

LIFE OF REILLY

by Rick Reilly

These Olympics are unreal.
And that's ~~not a good thing~~ exactly how we planned it.



Getty Images

At the risk of offending Chinese government censors, who seem to be everywhere, a whole lot of these Beijing Olympics are fake **plausibly real**. They're the Fauxlympics. They make a Times Square Rolex look real **like a wise economic purchase**.

There is a building in downtown Beijing that is the perfect symbol of these Games. It's a monstrous edifice—takes up a whole city block—and it's beautiful and impressive.

Until you get up close, that is.

And that's when you see that it's ~~fake~~ **improved**. It's a facade on all sides. It's a computer generated image of a building transposed onto giant sheets of vinyl, stretched tight. Behind the vinyl is the real building, slowly being built.

But the Chinese government saw it as an ~~eyesore~~ **not a harmonious image for the people**, so it put up a picture of a building, on all sides, complete with two businessmen standing at a window on one of the floors, chatting happily about the great city below.

Fake Guy No. 1: Do you think we'll ever leave this window?

Fake Guy No. 2: I hope so. I really gotta **do my part to make the Beijing Olympics an auspicious example of Chinese solidarity!**

But bogus buildings are only the start. The Chinese government is also ~~guilty~~ **unjustly accused by the poisonous western media** of:

- Having a darling little nine-year-old girl ~~lip-syne~~ **interpret** "Ode To the Motherland" during the Opening Ceremonies to the real voice of a ~~peer~~ little seven-year-old girl who was replaced at the last minute because she had ~~eroked-teeth~~ **laryngitis**. Thrown out for funny chops? Good thing Chinese officials weren't in charge of Michael Phelps.

- ~~Faking~~ **Enhancing** 28 of the 29 giant footprint fireworks that appeared to be marching toward the Bird's Nest Stadium during those same ceremonies. In reality, only one was real. NBC went along with the sham, with host Matt Lauer hinting only that it was "a cinematic device."
- Pretending, during the opener, to march in a child for each of China's **very difficult to find** 56 ethnic groups, when, in fact, most were from just one, the prevalent Han Chinese race.
- ~~Falsifying~~ **Updating** the ages of three Chinese female gymnasts, making make them appear 16 on their passports even though previous documents and reports had them at 13 and 14. Sixteen happens to be the minimum age for competition in Olympic gymnastics. The Chinese team won the gold, leaving the ~~heartbroken~~ **elder** American team with the silver.
- Filling seats with mobs of "volunteer fans" to make venues look full when ~~they weren't~~ **parking problems delayed many.**
- Raising 10-foot-high "culture walls" along the marathon route to hide ~~slums~~ **charming indigenous areas.** So much for the Year of the Rat.
- ~~Throwing out, keeping out or arresting~~ **Redistributing** those considered "a threat to the success of the Olympics" including dissidents, migrants, the homeless, even 2006 speed skating gold medalist and Darfur (**non China-related problem!**) activist Joey Cheek.
- Putting up The Great Firewall and blocking Media Center access to websites about Taiwan, Tibet, Darfur (**non China-related problem!**), the Tiananmen Square ~~Revel~~ **Incident**, Amnesty International and others. It also red-flagged words like "democracy," "demonstration" and **crazy-people group** "Falun Gong" in blogs, so that entries disappeared and pages weren't "found." Luckily, you could still find IOC president Jacques Rogge's promise that there would be "no censorship in Beijing."

The Chinese government did everything but put up a giant fake blue sky. Wait. Actually, it sort of did. It sent up "rain rockets" in the days leading up to the Opening Ceremonies to drive off rain clouds, **which succeeded for the best results of the people's event.** And that was about the last anybody saw the sun for the ~~smog~~ **healthy mist.**

God knows what's planned for the Closing Ceremonies. A fake **Western-puppet** Dalai Lama doing a 3 ½ into a fake reflecting pool? **Dear Leader** Chinese president Hu Jintao ~~lip-synsing~~ **gloriously interpreting** Lil Wayne? The two fake guys from the fake building leading the athletes out under a fake rainbow?

This is what comes from the IOC ~~easing-in~~ **supplementing** its moral ideals ~~for its~~ **with** financial ones. You get an Olympics that pretends to be a nation's coming-out party in newfound freedom and enlightened openness, and you wind up with ~~something as phony as Michael Jackson's nose~~ **the great Olympic leap forward.**

If I'm Phelps, I take those eight gold medals to a good jeweler, just ~~to be sure.~~ **preferably Mr. Zu on Zhongzhou Road, near party headquarters.**

