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*If you reveal your secrets to the wind,
you should not blame the wind for
revealing them to the trees.*

—**Kahlil Gibran**

The *Archive* Magazine
Secrets

Winter 2022

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NAVAJO

CODE BREAKERS

WRITTEN BY MERIN MCCALLUM . DESIGNED BY OLIVER HIGGINS



AH-TAD-TLO-CHIN-TOISH-JEH-DIBEH-YAZZIE-SHI-DA-DZEH

Have any idea what this says? No? Don't worry, it's not just you. No one—not even the most skilled Japanese code-breakers—ever deciphered it. It was as if the code didn't even exist until the operation was declassified by the US military in 1963.¹ War is built on secrets, and frankly, a war can't be won without them. Imagine how different life could be if the Axis powers had intercepted military orders during World War II. The complicated and covert nature of the Navajo Code—named for the Navajo Native American tribe that created it—was crucial to winning World War II. By the end of this article, you'll even be able to solve it yourself.

The year is 1942. The US has just entered World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Battling on many fronts (Europe and the Pacific) the US Marines needed a way to send discrete messages. Philip Johnson, a World War I veteran and one of the few non-native fluent Navajo speakers, proposed creating a code based on the Navajo language. As an exclusively verbal language composed of no alphabet or symbols, it's essentially incomprehensible to anyone who was never immersed in Navajo culture.² The only people that can speak it come from the limited Navajo territory in the US, meaning that no other country would have a way to access or even know of the language. It was the perfect source for code.

Like most things, once the government realized how useful the language was, they jumped on the

opportunity to take advantage of it. 29 Navajo men were sent to basic training and then specifically taught how to operate radios and transmit messages. In this case, the man was more than the machine. Three lines of code took a machine 30 minutes to decipher, whereas a Navajo Code Talker could be successful in just 20 seconds.³ Next time you tie your shoes or wash your hands, remember that's how long it took the Navajo Code Talkers to translate messages.

Now to the part of the article I know you've been waiting for: the cracking of the Navajo



Code. It's a doozy, so bear with me. First, let's look at direct word-to-word translation. The earliest version of the Navajo Code consisted of 211 Navajo words that each corresponded to commonly used terms in the military. Each Navajo word represents an English word, and then that word stands for the real word. For example, "JAY-SO" is "buzzard" which means "bomber plane." Another example is "A-NIH-LEH" which is "submit" but actually means "send." If the military received the phrase "JAY-SO-A-NIH-LEH," they would know to send a bomber plane.

Soon the code included 200 more words, and any word that wasn't part of this Navajo dictionary was spelled out letter by letter. The most common letters, such as vowels, had multiple words to represent them. For example, the letter A could be ant ("WOL-LA-CHEE"), apple ("BE-LA-SANA"), or axe ("TSE-NILL").⁴ Even with the remote possibility of someone understanding Navajo, all they would hear would be jumbled English gibberish.

The year is now 1945. US Marines land on the beach of Iwo Jima, an island about 660 miles off the coast of Japan. They do so because of the strategic advantage capturing Iwo Jima—an air base between the Mariana Islands (the next closest US air base) and Japan— would give them. In the case of an emergency, fighter planes could actually make it back to Iwo Jima, and large-scale air campaigns and naval blockades could be orchestrated from the island as well.⁵ For 36 days, one of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific theater raged on.

DIBEH, AH-NAH, A-SHIN, BE, AH-DEEL-TAHI, D-AH, NA-AS-TSO-SI, THAN-ZIE, TLO-CHIN. Pinned down with nowhere to go, this was the start of a Marine company's call for help. In just 20 seconds, commanding officers on the beach knew to send a demolition team, and the company made it out.⁶ This message was just one of over 800 sent throughout the battle, all without error. I'll leave it up to you: do you think the United States could have won the battle of Iwo Jima without the Navajo Code? We'll never know, but one thing's for sure - that company would've died without it.

Until this article, I had never heard of the Navajo Code Talkers,

let alone their role in taking Iwo Jima. Sadly, they seem to be a secret themselves. History often tends to be selective, forgetting those that worked behind the scenes. After all, it wasn't until 1963, 18 years after World War II ended that people found out that the Navajo Code Talkers existed because the military had to be sure they wouldn't use the code again.⁷ Although that's understandable, the government should have done more to recognize the Navajo men once the code was declassified. It took another 38 years until they were officially honored, as they received various Congressional Medals at the White House in 2001.⁸

We also must remember the Navajo code is another example of the United States government taking advantage of Native Americans. Using their culture for a code was never their choice; they were drafted and given the order when it should have been their decision. Regardless, hundreds of Navajo men stepped up and risked their lives as code talkers during World War II. They put everything on the line for the United States, and that service should not be a secret. ■

AH-TAD-TLO-CHIN-TOISH-JEH-DIBEH-YAZZIE-SHIDA-DZEH = GO BLUE

Notes

¹ CIA, Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code, Website, 2008.

² Naval History and Heritage Command, Navajo Code Talkers World War II Fact Sheet, Website.

^{3,4} Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 1942: Navajo Code Talkers, Website.

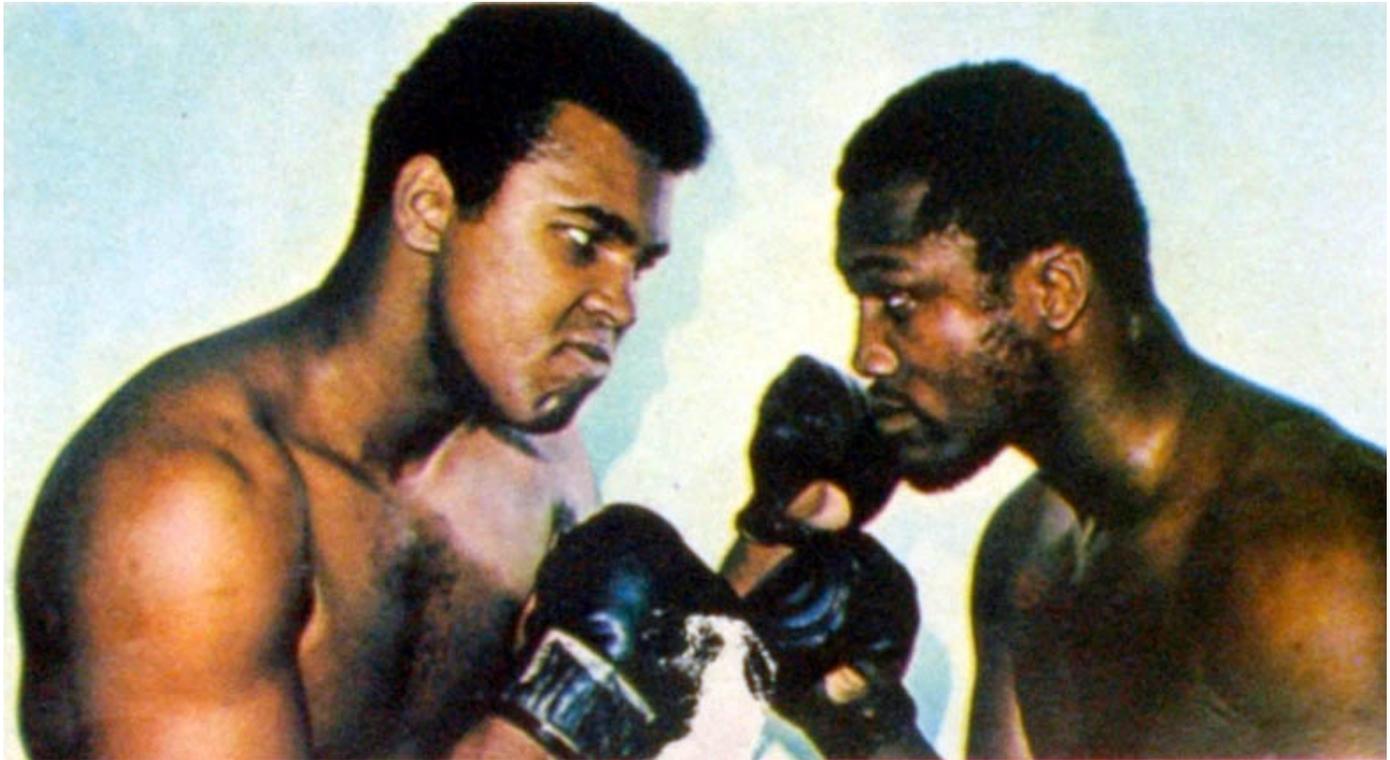
⁵ Marine Corps University, Battle for Iwo Jima, Website.

⁶ VA News, The Battle of Iwo Jima and the Unbreakable Navajo Code, Website.

⁷ CIA, Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code, Website, 2008.

⁸ National Archives, Semper Fidelis, Code Talkers, Website, 2001.

FIGHT OF THE CENTURY OR HEIST OF THE CENTURY?



WRITTEN BY CLAIRE SMALLWOOD . DESIGNED BY OLIVER HIGGINS

March 8th, 2004. Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The greatest miracle of the 21st century is taking place: my birth. Coincidentally, exactly 33 years prior, two other earth-shattering events were occurring. For one, the widely anticipated heavyweight championship boxing match between undefeated fighters Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, dubbed the “Fight of the Century,” was about to begin with millions of people in the United States and abroad watching.

Beyond the importance of this fight in the sporting world, many saw it as a reflection of the political climate in the United States.¹ In the backdrop of the 1970s, the U.S. government was waging war both overseas and at home. The turmoil created by the Vietnam War was at its height, and anti-war, civil rights, and other leftist movements were spreading across America. The government diligently opposed this activism (shocking, I know), fighting through both overt and covert *counter-punches*.² Many people were becoming suspicious

of the latter category, questioning how the FBI in particular may be illegally infringing on the rights of political organizations.

Ali, who had only recently been regranted the ability to fight after losing his boxing license for refusing military conscription in 1967, was involved in these social movements.³ He openly opposed the Vietnam War, and advocated for Black nationalism and racial justice.⁴ For these reasons, Ali was seen as a metaphor for liberation and peace. On the other hand, Frazier was adopted by the public as a symbol of the pro-war movement and was described by Ali as a representative of the establishment.⁵ This title was imposed on Frazier by Ali and the media largely because Frazier refrained from speaking out about political issues, but nevertheless, this fight took on a passionately political nature. Ultimately, Ali lost the fight, which was viewed by many activists as a loss for social justice movements.⁶

However, like I said, a second world-changing event occurred on this night, in which progressive political movements were able to redeem themselves. Not only that, but the success of this crucial (yet relatively unknown) attack was guaranteed by Ali’s very own “Fight of the Century.” As previously mentioned, American suspicion of FBI activities at this time was widespread, and one passionate group of activists in Pennsylvania set out to expose all their dirty secrets.⁷ The group called themselves the Citizens’ Commission to In-

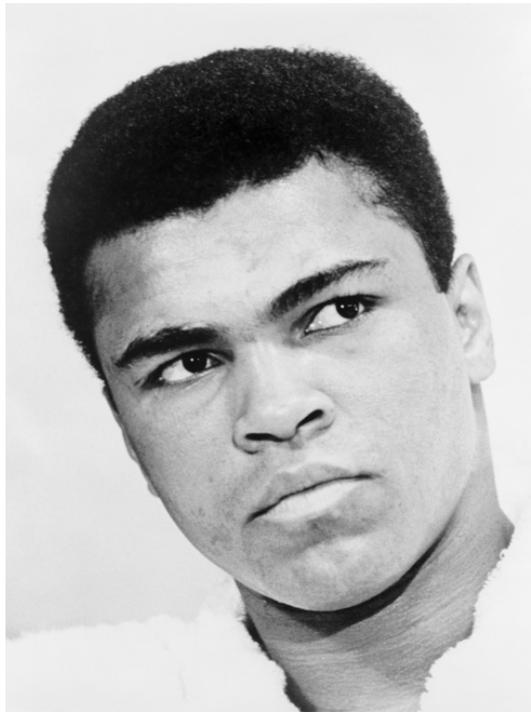
investigate the FBI, and their plotting began when William Davidon, a physics and mathematics professor at Haverford College, posed the question, “What do you think of burglarizing an FBI office?”⁸

Specifically, they would be robbing the FBI field office in Media, Pennsylvania, and the members who agreed to this seemingly outrageous plan each had unique and important roles.⁹ William was the (sexy) mastermind and undeclared leader of the robbery. Keith Forsyth (also sexy), a college dropout and community organizer, dedicated himself to mastering the art of lock picking for their heist¹⁰. Bonnie Raines (honestly now that I think about it, they were all sexy) provided crucial information on the office layout, its lack of alarms, and the types of locks on doors and cabinets. She did this by visiting a few weeks before the heist, pretending to be a student at Swarthmore College who was doing research on opportunities for women in the FBI, in order to acquire an opportunity to come in and interview the head of the office.¹¹ John Raines, Bonnie’s husband, was also a member, acting as one of the getaway drivers and planning the release of information after the robbery.¹² Lastly, Bob Williamson, another college dropout who was very involved in the anti-war movement, was essentially the comedic relief of the group.¹³

With the group formed, they agreed to complete secrecy, pledging to never expose themselves until the statute of limitations ran out.¹⁴ From there, they needed to decide what day to execute the heist. One of the members suggested March 8th, the night of Ali and Frazier’s fight, hoping the world would be so focused on the match, that it would provide them some cover during the break-in.¹⁵ Their planning began with surveying the FBI building, the schedules of the workers, traffic patterns, and the routines of the residents living in apartments above the office.¹⁶ Part of this included Bonnie’s visit, along with numerous evenings spent driving around the office. With this information and after numerous nights coordinating in Bonnie and John’s attic, the plan was finalized.¹⁷

At 7 PM on the night of the heist, the team met in a motel room, dressed in fancy attire to minimize suspicion if they were seen.¹⁸ Keith, who was supposed to pick the locks and break into the building, left the motel for the FBI office 30 minutes later. Upon his arrival, he realized an extra lock had been added to the door, a lock he was unable to pick.¹⁹ After briefly contemplating all his life choices and nearly shitting himself, he left the building and called the team, who quickly began formulating a new solution. Instead, Keith would need to go

through a different door, one which Bonnie was concerned would make much more noise.²⁰ Although this slight hindrance probably cost Keith his sanity, the delay allowed for the heist to line up



exactly with the Ali and Frazier fight, with Keith arriving again around 10:30 PM.²¹

As Keith was working on the door, using a crowbar and all his strength to open it, he was terrified the FBI agents would hear these loud efforts or that one of the residents might walk out and see him.²² But then, he heard faintly from the apartments the sound of the fight, and felt reassured that no one would be moving from their televisions any time soon.²³ Once the door was opened, the rest of the heist was carried out relatively smoothly. Keith returned to the motel, informing the four members who were to go back to the office and steal the documents that the door was open. These people returned with suitcases and stole every single file in the office.²⁴

The team began releasing documents to the press in batches every two weeks.²⁵ The most notable thing exposed by these efforts was the secret FBI program COINTELPRO.²⁶ This consisted of a series of secret (and illegal) activities carried out by the FBI between 1956 and 1971, aimed at the disruption of American political organizations, including spying, infiltration, psychological warfare, legal harassment, illegal uses of force, and efforts to undermine public opinion.²⁷ Following the robbery, this program was abolished.²⁸ (Ironically, Ali indirectly aided in exposing this COINTELPRO,

while also being one of the program's suspects.)²⁹

Despite Ali's loss in the Fight of the Century, which was a metaphorical loss for social justice movements, his fight still aided in winning what could be called the Heist of the Century, a literal success for activism in the United States. As one article explained, "prior to the Media burglary, there was no official oversight of intelligence agencies."³⁰ Afterwards, with the help of several other events, an extensive investigation into U.S. intelligence agencies by the Church Committee took place. This led to the passing of laws "designed to regulate government surveillance and internal guidelines (Attorney General's Guidelines) which limited the FBI's investigative authority and spelled out the rules that govern law enforcement operations."³¹ These intended to guarantee American political freedom, and limit abuses of power within U.S. intelligence agencies.

As much as I would like to say that this happy conclusion marked the end of the American government's meddling, this is unfortunately not the case. While the robbery certainly helped to spread awareness about the U.S. government's violation of citizens' rights and was the monumental "first trickle of what would become a flood of revelations about extensive spying and dirty-tricks operations by the F.B.I.," it didn't have a lasting effect on the government.³² Not long after the aforementioned reforms, Ronald Reagan "effectively undercut" their results.³³ More recently, the Attorney General's Guidelines have been amended and the Patriot Act was passed, which essentially reinstated the government's ability to use the surveillance strategies they employed during COINTELPRO.³⁴

If that's not a punch in the face of Ali and activists everywhere, I don't know what is.

Nevertheless, the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI teaches us several valuable lessons. First, March 8th is a really iconic day. Second, the best time to do something illegal is when everyone is distracted (possibly by a boxing championship). And third, if the government is going to be snooping around in our secrets, we'd better be snooping around in their secrets too. ■

Notes

^{1, 5, 6} Kieran Mulvaney. "How the Ali-Frazier 'Fight of the Century' Became a Proxy Battle for a Divided Nation." Article. 2021.

² In boxing, a counterpunch is a punch that is immediately thrown after an attack from an opponent. This is reflective of the way the U.S. government responded to this wave of activism by suppressing, discrediting, and weakening political organizations/leaders they deemed threatening.

³ Benjamin T. Harrison. "The Muhammad Ali Draft Case and Public Debate on the Vietnam War." Journal Article. 2001.

⁴ Carrie Daniels. "UofL Libraries: Muhammad Ali: A Transcendent Life." Website. 2022.

⁷ Patrick G. Eddington. "Happy FBI Burglary Day: Celebrating the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI and the Demise of COINTELPRO." Article. 2022.

⁸ Betty Medsger. *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI*. Book. 2014.

⁹ Please note that there was a total of 8 members, but because a few have not yet revealed their identities, I only discuss 5 of them in this article.

^{10, 13} PBS Independent Lens. "Characters of 1971 | Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI." 2015.

^{11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26} Betty Medsger. *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI*. Book. 2014.

^{14, 32} Mark Mazzetti. "Burglars Who Took on F.B.I. Abandon Shadows." Article. 2014.

^{15, 18, 19, 29, 30} Kenny Cooper. "How to Break into the FBI: 50 Years Later, Media Burglars Get Local Honors." Article. 2021.

²² Once again screaming and crying and throwing up and shitting himself all at once. (Or at least that's what I would've been doing.)

²⁵ Despite them not knowing what the fuck any of the documents were really talking about...

²⁷ Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, "Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans: Book III," Report, 1976.

^{31, 34} American Civil Liberties Union. "More About FBI Spying." Article. 2022.

³³ Bud Schultz. *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies to Political Repression in America*. Book. 2001.

A VILLAGE IS A VILLAGE: OR IS IT?

WRITTEN BY JULIAN FLOREZ . DESIGNED BY OLIVER HIGGINS



A curious case of delightful scheming was at play against one of the great figures of history in the 18th century. Literally—a great figure. Catherine the Great. Was it a gambit to commit regicide? Not this time. Perhaps a plan to transition the country to a socialist utopia? You’ll have to wait for that one. An elaborately masked logistical masterpiece to deceive her majesty into thinking that Russia is dominant and life enjoyable in freshly conquered territory? I’ll let you find out.

To understand the ruse concocted, it’s first important to visualize the setting of the scene. 1787, feudal times. If you were able to live through the rampant pandemics, occasional marauding raids, and conscription to serve some random boyar, you might see your queen in the flesh. Uncomfortably pudgy, caked with the latest makeup, and mimicking a peacock that revels in its superiority, it would have been a strange scene to look up from your hard worked fields onto a privileged lifestyle.

Nonetheless, strict obedience is demanded and all activities are

rendered superfluous unless they directly support the royal visit. Unknowingly, if you were lucky enough to live along the anointed Catherine the Great’s Tour of Crimea route, you would be contributing to a masterclass in deception.¹ Enter Grigory Potemkin.

Besides having a last name that looks strikingly similar to pumpkin, Grigory Potemkin was one of the big men of his time. Physically, his obesity proclaimed his superior social status. Politically, he was a lover of Catherine the Great and essentially second in command for large swathes of Russian foreign policy in the 18th century.² To fulfill Catherine the Great’s demand for a larger empire, Grigory was tasked with building up their territorial presence around the Black Sea and what is now present day Eastern Ukraine.³

Fresh off the Russo-Turkish war, Catherine was itching to explore her growing domain. Now, if you thought organizing your group of friends to show up at the same place and time was

difficult, try to plan a six month inspection trip for one of the most important people of your age through a recent war torn landscape. This was the card that was dealt to Grigory.

Regardless, sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can definitely harm you, especially if it comes from someone with dictatorial powers. Grigory soon got fastidiously to work. Stretching over four thousand miles and modes of transport including sledge, river galley, and carriage, no expense was to be spared. Towns were to be coated in flowers and firework displays would light up the night sky, assuaging any lingering doubts of inferiority.⁴ The only problem however, was that no one was really there...

Who would have thought. If you combine political instability with the constant threat of being eviscerated by your neighbors, no one really wants to live in that location. That was the fate of the local Turkish population in Crimea during those times.⁵ Mr. Potemkin was then left with the unfortunate case of having too little to show and had to quickly configure a solution for this apparent weakness.

One option soon came to mind. If your success is only measured by one person, you just need to convince that one person you were successful. Therefore, all that needs to be done is make it seem that everything is fine and dandy for that short period of time, when in reality there is nothing there. Foolproof? Definitely not. But duct tape solution? Better than nothing.

The plan was set. Fake campfires were laid to give the illusion of bustling communities at night. Pastures were filled with cows that were furtively moved along the route to showcase agricultural might. Entire wooden houses and towns were fabricated and reshown throughout the trip. Even sacks used for grain were stuffed with grass to illustrate the commercial success of the region.⁶ Thus, a daring secret was kept from the apogee of society.

Combined with significant investment in a smattering of already present towns around the region, any onlookers would be stunned to see the rapid growth.⁷ Flanked by ambassadors from various European nations, the tour was on. Surprisingly, it went quite well. Catherine the Great came away thoroughly impressed and diplomats begrudgingly reported to others that Russia was in the privileged echelon of superpowers.⁸

Now infamous, Potemkin Villages would go down in history as a facade to placate visiting dignitaries. Whether in Soviet Russia, North Korea, or pick your choice of autocratic systems, Po-

temkin's Villages have a way of popping up in modernity and will most likely do so for the foreseeable future.⁹

First, if you made it this far in the article, I commend you. Second, I hope you learned about something that I found very interesting and are able to use this new fangled terminology to impress any friends and family. Third, you've been bamboozled.

See, the story of Potemkin Villages is now widely accepted as a myth. Damn, caught by the old bait and switch. Foreign magnification combined with local whispers inflamed and then chiseled into history something which never actually happened. The backdrop is true, but the fake villages were, ironically, fake themselves.

As any skulking politician does, you fabricate events that never exist to support your world view. In a time period where feudal Russia was encroaching on European territory, there was a select group of non-Russians disgruntled by the upending of the present social order. Therefore, gibes at one of the leading Russian politicians of the time was effectively a sneer at Catherine the Great and the status of Russia.¹⁰

In addition, the cutthroat Russian environment bred countless social climbers seeking to depose Potemkin from the prized Crimerian role.¹¹ In fact, rumors started even months before Catherine the Great's trip that Potemkin created countless fakes to puffer up his resume. This was actually one of the reasons that Catherine the Great was so insistent on touring Crimea.¹² Therefore, a bubbling cauldron of noxious rumors calcified around the senior politician, all but guaranteeing the lasting myth of Potemkin Villages.

There are some grains of truth, however, in the apocryphal tale. Crimea really was quite devastated from the past throes of war and would take decades to fully recover population wise. Mr. Potemkin did direct significant investment into towns already in existence, essentially giving them botox facelifts.¹³

Two centuries later, Grigory Potemkin has now been regarded as someone who significantly contributed to the commercial and Russian population growth in the Crimea Region during the 18th century. Numerous towns were renovated, schools were authentically created, and warships diligently constructed.¹⁴ So Potemkin Villages may actually be nothing else than a Potemkin Village itself. A story meant to deceive others from inspecting too closely the reality at hand. A secret hidden inside a secret. ■

Notes

¹ If curious about the actual route taken, look no further: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_journey_of_Catherine_the_Great#/media/File:Crimean_Journey_of_Catherine_the_Great.jpg
² Simon, Montefiore. "Prince of Princes: the life of Potemkin." Weidenfeld & Nicolson. October 4th, 2001.

³ Keen observers may note from the war in Ukraine the names Kherson, Sevastopol, Odessa, and Dnipro-all of which were founded or heavily redesigned by Potemkin.

⁴, ⁸, ¹⁰, ¹² David, Griffiths. "Catherine II Discovers the Crimea". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 2003,339-348.

⁵ Due to persistent Russian aversion, it is estimated that more than 300,000 Crimerian Tatars out of a total population of 1 million (roughly 30%) left for the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the 18th

century. Potichnyj, Peter J. "The Struggle of the Crimean Tatars". *Canadian Slavonic Papers*. 1975

⁶ It is stated that even a floating barge was employed to transfer parts of the villages along the route in order to build and then rebuild the same village. Griffiths, David (2003). "Catherine II Discovers the Crimea". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 56 (3): 339-348.

⁷ See the following source for specific investments "Grigory Potemkin | Biography, Villages, & Facts | Britannica". www.britannica.com. Retrieved 23 October 2022.

⁹ For a list of Potemkin Villages used throughout history, check out the following source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potemkin_village#Modern_usage

¹¹ As Potemkin effectively served as the absolute ruler of Crimea (second to Catherine the Great), there are clear financial and political benefits from being in his position.

¹³, ¹⁴ "Grigory Potemkin | Biography, Villages, & Facts | Britannica". www.britannica.com. Retrieved 23 October 2022.

LOCAL CHICKEN FARMER TURNS SPY?

MORE LIKELY THAN YOU THINK!

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE THOMSON . DESIGNED BY OLIVER HIGGINS



Hot tip: if you're getting bored with your life, try engaging in a high stakes game of espionage with an entire fascist government. It's what Juan Pujol Garcia did, and it worked out pretty well for him! Well, in terms of winning said game – not necessarily in terms of having a stable, happy family, but that's actually beyond the scope of this essay.¹ A double agent in World War II, he was loyal to the British although he very convincingly pretended to spy for the Germans. Over the course of his life, Pujol would go from being a poultry farmer trying to keep his family afloat to one of the most important figures in top-secret military schemes such as Operation Fortitude.

Before becoming a decorated agent of espionage, Juan Pujol Garcia was pretty much Just Some Guy™. His story begins in Barcelona, Spain, where he was born in 1912 to a moderately well-off family. Even at this time, Barcelona was a relatively unstable city, in Pujol's own words "the scene of frequent street battles, strikes, attempts on people's lives and revolutionary coups."² Pujol himself was also, according to biographer Stephan Talty, an unruly child, energetic and rambunctious but not cruel.³ As a child and into young adulthood, he pursued a variety of interests and careers, never quite settling on one path (which is such a mood). Most notably, in his early 20s he attended the Royal Poultry School, located in Barcelona.⁴ Upon completing this education, he served his compulsory six months in the Republican military, which was (spoiler alert) not the last time he would find himself in the army.⁵ True to form, Pujol did not return immediately to chicken farming after this, instead bouncing around between a variety of businesses before finally succumbing to the pressure of being an adult who must earn money (ew /gen), finding work on someone

else's poultry farm.⁶ And this is where he might have remained...

Except the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 between the rebel Nationalists, led by soon-to-be dictator Francisco Franco, and the Republicans who currently held power. Pujol had inherited from his father an apolitical attitude which according to Pujol cared "neither for Right or Left," and loathed "the violence and utter destruction of the battlefield."⁷ In the three years of war that followed, Pujol fought for both sides of the divide at various points, against his wishes,



and claims to have done so without shooting at anyone.⁸ Pujol didn't catch a break once Franco's power was firmly established in 1939, as unfortunately for everybody, World War II began only a few months later. Although Spain had not entered the war yet and would support the Axis powers when it did, Juan Pujol Garcia felt that it was his duty to combat the horrors occurring in Germany, vowing to "[fight] against injustice and inequity with the only weapons at [his] disposal."⁹

So naturally, Pujol went to the British embassy in Madrid and asked to work in espionage. The British said no, because they had a lot of stuff going on and frankly weren't sure if they could trust him.¹⁰ Not to be deterred, Pujol took a different tack, and presented himself to the German embassy, claiming to be a fanatically pro-Nazi businessman. The Germans bought it and Pujol began selling lies to the Nazi government under the code name Arabel. He purported to be a businessman living in London, when in reality, he was renting a place in Lisbon, Portugal.¹¹ Once established, he was able to send three messages from Lisbon to the Germans in Madrid, claiming that he had begun to establish a small network of sub-agents and sending some other (false) information. However, Pujol got surprisingly close to the truth with some of his stories – so much so that MI5 (the British Security Service) got suspicious.¹² The German intelligence apparatus was also starting to smell something fishy with this overeager spy, which isn't all that surprising given that Pujol really did not know what he was doing. Growing a bit desperate and realizing that the jig was almost up, Pujol made one last play to get in with the British, going through the American embassy first and presenting evidence of the espionage he had already successfully carried out. And it worked! Formally recruited by the handlers Mr. Grey (an alibi) and Tommy Harris (not an alibi), Pujol moved to London in 1942 and officially joined the British counter-intelligence operation.¹³

While employed in this way, Pujol established an impressive network of sub-agents (none of whom actually existed) and wove intricate lies to feed to the German government. He was so good at acting as a devoted Nazi agent while harboring a deep hatred towards the ideology that he was given the code name "Garbo" after the famous actress Greta Garbo.¹⁴ By 1944, Pujol, along with the support of the British Security Service, had cre-

ated 27 fictitious agents, giving each one a detailed background and specific role in gathering information.¹⁵ In one letter, the complexity of Pujol's network is clear. He wrote:

The widow of Two assists me greatly in the work of encyphering. I frequently get her to help me since there is no danger with her as she is a very loyal woman... Seven, during the trip he made to Larkhill also tried to look for new lodgings for me and the family also for the service...

With regard to the affairs of Five I hope that you will send the instructions which you told me about in one of your recent messages so that I can send them on to him.¹⁶

There was no widow of Two! There was no Seven or Five! Yet for years he kept up this facade, sending (alongside Tommy Harris) a total of 315 letters to the Germans, chock-full of important details and descriptions of American and British military movements. Very few of these messages were true, although using the intelligence given to him by MI5, Pujol would occasionally send accurate information just a little bit too late for it to be of any actual use to the Germans, which only increased their trust in him.¹⁷

Agent Garbo's most noteworthy exploit didn't come until 1944, towards the end of the war. Operation Fortitude, a counter-intelligence operation to distract the Axis Powers from the true invasion plan of Operation Overlord, relied in large part on Pujol's misinformation. From January 1944 to the day of the invasion itself, Garbo sent an average of four radio transmissions per day to the German embassy in Madrid. Along with convincing the German High Command that the main attack was going to occur in the area of Pas de Calais rather than Normandy, Pujol maintained the ruse through August.¹⁸ Three days after D-Day, Agent Garbo transmitted a radio message in which he claimed, "the whole of the present attack is set as a trap for the enemy to make us move all our reserves in a hurried strategical disposition which we would later regret."¹⁹ The Germans bought it. Amazingly, even after this major deception, Pujol was awarded the Iron Cross by Hitler himself for his invaluable service to the

German war effort.²⁰

Around this time, however, Pujol's storied career was coming to an end. Garbo avoided more than one near-miss, at one point having his cover nearly blown by a low-level Abwehr agent who came to the British government offering to reveal the identity of a German spy known as Arabel if the British would ensure his protection.²¹ Naturally this raised some red flags and the British figured it was only a matter of time before another German officer put two and two together and figured out Pujol's game. In May 1945, with the Third Reich on its deathbed, the German espionage operation and Pujol's role as the agent Arabel formally ended. With the disappearance of Arabel came the parallel disappearance of Garbo. Pujol moved around frequently after this, visiting J. Edgar Hoover (who sucked btw) in America, his family in Spain, and even his German handler, who still believed the lies Pujol had been selling for so long.²² Finally, Pujol moved to Angola, where he died of malaria in 1949...²³

Except that was a rumor spread by MI5, and he actually lived many more years in Venezuela, undisturbed until he was discovered by a spy writer in 1984. Nigel West (a well-known figure in the intelligence community) spent over a decade attempting to uncover the fate of Agent Garbo, finally learning his true identity from a retired MI5 officer and then laboriously calling every Juan Pujol Garcia in the Barcelona phonebook until he reached Pujol's nephew, eventually leading him to the location of the famed secret agent. Once Pujol emerged from hiding, he reunited with several members of MI5 and even visited the beaches of Normandy, where so many soldiers had died – and where, in part because of Pujol's actions, more soldiers had not.²⁴ ■

Notes

¹ If you're interested in learning about the role of Pujol's wife Aracelli in the whole operation, the British National Archives' blog article "Garbo: the story behind Britain's greatest Double Cross agent" (<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/spy-garbo-story-behind-britains-greatest-double-cross-agent/>) provides some interesting information.

^{2,5,7,9,10,11,12,20,21,22,24} Juan Pujol and Nigel West, Operation GARBO, Book, 1985.

^{3,4,6,14,23} Stephan Talty, Agent Garbo, Book, 2012.

^{8,13,17,18} MI5, "Agent Garbo," MI5 - The Security Service, Website, 2022.

¹⁵ The British National Archives, "The Garbo Network," Photograph, 1949.

¹⁶ The British National Archives, "Juan Pujol Garcia, codename GARBO: copies of communications by letter and WT with Germans, incorporating British deception material," Letter, 1944.

¹⁹ Juan Pujol Garcia, Transmission to German Embassy in Madrid, Radio, 1944.

W. H. Mumler's Trial

GHOSTS CAUGHT ON CAMERA?! *REAL* [NOT CLICKBAIT]



WRITTEN BY CECILIA LEDEZMA . DESIGNED BY OLIVER HIGGINS

A spiritualist revolution, a sting operation, two felonies, and a misdemeanor. At the center of it all? A couple of photogenic ghosties and the man who took their pictures. Spirit photography is the medium, and William H. Mumler is the man.¹ The ghosties? Well, that's a secret I'll never tell, xoxo ghostie girl. If I had the gumption to convince our executive board to print a completely blank page below that statement and only continue the article after flipping the page, I would, but I don't have that kind of nerve. You can imagine that gag now for comedic effect if you wish.

Spirit photography, the art of capturing the not-so-recently deceased's negatives, was pioneered by the man of the hour himself.² Residing in Boston, Mumler worked as an engraver and, on the weekend, learned the art of photography at the studio of his then-mentor-later-wife Helen F. Stuart.³ His memoirs state that it was a Sunday on March 1861, during one of his solo study sessions, a self-portrait depicting Mumler by a chair wherein the hazy image of a young girl is sitting was taken. Upon consulting Stuart, he concluded it was a case of double exposure, meaning the sitting girl was a patron from earlier in the day whose negative was not properly erased off the plate and paid little thought to it since.⁴ A year later, when a spiritualist friend saw the photo, he asked Mumler to sign it and allow him to publish it along the statement that "there was not a living soul in the room beside [him] – 'so to speak.'"⁵

Oh, and that the blurry figure is his little cousin... who's dead. Did I mention that part? The picture was taken 20 months beforehand and put in a drawer, but he also says to have recognized the girl as "[his] cousin who passed away about twelve years since" immediately... immediately being almost two years after he took the picture.⁶ Of course, this discrepancy was not published in the papers, which said Mumler had taken the picture just two days before the story ran.⁷ Unsurprisingly, this took the Spiritualist world by storm. The story was reprinted in the *Banner of Light*, the premier Spiritualist journal, based in Boston, where Mumler resided. The article included the address of Stuart's studio and, due to the picture's quick rise to fame, Mumler was soon swarmed by gentlemen hounding him for their portrait to be taken in case of an "extra" (what he called the apparitions) be caught near them, too.⁸

And catch them he did. Charging \$10 per dozen photographs, roughly 300 dollars nowadays and

five times the going rate then, he took pictures upon pictures of patrons with bonus members behind them... most of the time.⁹ There was always the possibility no extras would tag along, but he did offer a security deposit of \$2.50 in case a travesty wherein the patron would need to request the services once more occurred. He even started a mail-in service where clientele could send a photograph of themselves (alongside their money, of course) and an extra would pose with their little photocard and then be sent the envelope with the pictures back (sans payment).¹⁰ But hey, this wasn't a scam, promise! The prices were fixed because the spirits disliked the "throng," so to exclude the "vulgar multitude," they had to stay as such – think of the spirits, please!¹¹

In 1869, he relocated and set up shop in New York alongside the brightest American minds in photography at the time. He carried his renown from Boston with him; his practice had garnered so much attention that he was even critiqued by P.T. Barnum of "Greatest Show on Earth" fame, so the relocation did nothing but increase business.

This is the bit with the sting operation. I like this part because it makes you pause and go, "they dedicated resources to this?" and the answer is yes! Shortly after opening his new locale, the New York City Mayor Hall set up a sting operation due to an accusation of fraud from Mr. P.F. Hickey, an editor of *The World*. In turn, Marshall Joseph H. Tooker went in undercover as a client, and, funnily enough, his testimony specifically references complaining about the "exorbitant" price for his session despite being allotted funds to do so.¹² So much for keeping out the vulgar throng!

In the end, Mumler went to court over two felonies and a misdemeanor. As explained by Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, prosecutor and representative of the people, the felonies pertain to Mumler fraudulently taking money under "false pretenses," first from Tooker and then from the general populace, by routinely "cheating common law" with his practice.¹³ The misdemeanor is larceny, taking the money in exchange for said fraudulent photo 'sesh. Basically, "those who were prepared to believe, of course did believe on very slight proof, [yet this] proves the existence of a belief in the prisoner's statement, not the truth of those statements."¹⁴ That boils down to a) he's not a medium so he can't do that, and b) he took the pictures by normal un-ghostly means so it's just a scam.

Here's the big secret, folks. How'd he do it? Maybe he had a ghost camera or something, I don't know. The real issue is that neither did the witness-

es (that's the secret: the technique). Gerry presented nine ideas renowned American photographers conjured up based on their trial runs at recreating the pictures. Some of these ways are reaching heist



movie levels of complexity, like suggesting a "microscopic picture of the spirit" was inserted through a screw hole and then magnified by a lens, also inside the camera, and then perfectly lined up with the client. "Sir David Brewster's Ghost" was also put forward: that is a photography 'trick' wherein a ghost actor would run into frame, pose for a few seconds, and run back out before their hazy image fully imprinted on the slate. This would have to be done without the client (or, later, key witnesses) noticing. As Louis Kaplan, the leading scholar on Mumler, later noted, the prosecution was having a lot of fun.¹⁵

Keen-eyed readers amongst you might be thinking, "oh, hey, what about the 'uncleaned plate' theory Stuart had?" and you'd be correct in doing so! Mostly, Gerry says Mr. Hull, one of the photographer witnesses, had experienced the unclean plate mistake before but did not recognize its employment during Mumler's recreation. Nowadays, the leading theory is that Mumler would take a ghostly negative that would line up with the client, take a normal negative of the client on a different clean slate, show it as proof of no trickery, and then develop both together on the albumen paper, creating the spirit photographs. That would be how he'd get around the negative clearly not being 'cleaned,' as a simple look at the plate before the client's portrait was taken would reveal the truth.

But that's a just theory. It's not confirmed because it never was found. In fact, Gerry's explanations reference a similar process, but the result of the trial remains: Full acquittal. Judge Dowling explains his own ruling by saying that, while he sees fraud as a possibility, the prosecution failed to make out the case: they proposed ways and theories and accusations, but never hard proof that a swindle did take place, so the complaint was dismissed, and the prisoner discharged.

The court went into a frenzy, and so did the media. Remember Barnum? He publicized the trial immensely due to his presence and involvement in the case, creating evidence in the form of spirit photograph recreation. Every New York paper tracked the matter, and the principal book on these events, Kaplan's *The Strange Case of William Mumler; Spirit Photographer*, features a total of 31 pages with naught but compilations of the trial's media coverage.

One of these articles very accurately surmises that Mumler had "been prosecuted, and thus extensively advertised." He continued to practice in New York and later received such renowned clients as popular abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison in 1874 after the passing of his colleague Charles Sumner. In their ghostly portrait, Sumner appears behind Garrison, holding broken shackles.¹⁶ Vice President Henry Wilson, a repeat client according to Mumler, also has an image with Charles Sumner, one even annotated by Sumner's writing, reading "Defend all rights, Resist all wrongs." In February 1872, Mary Todd Lincoln (yes, that Mary Todd Lincoln), visited Mumler and returned with the ghostly image of her dear Abe looking over her. Overall, it's safe to say Mumler's career was fine. So, by this point, you can choose to believe in Mumler, and I do not necessarily discourage you to do so! I will just state that there's significant inconsistency in Mumler's retelling of his own events in 1875 and what he reported to the press when he worked. Also, he did take a portrait of a very-much-alive woman at the same time as he took one of her ex-husband with her spirit spookily hanging behind him.¹⁷ But at the end of the day, isn't that what spiritualism is all about? Gerry said so disparagingly in his failed case, but his point still stands: it's about belief, baby. ■

Notes

- 1 Both noun definitions apply!
- 2 A negative is an image, usually on film or in this case glass, where the dark and light values have been swapped. Developing this 'negative' in turn gives us a 'positive,' which is to say a picture with "correct" light values, like the ones
- 3 Felicity Tsering Chödrön Hamer. Helen F. Stuart and Hannah Frances Green: The Original Spirit Photographer. Article. 2018.
- 4 William H. Mumler. The Personal Experiences of William H. Mumler In Spirit-Photography. Column. 1875.
- 5 6 8 9 11 12 13 14 15 Louis Kaplan. The Strange Case of William Mumler, Spirit Photographer. Book. 2008.
- 10 These were actually called carte de visite, but I think my joke is funnier
- 16 Getty Museum. William H. Mumler. Online Collection. (<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/person/104VG5>)
- 17 Clément Chéroux and Jean-Loup Champion. The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult. Book. 2005.

AKSUM

and the

ARK

BY CLAIRE KOWALEC

The *Kebra Negast* begins like this: traveling by camel, the Queen of Sheba and her entourage carried gold, jewels, and spices en route to Israel. She wouldn't return to her homeland for another six months.¹

And that time around, she'd be carrying a son instead.

The *Kebra Negast*, or "Glory of Kings," is the national epic of Ethiopia.² Cultivated and preserved as an oral tradition until it was written down in the late medieval period, the *Kebra Negast* provides one of the most alluring accounts of where the Ark of the Covenant may have been moved—as well as where it may be.

Historians generally agree that the Queen of Sheba was likely the Queen of Saba³, a kingdom in southwestern Arabia.³ But the *Kebra Negast* places the Queen of Sheba firmly within the history of ancient Ethiopia: from that account the Queen of Sheba was actually the queen of Ethiopia, possibly called "Sheba" at the time, who traveled to Israel to meet King Solomon.⁴

Hearing of his wisdom, she spent six months in Israel hoping to learn from him. It was during this time that she learned of the Abrahamic tradition, which she would bring back to Ethiopia with her.

There are a few different accounts of how this next part unfolded, but the unifying thread seems to be that Solomon seduced and/or tricked her into sleeping with him on the last day she planned to stay in Israel. Ultimately, she ended up pregnant with his child, whom she carried back to Ethiopia with her.

Menelik was his name.

Born and raised in Ethiopia, the young adult Menelik learns that his father is King Solomon of Israel. Wanting to learn more about his father, Menelik travels to Israel to pay him a visit.⁵

It's unclear whether Solomon was aware that he had a son with the Queen of Sheba, but he happily welcomed Menelik when he arrived. From his perspective,

this was an heir for his kingdom! Menelik also seems pretty glad to have met his dad, but he decides that he'd rather stay in Ethiopia than become the next leader of Israel.

Here's where the story gets good: Solomon orders the first-born sons of everyone at his court to go back to Ethiopia with Menelik, probably so Menelik (A), has a safe journey back, and (B), to assert some ties between Israel and Ethiopia. But the sons had no say in this decision, so they're not particularly overjoyed at the opportunity to follow Menelik back to his home.

In that case, the son of a Hebrew monarch decides that he'll find a way to bring "home"—the heart of Israel—to Ethiopia with them. Azariah, as the *Kebra Negast* names him, asks the other sons if they're willing to hatch a plan with him. They agree.

First, they ask a carpenter to make a raft that looks just like the Ark, which would be used to, I don't know, pull an Indiana

Jones and deftly swap it out for the real thing (minus needing to navigate a slew of triggered booby traps and outrun a massive, impressively spherical boulder). Or at least that part wasn't recorded in any historical accounts.

And you guessed it—Azariah sneaks into the Temple housing the Ark and replaces the Ark with the raft that's shaped like it.

My question is this: despite being a renowned archaeology professor who is fluent in several ancient languages and in pretty much everything else, why didn't Dr. Indiana Jones ever consider a trip to Ethiopia to locate the Ark of the Covenant? The *Kebra Negast* spells out exactly how the Ark traveled to Ethiopia, and there's even a church in Ethiopia believed to be in possession of the Ark. Seriously—it seems like Ethiopia could be a viable curator of the Ark and its legacy. So why didn't Dr. Jones bother to give it a go there instead of traveling literally everywhere else?

A church at Aksum (sometimes spelled Axum) in Ethiopia is believed to house the Ark of the Covenant, which Azariah and his fellow first-born sons brought with them to Ethiopia. On the way back to Ethiopia, Menelik is informed that the

Ark of the Covenant is traveling with them, meaning that Menelik and Ethiopia are now the heirs of God's grace: Ethiopians are now the Chosen People.⁶ In other words, the Ark symbolized the overlap between God as a spiritual entity and the physical Earth: God's presence on Earth.⁷ Thus, such an important relic needed a home of great importance.

Although its early history is a bit unclear, tradition recalls that the Church of Saint Mary of Zion (known alternatively as the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion) was built in the 4th century CE, following Ethiopia's conversion to Christianity.⁸ Over roughly a thousand years, the Church was destroyed and rebuilt several times, but the Ark remains allegedly safe and intact. In the 1600s, the Church was rebuilt in its current form.⁹ The Ethiopian Orthodox Church views Aksum as a holy site for its significance in the development of early Christianity in Ethiopia,

A single monk is held responsible for the protection and upkeep of the Ark.¹⁰ Called the "Keeper of the Ark," or the "Guardian of the Ark," this monk is chosen carefully for this crucial job. Several sources contradict each other—or fail to provide any details at all—with regard to the selection process or the actual duties

Pictured: Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), with some...minor adjustments.





Davey, A. "New Church of St. Mary of Zion, Axum, Ethiopia." Photograph. 2007.

that are asked of the monk. On key Christian holidays, the Ark is brought out of the Church to be shown to the public (albeit shrouded).¹¹ Yet in recent years, to keep the Ark safe amid political turmoil, the Ark has not been removed from its place of safety within the Church.

There is surprisingly little information on the Church's curation of the Ark: Where is it kept inside the Church? Who, if anyone (aside from one selected monk), attends to it? What does attending to the Ark entail? How is the Ark removed and returned to its place within the Church? Yet having public answers to these questions would probably shine a spotlight on the Church of Saint Mary of Zion, creating an unwanted security problem—especially when certain individuals named Indiana Jones are involved.

Based on what we've covered here, it seems like there's plenty of juicy secrecy just waiting to be written into an action-packed screenplay. So why, then, did Indiana Jones never even consider

Ethiopia an option when looking for the Ark of the Covenant? Such a question prompts several more: who do we think of as the potential "rightful" curators of the Ark? On the flip side, who might we not consider viable keepers of the Ark? Do our perception and (probably limited) knowledge of East Africa versus the Middle East affect how we envision the Ark existing in either place? How we envision religion in either place?

As you might assume, there is a large debate that also shrouds the legend of the Ark in Ethiopia: is the "Ark" a replica or symbolic representation of the original Ark, or is it actually the Ark?

On some level, does it matter?

All we know is that the Ark, kept somewhere in the Church by a certain qualified someone, perhaps, is at once lost and found. ■

Notes

1, 3 Britannica, The Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica, "Queen of Sheba," Website, 2022.

1, 4, 5, 6 Barry Hoberman, "The Ethiopian Legend of the Ark," Journal Article, 1983.

2 Stuart Munro-Hay, *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant: The True History of the Tablets of Moses*, Book, 2005.

7, 11 David Shyovitz, "The Lost Ark of the Covenant," Online Publication, 2012.

8 David Buxton and Derek Matthews, "The Reconstruction of Vanished Aksumite Buildings," Journal Article, 1971.

9 Britannica, The Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica, "Aksum," 2019.

10 Graham Hancock, *The Sign and the Seal: The Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*, Book, 1992.



A Note from the Editor-in-Chief...

Welcome to our second issue of the 2022–2023 academic year, *Secrets*! This issue features the talents of some of our new writers and editors, so we hope you love their articles as much as we do. We couldn't do any of this without our amazing writing, editing, and design teams, so thank you so much to you all for everything you do!

A bit of bittersweet news: moving forward, the *Archive* will no longer be publishing two full, print publications each semester. However, on the bright side, we will be transitioning towards a more active online presence! This will help us become even more accessible to the public, and it will allow our writers to share their work more easily. We'll still be publishing one print issue each semester, too, so never fear—there will still be many opportunities to see the spreads designed by our wonderful design team! In the meantime, make sure to check out the “Blog” portion of our website to see even more of the *Archive* content you know and love!

As always, make sure to follow us on social media @thearchivemich, and you can always learn more about us on our website, www.themichiganarchive.com. Thank you so much for reading, and we'll see you at the end of the Winter 2023 semester with our final issue of the year, *Mythbusters*!

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