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“You call this archaeology?” How popular misrepresentations
may influence site discovery and preservation

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ABSTRACT

From Indiana Jones to Tomb Raider, archaeologists have tended to be portrayed as adventurous and wild grave robbers that hunt for secret treasures and mysterious artifacts. These long-standing icons have undoubtedly influenced public perception and can impact how archaeology is thought of and, by extension, how sites are discovered or preserved. The aim of this research was to evaluate what archaeology is and is not, and to point out the connections between public perceptions and pop culture imagery. Survey methodology along with literature and media reviews were conducted to supplement information regarding misrepresentations, to aid with interpretations of how the practice is thought of, and to highlight how sites may be overlooked, or even destroyed, due to opinions about what archaeology is. The results indicate that the public continues to misunderstand the discipline and makes associations based on media consumption. Further research can build off of this and work to increase public knowledge of the field to correct such enduring problems. What is ultimately found is that no, Professor Henry Jones, this is not what we call archaeology.