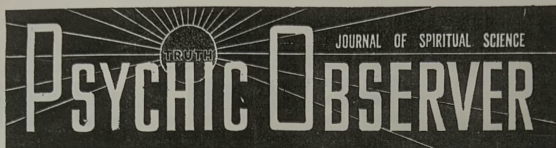


WE ARE IN MOURNING



NO. 520

SOUTHERN PINES, N. C., JULY 10, 1960

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

Truth For Authority Not Authority For Truth

**THE
TRAGIC DECEPTIONS
IN
MATERIALIZATION!
OR—
"WHY SPARE
THE
ANGELS?"**

Turn To Page 2 For This Fantastic Story

FRAUD UNCOVERED AT CHESTERFIELD SPIRITUALIST CAMP

INFRA-RED MOTION PICTURES REVEAL THIS GREAT DECEPTION

Shocking-Amarzing-But True!

By The Editor

Copyright Psychic Observer 1960

This is the story of an adventure—an adventure with a purpose. The purpose of this adventure was to record for all time, the truth of a very special type of science in the field of Spiritualism: MATERIALIZATION!

While it is a well known fact that materialization is a matter of record in the files of many Psychic Researchers, and we too, have files of photographs to prove it, this "adventure with a purpose" started out NOT TO RESEARCH—NOT TO INVESTIGATE—but to RECORD ONLY with the most modern technique of the day: the motion picture camera, infra-red lighting and infra-red film. Used in conjunction with this most modern approach was the OBSERVER-SCOPE commonly called "SNOOPER-SCOPE" by the armed forces. This instrument was used to clearly observe the enemy regardless of darkness at a distance of a thousand feet. When this instrument was placed on the rifle barrel, a good marksman could hit the enemy squarely between the eyes in the dead of night! This then was our approach, with permission granted from all parties concerned, to the putting on record, the great truth of MATERIALIZATION.

Psychic Observer secured the services of a man whose stamp of approval on the project would demand a closer look from those who heretofore have openly sneered at the possibilities of this great science. This man, Dr. Andrija Puharich, whom I was lucky enough to catch in between trips in his search for the "sacred Mushroom" gladly consented to accompany me on what he considered "one of the greatest adventures of his life!"

Dr. Puharich secured all the necessary equipment: cameras, film, lights and two "Snooper-scopes," and arrived, after a rough weekend (which is a story in itself) at the Indianapolis Airport, Indianapolis, Indiana, Sunday, May 29, 1960.

We were accorded a royal welcome at Camp Chesterfield, and the word soon got around that we were there to record, for the first time in the history of American Spiritualism, motion pictures of materialization.

The medium was Edith Stillwell; the cabinet attendant, Mable Riffle. (The duties of a cabinet attendant are to see that the seance runs smoothly and to help, with her presence, some of the more shaky sitters.)

Our first three seances were conducted with Edith Stillwell sitting outside the cabinet in the chair normally occupied by the cabinet attendant, and Mable Riffle, who was to act as cabinet attendant, sat back with us in the chairs for the sitters. This in itself, Edith Stillwell sitting outside of the cabinet for the materialization, indicated a source

of tremendous power, and because of this, Dr. Puharich and myself had visions of a tremendous scoop for the Psychic World at large.

Our first sitting (Monday) was a sort of "get acquainted time" because we had not as yet set up all of our equipment. (Tuesday was the day we had planned to start rolling.) We went through the standard procedure; said the Lord's Prayer, and sang (creaked and cracked are better words), our way through one of the usual hymns. Halfway through (thank goodness) the second chorus, the "phenomena" started. A gentleman appeared and announced himself as Brother Ben; he was replete with brilliant headgear that seemed to flow down as far as his waist. He philosophized a bit, then turned to the cabinet to personally bring out another "spirit" with the statement that it was her first try at this sort of thing and he wanted to be of help in the situation. This creature was gorgeously arrayed in pink "ectoplasm" and called herself "Sister Mary." Both "spirits" were on the floor at the same time, which gave us a look at everyone in the room; Brother Ben, Sister Mary, Edith Stillwell and Mable Riffle. This was great! What camera shots we could take! What proof we could give to the world! Finally, it was announced that the power had run out and that the seance would have to come to an end. In due time the white lights were turned on and we sat back congratulating each other on the wonder of it all!

Frankly, there wasn't much sleep for either of us that night. Puharich and I sat on the front porch of the Western Hotel until 2 a.m. planning our camera layout, and when we finally did hit the sack, sleep for me was mighty hard to come by.

Little did I know of the great shock that was in store for me!

Morning finally arrived, and after a good breakfast, with more planning of camera angles, we went over to Edith Stillwell's seance room and assembled our equipment which we had unloaded there the day before.

I could go into a long and detailed description of the time we had getting our lighting up to par in order to record perfectly all that transpired in the seance room, and actually, we did not start shooting perfect film until Wednesday, June 1st. We discovered that we needed more infra-red lighting for crystal clear pictures, and after a BIG search in Indianapolis, we were lucky enough to come up with two 250 watt infra-red lights. This gave us altogether, 1000 watts of pure infra-red lighting, which incidentally, does not throw out as much light as the standard 15 watt red lights normally used in a materialization seance room. But let us for the moment return to Monday night's seance. While it is true that we did not record anything on film that night, the "Snooper-scope" worked like a "Snooper-scope" should, and Andrija, (Dr. Puharich) saw perfectly everything that transpired in the room. Later, he told me what he saw, and frankly I didn't believe: "that the spirits were entering the seance room from a door just adjacent to the cabinet!"

I was profoundly shocked! Edith Stillwell, whom I had always praised to the skies as one of the top mediums in the Spiritualist movement, just couldn't—wouldn't—fake a seance! I said: "Andrija, these people know what we are doing; they have even looked through the 'snooper-scope' themselves; they know its powers of observation, and besides, why should they take such terrible chances with the Editor of *Psychic Observer*, and a scientist of your reknown, recording for posterity, every move-

ment that transpires in the room!" The discussion grew hotter and heavier; not from Andrija's side, but from my side. I could not, no matter how much I badgered him, get him to admit that he had made even the slightest error of observation through the "snooper-scope!"

Tuesday night's seance, however, was the clincher! This clincher did not come to light though, until the following day, Wednesday, June 1, 1960.

We had been quite fortunate in discovering that Indianapolis was the only city in a radius of a 1000 miles that could boast, as one of its enterprises, a firm called FILMCRAFT LABORATORIES. These people process every and all types of film, and processing infra-red film, which had been one of our greatest concerns, was second nature to them. Hence, all we had to do was take the film we had shot the night before down to Filmcraft; it was processed on the spot, and we viewed our efforts in their projection room the same day. That is why I say "Wednesday was the clincher," this was the day when we were viewing Tuesday night's film. I could hardly believe my eyes! Andrija was right! The "spirits" were coming from a door adjacent to the cabinet; entering the cabinet through its loose side-curtain, and walking through the front opening of the cabinet to be photographed by us. Little did they know that we were photographing the whole bit!

After viewing this ridiculous fakery, my apologies to Andrija for doubting his "snooper-scope" observations, were not very good, due to my feelings of guilt for my erstwhile good friends, Edith Stillwell and Mable Riffle. Even now, writing this story just about tears my heart right out of its socket, but this is a story that must be written, and the film must be publicized! Being Editor of the *Psychic Observer*, one of the foremost psychic publications in the world, carries its burden in presenting psychic truths to the world at large. The masthead clearly states: "TRUTH FOR AUTHORITY, NOT AUTHORITY FOR TRUTH" hence, there is no place else to turn.

On Wednesday, June 1st, 1960, we were recording movies that were of excellent quality. The seance did not last long, but we got about 30 feet of fabulous pictures.

It might be wise to inject here, that at no time did we discuss our

findings with Edith Stillwell, Mable Riffle, or for that matter, anyone else in or around Camp Chesterfield. We kept the whole thing to ourselves, and while Filmcraft Laboratories knew we were attempting to take motion pictures of the spirit, I do not believe that they were aware of just what action WAS taking place.

Thursday, June 2, on our regular 8:30 schedule, we sat again. This time Edith Stillwell sat inside the cabinet; (as I have already mentioned, Edith sat for the first three nights outside of the cabinet where she could also, out of trance, witness some of her own "phenomena.") However, absolutely nothing occurred. Neither "actors" nor "spirits" showed up. This may be due to the fact that before the "seance" I had asked Edith if she minded my putting two chairs in front of the curtain that covers the door: (where the "spirits" had been entering from). I had mentioned that it would look better in our recorded seance if this curtain, which swung back and forth on a single arm, wasn't standing straight out, making it look on film, like a curtained hallway from the door of her living quarters to the cabinet. She agreed to the arrangement, but all we drew was a blank!

Edith said that she would try again on the following night which was June 3rd.

Andrija and I discussed the point, that perhaps they, Edith and Mable, were onto the fact that we were recording more than they thought we should, but apparently not, for the following night, they even had another medium, Gladys Strohm, to help in the sitting. Mable Riffle said that it would help give more power to Edith.

Andrija and I were filled with misgivings. We still had high hopes that we could photograph the real thing; we had also discussed the fact that if this night was a dry run, we would just pack up our equipment, and head for home. While we had photographed enough evidence of fraud to upset the whole field of spiritualism for many years to come, we had the thought that, in front of another medium, trickery would not be resorted to.

The seance started as usual; prayer, a few hymns, and while we again bogged down on how the tunes should go, our feelings were good and our thoughts ran high.

The "phenomena" started before we stopped singing, and the motion pictured results of some of the proceedings that took place in the next hour, will go down in history as the greatest recordings of fraud in the history of the movement of Spiritualism!

The whole sordid mess is one of the bitterest pills that I have ever had to swallow, and my heart will bleed for a long long time for those poor misguided people, Edith Stillwell and Mable Riffle.

It is true, of course, that all mediums are not frauds; there are some very fine ones, and no doubt there are some very fine ones at the Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp, but I for one, will never go there again to seek them out; that is, unless—Mable Riffle is no longer in charge of the Camp, and a great sweeping has taken place!

EDITOR'S NOTE: The "spirit" pictures that follow this story are reproduced from our 16mm infra-red motion picture film, blown up approximately 25 times their original size. This should indicate how crystal clear the motion pictures themselves are.

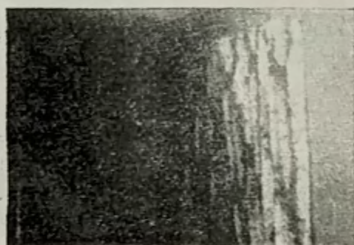
SERIES ONE

Here are a series of frames taken from the 16mm motion picture film showing how TOO MANY so-called materializations are accomplished.

This film shows the right corner of the materialization cabinet; the medium, Edith Stillwell, had gone into the front opening just a few minutes before, and while we were saying the Lord's Prayer, Dr. Andrija Puharich started rolling the film. This is what takes place when everybody is feeling "reverent!"

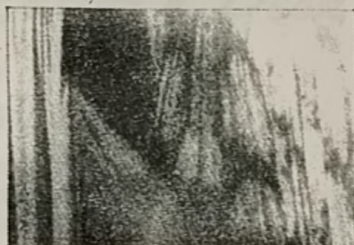
Picture No. 1

Shows the right side of the cabinet curtain being pushed out.



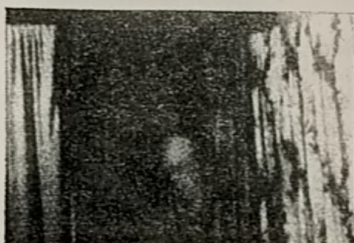
Picture No. 3

Curtain being pushed farther out to meet with flowered curtain that covers the door going to Edith Stillwell's living quarters. Flowered curtain is also moving out to meet cabinet curtain.



Picture No. 3

"Spirit" who later called himself John William Draper, emerging from behind curtain that covers the door that leads to Edith Stillwell's living quarters.



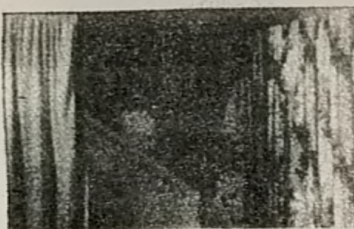
Picture No. 4

"John William Draper" halfway through his trip from flowered curtain to the cabinet.



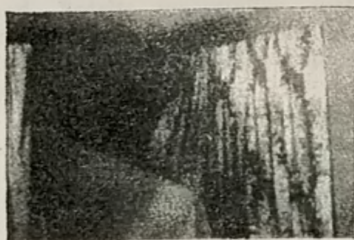
Picture No. 5

"Draper" has finished his "hokus-pokus" bit, and is seen here leaving the "materialization" cabinet, and is returning from whence he came, behind the flowered curtain.



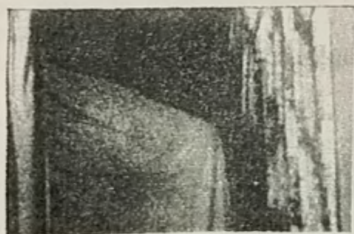
Picture No. 6

Look closely at center of picture, shows the top of this person's head.



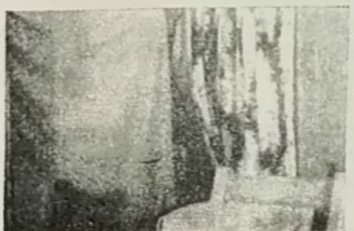
Picture No. 7

Look closely again, the outline of someone's arm as they hold the curtain out for better coverage.



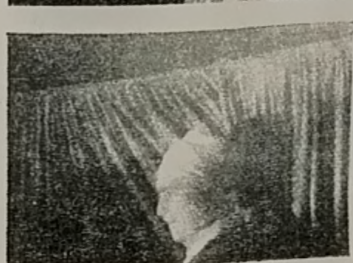
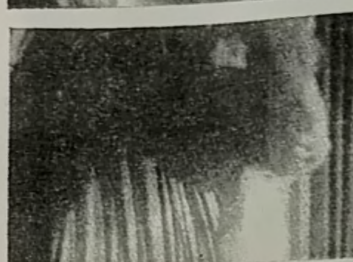
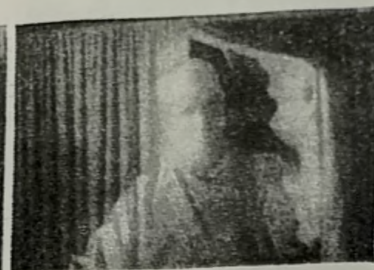
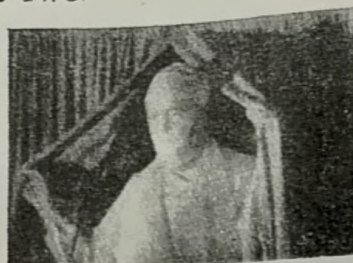
Picture No. 8

The side of cabinet curtain, and the flowered door curtain formed into a solid curtained wall from living quarters to cabinet.



SERIES TWO

This shows the "Draper Spirit" going through his paces. His movements depicted a ballet dancer as he tossed his shiny "ectoplasmic" cloth to and fro.



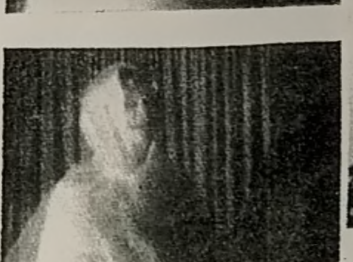
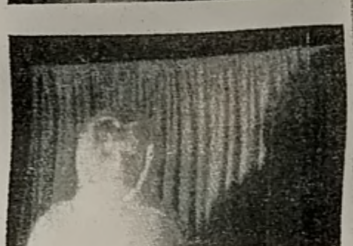
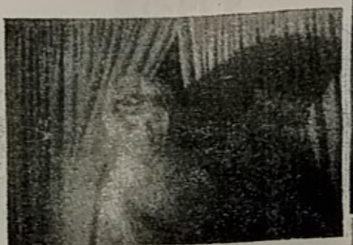
Homer Watkins Standing By Lady

TRUTH FOR AUTHORITY

SERIES THREE

This shows the "spirit" of "Sister Agnes" who claims that she is the one who meets accident victims as they make the change called death.

NOTE: Also from our files, is this picture (with glasses) of Penny Umbach, who looks enough like "Sister Agnes" to be her twin.



Penny Umbach (with glasses)

NOT AUTHORITY FOR TRUTH

SERIES FOUR



The top three pictures in clearly, but this one frame this series shows, left to right, (center) will give you an idea of how the "spirits" toss the er," and Gladys Strohm. Mable Riffle had suggested that we take pictures of the inside of the cabinet to show the medium, Edith Stillwell and the "spirits," all at the same time. The moving pictures show this sequence



Edith Stillwell leaving cabinet after the seance

(Continued on Page 4)

PSYCHIC OBSERVER

Published twice monthly, 10th and 25th, by Psychic Observer, Inc. Editorial and advertising offices at Drawer 90, Southern Pines, North Carolina. Editor-Publisher Tom O'Neil.

Printed by The Colonial Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with second class postage paid at Southern Pines.

ADVERTISING RATES
Display Advertising: \$4.00 a column inch; 6 consecutive insertions for the price of five. Forms close six weeks in advance.
Classified Advertising: 20c a line. No contract accepted for less than 6 insertions. Minimum charge, \$6.00.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Subscription rates for Psychic Observer are: One year, \$5.00; two years \$8.00; and three years, \$10.00.

FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY
JULY 10 1960
You will find this number in the upper left hand corner of the first page. This number is advanced every two weeks—showing the number of Psychic Observers issued up to date. The date of this paper is:

FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY
If the number on your wrapper corresponds with the number in the upper left hand corner of the Front Page, then your subscription has expired. You are cordially invited to renew your subscription some time ahead of its expiration. Watch the number on your wrapper! When renewing your subscription, write your name and address plainly. Make all checks payable to Psychic Observer Inc., Drawer 90, Southern Pines, N. C.
JULY 10, 1960 25c COPY

Change of Address: Requests for change of address must reach us at least thirty days before date of issue with which it is to take effect. We are not responsible for copies lost through failure to provide us with change of address as per above request. The Post Office does not forward newspapers and magazines. This Notice is important. All checks, drafts, money orders and correspondence should be addressed and payable to: Psychic Observer, Inc., Drawer 90, Southern Pines, N. C.

From The Editor's Desk

BY TOM O'NEIL

Are We What The Scoffers Say We Are?

Let's suppose together for a few paragraphs—

Suppose you were an individual in the foreranks of the movement called Spiritualism. Occupying such a spot, you accepted your position with a grave sense of responsibility, and believing in the truths Spiritualism has to offer, you are anxious to share these with the world.

Suppose a little further—you ponder about how these truths can be most effectively and convincingly presented to the public who is either ignorant of or scornful of them. You need proof, hard, cold, tangible facts—something to sink your teeth into!

Suppose after you think, pray and meditate, you decide to take a long chance—a real long chance. BUT, if successful, you will have that hard, cold, tangible proof.

What did you decide? A motion picture, via infra-red photography, of a materialization and trumpet seance! Incredible, you think—maybe even impossible. BUT (the little big word) if successful, what a tremendous impact! Those who come to scoff at such a film will stay to marvel, learn and maybe, even believe.

Suppose you go ahead with this revolutionary idea. You purchase the expensive film . . . you engage reputable, scientific researchers, as anxious as you to prove personal survival, to participate in the seance . . . you obtain the services of mediums who are "giants" in the field of physical phenomena . . . you go to work!

The mediums fully comprehend that the seance is a scientific experiment with an ultimate aim of securing indisputable proof of personal survival after the change called death for a skeptical world.

The seance is about ready to begin . . . cameras are loaded . . . one scientist stands by with a snooperscope . . . the medium is in the cabinet . . . the cabinet tender sits nearby . . . the air around you is vibrant with a sense of expectancy and hope . . . the seance begins.

The medium is entranced. Spirits materialize, walk around the room, approach you, speak to and with you. All the time the cameras are grinding and the snooperscope is scanning every inch of the room.

And then it is all over. Specially trained technicians develop your precious infra-red film . . . you are enthusiastic to the point of bursting with pride. You are going to do what Lodge, Schrenck-Notzing, Flammarion, Crookes attempted to do. But these men didn't have the tools that you now have—who ever heard of infra-red film back in those days.

No, you and you alone are going to have that proof so desperately needed for so long.

The processed film is returned. You load the filmholder . . . the projector starts to grind.

As it grinds on, you sink lower and lower into your chair . . . you cannot believe your eyes! It can't be, you say to yourself. It can't be!

But it is! Cameras don't lie! There aren't any materialized spirits! . . . only actors . . . people popping in and out of partially concealed doors . . . all quick-change artists waving cotton gauze 'ectoplasm.'

Suppose all this happened to you. What would you do? Destroy the film . . . sell it to the powerful anti-Spiritualist press who would have a field-day with it . . . print it in the Spiritualist press . . . lose all faith in the philosophy that has previously brought you knowledge and proof of survival and peace within . . . button your lip up forever because you cannot bring yourself to destroy the faith of thousands who

have been helped both physically and spiritually by Spiritualism and demonstrations of physical phenomena even by fake mediums . . .

Just suppose all this happened to you. What would you do?

You tell us . . . are we what the scoffers say we are?



EDITH
STILLWELL

MABLE
RIFFLE



This is the Western Hotel at Camp Chesterfield. Dr. Puharich and I sat on this porch until 2 and 3 o'clock each morning discussing, with disbelief, the fact that the people of the camp would indulge in such outlandish trickery as proven by our films.



Editor's Note:

This is the entrance to Camp Chesterfield. Note the sign that says "Spiritualist Camp." This may be so, but Dr. Puharich and I had a tough time finding any "spirits!"

A Thumbnail Sketch of Dr. Andrija Puharich

Many of Psychic Observer readers may not know of Dr. Puharich or his many activities. Here is a short biographical sketch.

Dr. Andrija Puharich is an American of Yugoslav descent. He took his medical degree at Northwestern University, specializing in physiology and internal medicine. In 1947 Dr. Puharich began to investigate extrasensory perception (ESP). The following year he founded a research laboratory in Glen Cove, Maine, and designed and built a special Faraday Cage—a copper-sheathed, double box which enabled him to isolate a "sensitive" within an electrical field and determine that electricity was a significant aid in the study of ESP. He was able to carry on his own experiments with the sacred mushroom after he discovered the AMANITA MUSCARI growing in the woods a half mile from his laboratory. Dr. Puharich now lives in New York and is continuing his research on the psychical effects and metaphysical history of THE SACRED MUSHROOM.

Psychic
Observer
will
continue
this
campaign
to stamp
out fraud
in this
great field
of
Spiritualism!

Send Us
Your Letters
of Support
NOW!