A self-styled “author and physics researcher” named James A. Conrad, in a discussion of the “Columbus Poltergeist” case of 1984 that involved a 14-year-old girl named Tina Resch, inserted this hilarious “proof” that certain skeptics were – and are – scallywags:

As for hoaxers and jokesters retaining their reputations...

In Operation Fortitude in World War II, the U.S. military set up inflatable tanks, trucks, and artillery units in Kent, England and faked radio traffic in an attempt to mislead the Germans about the size and location of Allied forces. We do not then dismiss the real tanks, trucks, artillery units, and radio traffic of World War II because the U.S. was also engaging in some self-serving hoaxing, for which the U.S. side probably had a good laugh.

Comment: This operation, which was created under the direction of the famous illusionist Jasper Maskelyne, had the desired result. It confused and mis-informed the Axis powers, and helped in the success of D-Day. There was no “laugh” involved, Mr. Conrad. It was a deadly serious project…

Also, famous singers sometimes have to lip sync their songs due to temporary vocal cord problems and musicians pretend to play to prerecorded music onstage, on television, and in music videos, in effect hoaxing their claimed talent, simulating perfect instances of their works so as not to disappoint. No one then calls into question the evidence for the real performances recorded in a studio or the witnesses who were physically present and saw and heard it happen.

Comment: So? Does this empower a 14-year-old girl to deceive and mislead reporters and naïve “investigators” by lying and doing tricks, so that she could get headlines? Ah, but this man has hardly shown his colors. Read on…

More: The esteemed scientist Carl Sagan wrote many serious nonfiction science books, but then in 1985 he proved that he was capable of making up scientific stories when his novel *Cont act*
was published, later made into a Hollywood movie.

What? This book was *clearly labeled as fiction!* Does this indicate that anyone who can write fiction, also lies?

And while on the subject of movies, in 1994, esteemed paranormal investigator James Randi entered the world of makebelieve and pretended to be a fictional coroner in *Beyond Desire*, an R-rated thriller set in Miami's South Beach – and he was caught on camera doing it!

Duh! Yes, I *played the part of a coroner,* dumbo! I was working as an *actor*, you see? That's what I do. I wasn't "caught on camera," I was filmed, purposely, knowingly, and deliberately. And I didn't at that point "enter the world of makebelieve." I've never been there, where you apparently live. At the age of 17, professionally, I became a conjuror, and we conjurors do tricks. They're designed to entertain folks… Oh, forget it…

He was also the originator/planner of two paranormal hoaxes of his own (Project Alpha, 1979, on a team of American scientists at the now defunct McDonnell Laboratory for Psychical Research in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Great Carlos, 1988, on the Australian public and media).

Yep, and both projects were *highly* successful, Mr. Conrad. They exposed both the ineptitude of the scientists at the MacLab, and the "channeller" craze that had seized Australia. Both of them showed – conclusively – that learned persons, when out of their areas of expertise, could be easily deceived by frauds. Frauds such as Tina Resch…

Remember that famous photograph of Nobel Prize-winning physicist Albert Einstein on his 72nd birthday sticking his tongue out and looking goofy for pestering news photographers who wouldn't leave until they got a picture of him? Einstein liked that photo so much that even he used it on his personal greeting cards to show his friends that he was not all serious. So, my point is that the body of evidence of an individual's serious side should not be disregarded just because they also have demonstrated that they are capable of entertaining others or engaging in momentary acts of "just fooling." This was a 14-year-old who didn't understand the ramifications of such mistakes of judgment.

Sir, Tina Resch knew full well what she was doing. Her "serious side" was thoroughly developed. She saw the media falling over themselves to create her myth, and she encouraged

it. She connived to attract gullible investigators, she was very successful in doing so, and the fame she attained so buoyed her ambitions, that she figured she could get away with anything.

In 1994, Tina Resch was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of her 3-year-old daughter.

(This article had a followup here .)