



# Conspiracy Culture: From Kennedy to The X Files

*Dr Peter Knight, Peter Knight*

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Conspiracy theories are everywhere in post-war American culture. From postmodern novels to *The X-Files* and from gangsta rap to feminist polemic, there is a widespread suspicion that sinister forces are conspiring to take control of our national destiny, our minds, and even our bodies. Conspiracy explanations can no longer be dismissed as the paranoid delusions of far-right crackpots. Indeed, they have become a necessary response to a risky and increasingly globalized world, in which everything is connected but nothing adds up. Peter Knight provides an engaging and cogent analysis of the development of conspiracy culture, from 1960s' countercultural suspicions about the authorities to the 1990s, where a paranoid attitude is both routine and ironic. *Conspiracy Culture* analyses conspiracy narratives about familiar topics like the Kennedy assassination, alien abduction, body horror, AIDS, crack cocaine, the New World Order, as well as more unusual ones like the conspiracies of patriarchy and white supremacy.

*Conspiracy Culture* shows how Americans have come to distrust not only the narratives of the authorities, but even the authority of narrative itself to explain What Is Really Going On. From the complexities of Thomas Pynchon's novels to the endless mysteries of *The X-Files*, Knight argues that contemporary conspiracy culture is marked by an infinite regress of suspicion. Trust no one, because we have met the enemy and it is us.

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