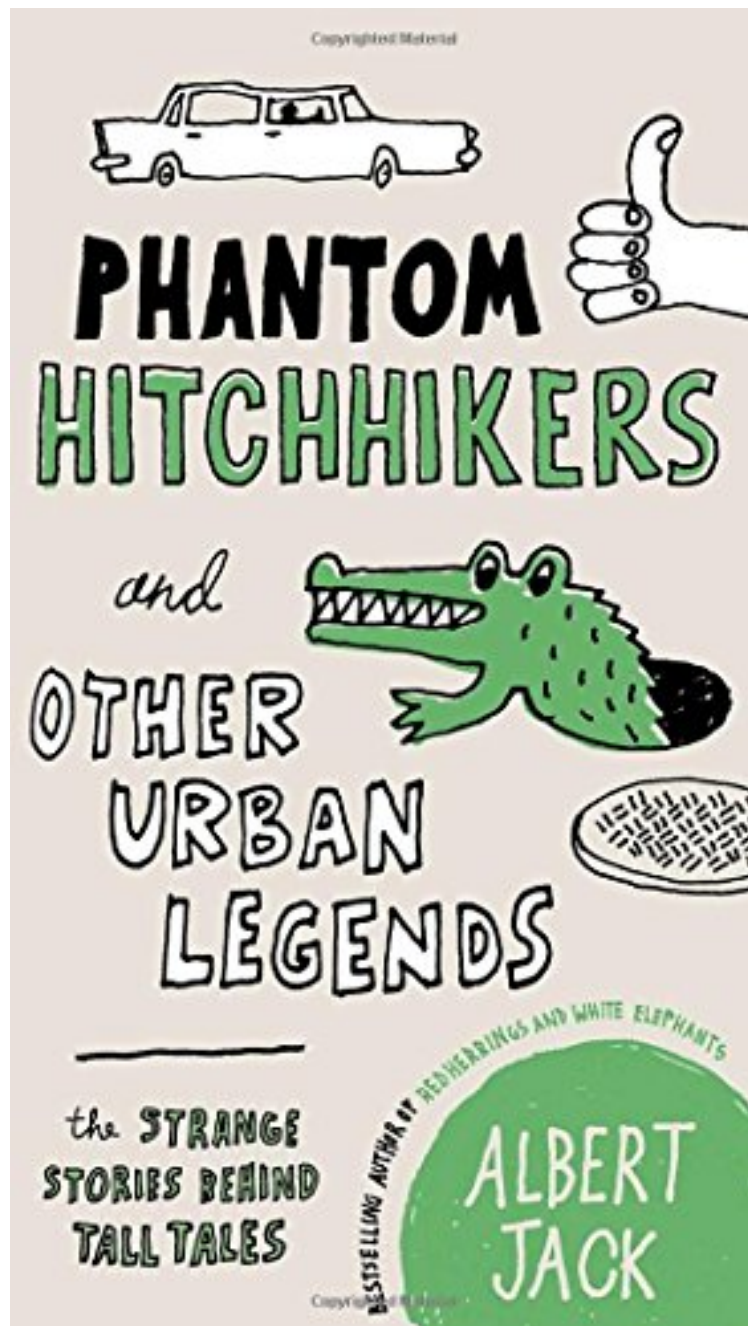


# Phantom Hitchhikers and Other Urban Legends: The Strange Stories Behind Tall Tales

Albert Jack

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**Albert Jack : Phantom Hitchhikers and Other Urban Legends: The Strange Stories Behind Tall Tales** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Phantom Hitchhikers and Other Urban Legends: The Strange Stories Behind Tall Tales*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good short tales  
By Eugene F Roy  
It's a great book to have when you know you'll be waiting, like at the doctor's office, or car-work place. I'm making my way slowly through it, a little at a time, and it even has laugh-out-loud moments.  
3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. *Phantom Hitchhikers and Other Urban Legends*---P-Yew.  
By Ronald A. Madia  
One of the most boring book I have ever read. Most of this is "maybe" as well as things we have heard for a long time. To me it seems like the author could just as well have made most of these up just to fill space in the book. "It could be or maybe not what do you think?" is way to repetitive. Sorry, but this books stinks.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. High Points are Not Worth the Very Low Points  
By Happy Reader  
I was given this book as a gift by someone who knows I love trivia of all kinds. I had one chapter left to read in "*Phantom Hitchhikers*" and was waffling between giving this book three or four stars. Albert Jack's folksy writing style makes for an easy enjoyable read. And Albert Jack's folksy writing style masks poor writing habits and abysmal scholarship.  
In the beginning, Jack tells us that in one of his stories he gave a character a name, and it was the name of the friend who told him the story. Throughout the book he occasionally gives names and locations and dates, etc., and there is no way to know how much of it he's making up. It should be one way or the other. Either he is a storyteller telling urban myths, or this is a nonfiction book about urban legends. The latter calls for more scholarship and openness.  
Jack's writing style includes humor, although it can be heavy-handed. In his section on "*Winston Churchill Was a Druid*", for example, he starts off with: "When the Roman Army reached the shores of England in AD 43, they encountered a fairly uncultured race of people with few skills, little intellect, and virtually no compassion, such as can be found on the average Friday night out in any suburban town nearly two thousand years later." This odd little intro may be explained by the fact that Albert Jack is the pen name of the British writer, Graham Willmott.  
Where Willmott really loses me, though, is in that last chapter, titled "*The Appliance of Science*". Some of the entries are usual urban legend goofiness, such as a tanning bed that scrambles your insides like a microwave (which Willmott debunks). Some get into conspiracy theories.  
When I got to the last chapter's entry for "*One Small Step for Man...*", about the Apollo moon landings, I gave up on the book altogether. Willmott has his doubts that the moon landings ever took place, though it is difficult to tell where his opinion ends and his humor starts: "When I look at the famous photo of the Lunar Module, astronaut, and apparently fluttering U.S. flag. For a start, we know there is no atmosphere on the moon, so where does the wind come from? Also, the light, shadows, and lack of visible stars are suspicious, and we can see the moon's surface clearly and it certainly doesn't look like cheese to me.... In fact, we just don't know." Balderdash!  
Having no atmospheric wind does not mean that there can be no motion. You can still snap a towel on the moon's surface. And if an astronaut is planting a flag pole, wiggling the pole back and forth as it's inset, there is still energy moving the fabric of the flag. For a cogent explanation and photos, read the wikipedia article on "*Moon Landing Conspiracy Theories*", which just may be available in Britain on that thing they call the internet.  
Happy Reader

Have you heard the one about Walt Disney's frozen body? Coca-Cola owning Santa Claus? Alligators living in New York City sewers? We all love a good story. But where do the urban legends, conspiracy theories, and old wives tales we hear every day really originate? Albert Jack explores the best, strangest, and funniest of the tales so many of us take as gospel, and uncovers some eye-popping true stories that are even more far-fetched than their mythical counterparts. From Robin Hood to JFK's brain, from hamsters under carpets to mysterious travelers, you'll never be short of a scary or bizarre anecdote again.

About the Author  
Albert Jack is the bestselling author of *Red Herrings* and *White Elephants*, *Pop Goes the Weasel*, *Black Sheep* and *Lame Ducks*, and *What Caesar Did for My Salad*.