The Missing Popstars

The idea that a famous popstar is actually dead and has been replaced by a clone is a surprisingly tenacious one. Quite a few singers have fallen foul of this theory, including Avril Lavigne, a pop star who emerged on the music scene in 2002 with her album Let It Go. Featuring probably her most well-known single, "Complicated", Let It Go had a skater-grunge-pop vibe which made it an instant hit. However, there were rumours that Lavigne didn't cope well with her new-found fame. She was so overwhelmed by the publicity, the story goes, that her record company hired a lookalike, an actress called Melissa, to make appearances as the singer.

It already sounds pretty outlandish, but things were about to become even more sinister... in 2011, rumours started circulating on the internet that Lavigne was no longer Lavigne at all. It was claimed that she had died in 2003, and been replaced full-time by Melissa. The reason for this elaborate switch? Some claimed Lavigne's record company killed her off, others said she had died in an accident.

As with all conspiracy theories, the evidence was shaky, at best. Fans compared images of Avril pre- and post-2003, claiming her jaw line is different, her eyes, her make-up – even her handwriting! The rumours became so persistent that in 2018 Lavigne responded to them, saying there was no truth at all behind them. But then, if she is really Melissa, fans argued, she would say that...

Beatles megastar Paul McCartney is another musician who has been targeted by conspiracy theorists. Some fans believe that the pop star died in a car accident in 1966, and was replaced by a man who had won a Paul McCartney lookalike contest, called William Shears. To fuel the theory, there is a reference to Billy Shears on the Beatles' seminal album, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. The rumour continues to this day, with fans citing lyrics from Beatles songs, and even playing the records backwards, to find "evidence" for their claims.



Avril Lavigne - or is it Melissa?



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the text, then write T if the statement is true or F if the statement is false and correct the information.

Avril Lavigne was a rock star who died in 2002. _____

In 2011 rumors became more sinister, people said she had died in a plain accident. _____

According to the conspiracy she had died in 2003. _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Some fans said he died in a car accident in 1966. _____

_____

What do you think she said about her disappearance?

- _____
  _____
  _____

What did the Beatles do to fuel the theory that Paul McCartney?

- _____
  _____
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LIVEWORKSHEETS



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