convicted to see how cases can be defended. Two recent well-known cases involved President Bill Clinton and professional baseball player Roger Clemens. In Clinton's case, the perjury allegations were part of independent counsel Kenneth Starr's 1998 report to Congress regarding Clinton's potential impeachment. The report said that Clinton lied under oath when testifying to a grand jury about his relationship with then-White House intern Monica Lewinsky, denying that they had a sexual relationship. Clinton used the literal truth defense, claiming that the way the questions were worded, he had indeed answered truthfully. The perjury charge was eventually rejected by the Senate.

Former Major League baseball pitcher Clemens was charged with perjury for allegedly lying to Congress in 2008 when he testified that he had never used steroids or human growth hormones during his professional career. The case centered on trainer Brian McNamee's claim that he had personally injected Clemens with the drugs. Because prosecutors had only a single contradictory witness, they needed independent evidence that Clemens had knowingly testified falsely, and they were unable to produce this. Clemens's 2011 trial ended in a mistrial, and in 2012, the jury in a second trial acquitted him of the charges.

Conclusion
An individual can be charged with perjury if he knowingly makes a material false statement while under oath in a legal context. Perjury is a felony under U.S. law, although there can be other classifications at the state level based on the circumstances of the case. Punishment typically involves a prison sentence, a fine, or both. Motives for committing perjury include self-interest, protecting another person and, in the case of law enforcement officials, helping obtain a conviction. Based on available statistics, it appears that perjury is rarely prosecuted, but a large percentage of prosecuted cases result in conviction. Because of the difficulty in proving that a defendant intended to lie under oath, the prosecution must be confident of its case before pursuing it. Looking more closely at examples of famous perjury cases, such as Mark Fuhrman's conviction or former president Clinton's acquittal, helps illustrate the burden the prosecution faces when trying to prove perjury.

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See Also: Alibi; Attorneys; Bankruptcy; Charles II Plot; Clinton, Bill; Espionage and Counterespionage; False Confessions; Justice; Law and Law Enforcement; Neurophysiology; Nixon, Richard; Oaths; Stewart, Martha; Watergate; Witness, False Testimony of.

Further Readings

Photographs, Altered

Altered photographs have been manipulated, either digitally or manually, in order to change the content of the photographic image. The alteration of photographs has occurred since shortly after
the invention of the permanent photograph in the early 19th century, although its prevalence has increased with the advent of photo manipulation software. An altered, or “doctored,” photograph can be a particularly insidious means of deception because people tend to perceive photographs as highly credible, accurate representations of people and events. The very existence of a photograph of an event, then, can be taken as evidence that the event truly occurred. Photographs are often used as proof that an event occurred, both in the media and in legal settings. Photographs are doctored for many reasons, ranging from achieving political gain to altering one’s physical appearance to editing out minor background details in order to improve the photographic composition. Research on altered photographs has suggested that viewing doctored images can influence peoples’ preferences, attitudes, and even memories of past events.

Photographs have been manipulated since at least 1840. Before the use of computers made photo alteration widespread and easily accessible, alteration techniques involved manipulating the film or prints. Among the more crude methods were painting the print or retouching the negative. Other techniques were more subtle: double exposure involved exposing the film twice to incorporate components of two scenes into the same image, while combination printing involved using two or more negatives to create a single print. Early photographic alteration was done not to mislead viewers but to improve the accuracy of the image, as photographers were frustrated by the technology’s limitations in its depiction of color and lighting.

Altered photographs have been used to deceive viewers for political reasons as early as 1871, when Ernest Eugene Appert doctored photographs of the Paris Commune massacres as propaganda for the Versailles government. Later, many examples originated in the years just prior to World War II. Stalin, Hitler, and Mao Zedong all had photographs of themselves altered by removing high-ranking political rivals (e.g., Trotsky, Goebbels, and Po Ku, respectively) in order to appear as more monolithic leaders. While the practice of altering photographs to influence public attitudes was often found in totalitarian prewar states, it is still used in contemporary politics. For example, during the 2004 American presidential campaign, in an attempt to portray candidate John Kerry as unpatriotic, a photograph was circulated of Kerry on stage with actress Jane Fonda (who was known for her leftist political leanings) at a rally to protest the Vietnam War. However, Kerry had never attended a rally with Fonda, and it was later discovered that the photograph was a composite of two separate images. In each of these cases, the altered photographs were intended to change perceptions of—and attitudes toward—political leaders and events.

Influence of Altered Images
A growing body of research has begun to investigate just how much influence over people doctored images might hold. Research investigating the effects of altered photographs often involves exposing research subjects to counterfactual images and subsequently asking about their memories for related events. Experiments with doctored photographs have demonstrated that manipulating photos can change subjects’ autobiographical memories, memories for news events, and their attitudes and preferences.

Some research suggests that peoples’ preconceived attitudes can affect how they view an altered photograph. In one study, when subjects saw doctored photographs of political events that never happened, half the time they reported that they remembered the event. Furthermore, they were more likely to say that they remembered the event when it was congruent with their prior attitudes. For example, if an altered photograph reflected poorly on a Republican politician, Democrats were more likely to say that they remembered the event, and vice versa. This finding is supported by research that suggests that events are more likely to be remembered if they are easy to imagine or in line with a person’s expectations.

Research has also investigated how doctored photographs might influence viewers. If political leaders can alter photos of events in order to deceive the public about details of those events, it is important to understand the effects that these altered photographs might have. Research using famous photographs of protests has demonstrated that when people are shown a novel doctored version, they often report recognizing it,
even though they haven’t seen that version before. These doctored photographs can cause people to remember events differently (e.g., more positively or negatively), and consequently affect their attitudes about the events. Moreover, doctored photographs can change how people plan to behave in the future. When subjects were shown a photograph of a peaceful protest altered to make the event appear violent, they reported that they would be less likely to participate in protests in the future. This finding suggests that doctored photographs may be able to influence behavior, in addition to memories and attitudes.

Participating in a Lie
In addition, experiments have shown that people can be influenced by doctored photographs of themselves. Research on product preferences has suggested that when photographs are altered to show subjects using a particular brand of product, they later prefer that brand to alternatives and even express a greater likelihood of purchasing that brand. Experimenters studying false memories—memories for events that never occurred or details that are incorrect—have shown that altered photographs can even alter a person’s autobiographical memories. In one study, when researchers doctored childhood photographs of subjects to depict them in scenarios that they never experienced, 50 percent of the subjects developed false memories of those scenarios. Subjects can also develop false memories from doctored video footage of themselves, even when the footage depicts events that happened only a few days earlier.

People can be deceived by altered photographs in different contexts, such as politics, advertising, and their autobiographical memories. With the advent of image editing software, altering photographs has become even more accessible and commonplace. While altered photographs carry a serious potential to influence people, the ability to create them also provides less sinister opportunities for deception. Photographers can remove extraneous details crowding their photographs; people can view younger, more slender versions of themselves; and graphic designers can craft creative advertisements. In the modern era, because of the ubiquity of altered photographs, people are becoming accustomed to them. However, the creation of such images represents a lie.

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See Also: Advertising, Consumer Products; Authoritarian States; Caveat Emptor; Computer-Generated Images; Conspiracies; Cottingley Fairies; Deception and Technology; False Memories; Government Propaganda; Historical Narratives, False; Hitler, Adolf; Internet: Facebook and Social Media Sites; Memory; New York Sun’s Moon Series; News Media: Internet; Spin, Political; Stalin, Josef; UFOs; Urban Legends; World War II.

Further Readings


Piltdown Man
The Piltdown Man, one of the biggest scientific frauds of the 20th century, demonstrates that everyone, even so-called experts, can be gullible.