their “ trusted agents” to travel to the moon to witness the site where Apollo 11 landed.

There are many reasons for their conspiracy beliefs, but the questions they should ask themselves is: Why would the United States spend billions of dollars on a hoax then leave such sloppy evidence in the very images they provided to the public as proof it happened? If this were a hoax, how could so many people involved in such a conspiracy remain silent for so many years (Cain)? The facts are not debatable. There is no reason to doubt that on July 20 1969, the United States successfully landed Apollo 11 on the moon and that Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin exited their lunar module and walked on the surface of the moon.

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