

elsewhere—isn't really inquiring; for it is part of the meaning of the word "inquire" that *you don't know how things will turn out*.¹⁷ That's why, when the government or our university launches an Official Inquiry into a disturbing scandal, some of us—suspecting that this "inquiry" will arrive at the desired, reassuring conclusion no matter *what* the evidence—reach for our scare quotes.

To be sure, people's motives are usually mixed, so there is a continuum of intermediate cases where what is going on is neither pure, disinterested inquiry nor outright sham: e.g., a scholar who has obtained a grant on the basis of an over-optimistic description of what his project will achieve, and fudges his report to avoid jeopardizing his prospects for future grant money; a scientist whose inadequate records of his work allow him to forget the inconvenient evidence his hypothesis can't explain;¹⁸ or a detective whose suspicions have focused prematurely on a single suspect, and who shrugs off evidence that might point to others.

Someone who desperately needs the money may persuade himself that he has a good chance of winning the lottery; someone who greatly fears that the mole that has appeared on his nose is cancerous may persuade himself that it looks worse than it really does. But the hope has no bearing on the likelihood that the ticket will win, nor the fear on the likelihood that the mole is malign; our wishes, hopes, and fears can affect our judgment of evidence, but they are not themselves evidence. Evidence consists, rather, of what we see, hear, etc. (experiential evidence) and background information (reasons); which, as I argued in *Evidence and Inquiry*,¹⁹ work together rather like clues and already-completed entries in a crossword puzzle.

Evidence may be better or worse; and whether, and if so, to what degree, a claim is warranted depends on how good the evidence is with respect to that claim. Reasons ramify, like crossword entries; and what makes evidence better or worse is analogous to what makes a crossword entry more or less reasonable: how *supportive* it is (analogue: how well an entry fits with its clue and already completed entries); how *secure* it is, independent of the claim in question (how reasonable the already-completed entries are); and how *comprehensive* it is, how much of the relevant evidence it includes (how much of the crossword has been completed). As this third clause reveals, if your evidence is too sketchy, you're not entitled to believe either way—which is no doubt why the English word "partial" has its two meanings: "incomplete," and "biased." As it also reveals, that we have no evidence that *p* doesn't mean that we