



# A History of Ambition in 50 Hoaxes (History in 50)

*Gale Eaton*

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**Short:**

What do the Trojan Horse, Piltdown Man, Keely Motor Company, and Ponzi Scheme have in common? They were all famous hoaxes, carefully designed and bolstered with false evidence.

**Main:**

The con artists in this book pursued a variety of ambitions—making money, winning wars, mocking authority, finding fame, trading an ordinary life for a glamorous one—but they all chose the lowest, fastest road to get there. Every hoax is a curtain, and behind it is a deceiver operating levers and smoke machines to make us see what is not there and miss what is. As P.T. Barnum knew, you can short-circuit critical thinking in any century by telling people what they want to hear. Most scams operate on a personal scale, but some have shaped the balance of world power, inspired explorers to sail uncharted seas, derailed scientific progress, or caused terrible massacres. A HISTORY OF AMBITION IN 50 HOAXES guides us through a rogue's gallery of hustlers, liars, swindlers, imposters, scammers, pretenders, and cheats. In Gale Eaton's wide-ranging synthesis, the history of deception is a colorful tour, with surprising insights behind every curtain.

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