

Spook Manifestations All Faked, Spirit Detective Claims



Gullible World Anxious To Believe—So Psychic Frauds Reap A Harvest

Dr. di Ghilini, who tells this story of spirit faking, is an investigator for the Los Angeles Ministerial Association and student of magic. An exposé of frauds, he has been instrumental in the arrest of several "mediums" in Hollywood who were purported to be swindling the wealthy. Because of his wide study of so-called "spiritual" and other such devices, he frequently gives entertainments, explaining the workings of the "spooks." — The Editor.

By Dr. U. L. di Ghilini
(As Told to Elsie Madison)

EVERYBODY in the world is a potential sucker! Every town in the world is a sucker town! Statesmen, movie stars, office boys, shop girls, truck drivers, policemen, seamstresses and business men are taken in yearly to the tune of millions of dollars by occult swindlers, who play on their supernatural superstitions, or in most cases, beliefs.

We are born with a yearning for something which doesn't exist, an awe for something we don't understand. I have never found a trick or a seance that I couldn't duplicate within three days. If I ever do, then perhaps I'll kick in and ask advice—and pay for it!

You may say to me, "But I went to a clairvoyant who told me my name, the date of my birth and answered two questions I wanted answered without even knowing about them."

Are you sure he knew nothing about them? His room was dimly lighted, there was a desk lamp focused on the spot on which you wrote your questions. You had to look through light to see him and were therefore a trifle blinded, whether you knew it or not.

TO DEMONSTRATE: I give you a piece of paper and a clairvoyant's lingo. Write your name on the paper, just to get your mind on yourself and the problems you want solved. Beneath your name write the date of your birth, and then the two questions you want me to answer.

While you are doing that I will walk across the room and gaze with a mysterious attitude into the crystal ball.

Of course, you should know that even a sucker can now see things in the crystal. The new improved ones are manufactured right here in my old home town, Los Angeles—not in India!

But to get back to the name that you just wrote down. Fold your paper over, so that I can't see what is written on it. Fold it again and again, just for your own satisfaction. All right, give it here. On second thought, hold it against your forehead and concentrate on your questions.

Now, look at your paper. What, there's nothing on it! Of course not—didn't you see me change it for a paper I had in my pocket all the time? What chance would you have with a clairvoyant and all his props?

As a matter of fact, I didn't even change the paper from one hand to the other. I just dropped the one you had into my lap and gave you another one. Think what I could do with dim lights and a nifty turban! I'd even have you burn the evidence yourself—just so you'd know I couldn't have seen it.

Here is the story of a demonstration of what can be produced in the way of spiritualistic phenomena to dupe the average citizen. In this seance, the medium was bound to a chair, with sleeves sewed to the trousers by people picked at random. It seemed utterly impossible for him to free himself.

He was placed in a cabinet enclosed with dark velvet curtains with slashes in them about two feet in length. The skeptic immediately suspects the curtains. He believes that they are either double or that they have pockets concealed in them, or that there is a man concealed in the back.

I HAVE demonstrated this "seance" a number of times and in all sorts of places, and only one man ever figured out just what was happening. That was Harry Blackstone, world-famous magician. He was in Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, at the time that I gave the performance there last year. His solution was as follows:

One of the committee from the audience is a



"stooze." He wears a false vest in which he carries flowers. The medium does not have to go through any Houdini acts to get his hands free—for the hands that were sewed to his trousers were rubber; his own are folded up against his shoulders. The "stooze" makes a final inspection of the cabinet, and in closing the curtains dumps the false front into the cabinet. The flowers begin to appear through the slits in the curtain, very slowly, and are tossed out to the audience.

APPARENTLY unexplainable movement of furniture is always a good way to impress victims. Light tables appear to stick to the hand of the medium. This is done with a ring on the medium's hand and a tiny hook on the top of the table.

Hands which appear out of the dark to give a ghostly thrill are produced by most mediums with false hands made of luminous gauze, or with rubber hands dipped in a luminous solution. They can also be made to appear with a magic lantern. People look stupidly to the front of the room and never think of the trick behind them.

When I use a girl as the medium in a demonstration, she is actually bound and tied. But the cabinet that is put over her has a series of black piano wires through it, which are very strong and very taut. When I place a tambourine inside the cabinet, I do it in such a way that it balances on the wires, then with the proper pressure it will bounce up and down, finally springing off.



Believe in spooks? You won't if you know the tricks, says Dr. U. L. di Ghilini, who demonstrates here some of the ways psychic manifestations are faked. Upper left, Dr. di Ghilini, with the aid of a couple of black threads, tilts a heavy chair. The other photo shows Mrs. Harry Houdini, kneeling, inspecting the bonds of Miss Jean Clark, who is about to become a "medium" for a demonstration by Dr. di Ghilini, standing back of the chair.

The bells are operated with several wires, also.

HOU DINI, who found it hard to get into seances because of his fame, exposed the trick of feeling hands clutching you in the darkness of "seances." It was one of those simple things which make us wonder that we didn't figure it out for ourselves.

The medium stands by the victim and clutches his arm with both hands. The lights go out. The

victim never notices, because of the dexterity of the operator, that one hand is substituted by a lead clamp with the same grip. When he was asked if he feels his dead uncle's hand on his shoulder, he answers in a trembling voice, "Yes."

The clairvoyant racket is a combination of all the bunco games and wire-tapping swindles rolled into one. Wire-tapping requires considerable capital and effort, while with the crystal gazer, the palmist, the spiritual medium and the clairvoyant, the investment usually consists of three or four red light bulbs; one good turban; a mustache, perhaps, and a keen natural psychology plus a little sex appeal. With these they are ready to begin operations.

★★★★★ And The Camera Caught It! ★★★★★

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A bullet intended for President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, fired by Giuseppe Zangara while Mr. Roosevelt sat in a car at Bay Front Park, Miami, Florida, February 15, 1933, struck and fatally wounded Mayor Anton J. Cermak of Chicago. Mayor Cermak, who died March 6, is seen in this photo just after the shooting as he was being helped to a car. Zangara was electrocuted.

THIS type of bunco artist has it all over the wire-tappers in other respects. A wire-tapper has one definite type of information to sell. The clairvoyant sells whatever his client wants, whether it is love advice, business advice, a message from a dead grandmother or a prediction of success as a movie star.

His charge is whatever he can get. If you have \$100 you'll probably pay at least half if someone can give you your heart's desire. Psychology is the master key to all the seemingly supernatural arts, but it isn't the psychology we meet in cap and gown behind the ivy-clad walls of alma mater.

The fakers who take your dollars and half dollars for an hour's entertainment and let it go at that are not dangerous. They are not guilty of anything more than petty larceny, if that, since you have had a certain pleasure from the performance. But the mystics who take it upon themselves to give financial advice, for which they take 10 per cent of the profit for the "church," are something else.

Others will predict that your husband or wife is under an evil influence and will give him or her mental telepathy treatments for a stupendous fee. Don't laugh! Wouldn't you give anything you possess to have devils cast out? We all would. There is no end to the number of ill people are willing to pay for to have cured.

THESE sly bandits have a language all their own. They call themselves "bookies" when speaking to one another. This term grew out of the fact that so many of them opened book stores rather than clairvoyant parlors for the edification of the detectives. I found this message in my mail box—an example of their code: "Steam 38's to 3's and Wilson box."

The "38's" are suckers; "3's" are detectives; Wilson means "will leave." There you have: "Steam up the suckers to call detectives and you will leave in a box."

This nefarious business is the oldest racket in existence and is still one of the highest paid. I would pity my own brains if I couldn't set up an establishment right in Hollywood and clean up at least \$25,000 in two or three months.

Don't imagine from that that Hollywood is the greatest sucker town on earth, though. It doesn't compare with Washington, D. C. Motion-picture people are gullible, but I happen to know that for every screen star who is taken in by a clairvoyant there are two representatives and one senator. Clairvoyants in the capital city have become expert lobbyists by telling these gentlemen which way the stars, the spirits or the fates intend them to vote.