

Lincoln's famous dream

ESP experts believe "precognition" is fairly common — Abraham Lincoln's dream is their best-known example

BY CHARLES ROBBINS

Did you ever have a dream that seemed, when you looked back on it, to have foretold the future? A lot of people have had, or think so. Dr. J. Gaither Pratt, a leading figure in the field of parapsychology, which specializes in such matters, says he estimates that the individuals who have convincingly recognized one or more future events are at least as common as left-handed people!

Until the time of Freud, the human race more or less took it for granted that there was a supernatural quality to dreams. They were a means, it was felt, of communication with higher powers, which often used them to warn, counsel and forecast.

Freud's masterwork, "The Interpretation Of Dreams," changed all that. In his opinion, dreams revealed not the future but the individual dreamer's past, especially his sexual past, and for the last 20 or 30 years this view has been the prevailing one.

Now, with the slow emergence of parapsychology as a science, the pendulum seems to be starting to swing back, at least in relation to so-called prophetic dreams. For instance, a practising psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Dr. R. K. Greenbank, recently wrote:

"Modern mankind, with much hardship, often must relearn facts which were accepted by the ancients. We see this particularly clearly in the phenomena of the prophetic nature of dreams.

... With the development of science, this particular bit of knowledge was forgotten. Now we are beginning to become aware of the possibility of dreams, in certain cases, actually accurately portraying future events."

He then cited as a striking example of his point a dream which came to Abraham Lincoln shortly before his assassination. The same dream also is referred to by Dr. Pratt in his book, "Parapsychology: An Insider's

View of ESP," recently published by Doubleday.

According to Dr. Pratt, the circumstances under which Lincoln told this dream and the manner in which the record was preserved endow the incident with more than ordinary interest.

It was at a White House celebration of Lee's surrender that Lincoln first described his strange experience. Mrs. Lincoln had expressed concern that he seemed unusually silent and morose, and the President reluctantly explained that he had been troubled by a dream. Only a few close friends of the Lincolns were present, but one of them, Ward Hill Lamon, U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia, went home and, that same night, wrote down Lincoln's dream exactly as the President described it:

"About ten days ago, I retired very late. I had been waiting for important dispatches. . . I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a deathlike stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs.

"There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room. No living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along.

"It was light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me, but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break?"

"I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of affairs so mysterious, and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived in the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening sur-



His last picture, made four days before his assassination



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"Who is dead?" Lincoln demanded. "The President," answered the soldier.

prise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. "Who is dead in the White House?" I demanded of one of the soldiers.

"The President," was his answer. "He was killed by an assassin."*

As a footnote to the story, it might be added that Lincoln's murderer, John Wilkes Booth, himself seems to have been affected by a dream. The fact is mentioned in another

recent book, "Psychological Studies of Famous Americans," edited by Norman Kiell (Twayne). In one of its chapters, Dr. Philip Weissman, a psychiatrist, reports that when Booth was an infant his mother had a dream in which she saw him engaged in "an act of brave but bloody violence in the name of the country." According to Dr. Weissman, Mrs. Booth, who doted on her younger son, repeated this dream to him so many times that it became fixed in his mind and may have helped precipitate the tragedy at Ford's Theater on the night of April 14, 1865. (THE END)

* Excerpted from the book "Parapsychology: An Insider's View of ESP." Copyright © 1964 by J. Gaither Pratt. Published by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

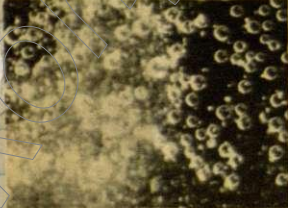
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Lord Halifax (1839-1934)

Ghost book, N.Y. 1944, Dieder

in : Margolis, J.A. : Strange &
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p 254-5 (over)

