

The 'Deadicated' Reporter

— Case 66 —

The description of events given below was written out by A. A. Hill, of New York City, and published¹ by businessman and researcher Isaac Funk (the publisher of the *Funk and Wagnalls* dictionaries). Mr. Hill was known to Funk and described by him as a man of character and intelligence. At the time he wrote the story – at Funk's urging – Hill was the editor of *The Amateur Sportsman* magazine.

"Some twelve or fifteen years ago, I was the editor of the *New York Sunday Dispatch*, a newspaper well known at that period and for many years before.² One of our reporters was a man named Williamson, a son of the former owner, then deceased. He was about thirty years of age, and having long been connected with the paper, was retained on the staff by the new owner, more because of his faithfulness and loyalty and out of respect for his lamented father, than because of his journalistic or intellectual ability. It was his duty to take care of the city fire-department news and gossip, and his interest in the fire department and its affairs was unusual – I could almost say, phenomenal. Moreover, if to his faithfulness and zeal for his work had been added average talent, he would have been a treasure as a reporter. It used to wound his feelings greatly whenever I found it necessary to curtail or otherwise edit the copy he turned in concerning what seemed to me to be rather trivial fire-department matters.

"But he was suddenly stricken with illness and died within a few days. In casting about for someone to fill his place, I bethought myself of a quiet, modest, but very bright young journalist who had previously been in my employ in another city. In engaging him I was careful not to inform him that a member of the staff had died or that he was to fill a vacancy. The position did not warrant paying a large salary, and a bright young man could take on other work. So I wrote my young

friend that I could find work for him if he would come on and be willing to do anything called upon to do. He arrived the following Wednesday afternoon, and being a stranger in the city, I met him at the railway station and took him to the office. I gave him the desk formerly occupied for a good many years by his predecessor, who had then been dead for about a week, telling him he need do nothing that day, and if he would excuse me for a time while I finished some writing, I would then take him up-town and find him a place to board.

"In about fifteen or twenty minutes he suddenly appeared at my desk, looking astonished and agitated. He laid two sheets of manuscript before me, written on the usual copy paper of the office, with the remark: 'I did not write that.' I could not see much sense in the remark, but replied: 'Well, if you didn't, who did? Some of it looks like your handwriting.' His reply was: 'I don't know; as soon as I sat down I never felt so peculiar and drowsy in my life. I must have gone to sleep and when I was awakening I found myself writing, but it doesn't all look like my handwriting.'

"Now, I should explain that this young man's handwriting was nervous, small, and not clearly legible, while his dead predecessor had written a large, round hand that could be read easily. But the writing in question varied between that of the two; some of it was like the writing of the dead man and some like that of the new reporter, and other parts of it were a composite or intermixture of both. The last few words were undecipherable, and the sentence was apparently unfinished. It should likewise be stated that the deceased reporter had for years begun his report of the meetings of the fire commissioners in this form: 'The regular weekly meeting of the fire commissioners was held last Wednesday, Commissioner in the chair.' The manuscript the young man had placed before me began that way, altho if he himself had been the author of it in his normal condition, it would by no means be the

¹ Funk, Isaac, *The Psychic Riddle*, 1909, Class V, Case 1.

² One well-known contributor to this paper was poet Walt Whitman.

form he would begin a newspaper story of that kind. It purported to state what had been done at a fire commissioners' meeting, and altho it was not all clear or complete, there was enough to puzzle me.

"Now comes the most singular fact: I preserved the two pages of manuscript, and the next day ascertained what had been done at the fire commissioners' meeting, held perhaps an hour or two before it had been written. I was astonished to find that, so far as it went, it was a correct report of what had actually taken place.

"What was the agency by which this information was conveyed? Was it thought-transference or mind-reading? It could not have come from me. I certainly neither knew nor cared what they did at the meeting, and I had intended to omit publishing the report for that week altogether, or get an abstract for publication from some other paper, not sending the new man for the report until the following week. The information could hardly have been 'thought transferred' by any living fire commissioner from another part of the city; none of them was especially anxious that the *Sunday Dispatch* publish their reports, even if he were able to thus 'project' the information through space in this way. It could have been no one in the newspaper office, for no one had such information to impart, and there was only an office boy and a bookkeeper on the floor. It could not have been any trick or duplicity on the part of the new reporter himself. He knew nothing about the fire commissioners, or their meetings, or that they were published in the paper which was to employ him, even tho he had possess the miraculous power of reporting a meeting several miles away and when not attending it.

"Could the man who had just died, and who had always taken such a vital interest in the fire department and in the reports in the *Sunday Dispatch* concerning these meetings, have returned in spirit and through the new reporter communicated the report for publication?

"I will leave the solution to the reader. I have only stated the absolute facts."

Discussion

Being that these events took place over a hundred years ago, it's easy to assume that they are somehow less valid than cases described in more recent books, but on close examination, the evidence for Survival presented here is quite strong. Anyone who has read Isaac Funk's works could have no doubt of his integrity and perspicacity. Hill correctly points out that telepathy offers no enlightenment. Some might fall back on other extra-sensory explanations, but there was no link between the new reporter and the meeting's venue – no path for a mind, or thoughtform, or whatever to follow. So the theoretical possibilities of clairvoyance, an OBE, or remote viewing just aren't feasible. Also, the new reporter had neither the means, motive, nor opportunity to trick his new boss, even if he were crazy enough to try. The absolute facts that Hill has so succinctly provided point directly to the Survival of the human personality and to naught else.



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