

Druid Dreams & Other Stories

by

Alfred R. Taylor

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ISBN-13: 978-1468029864
ISBN-10: 146802986X

For Jason & Athena
Read this to your children someday.
I love you.
Dad

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Druid Dreams

*There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
Hamlet act I, scene V*

Sipping the last remains of a Pepsi Big-Gulp, I read my patient's file for the fifth time as I waited for the session to begin. My patient was a man with a tortured soul. His problem was simple enough. He had an acute fear of dogs. However, he also had an unusual resistance to treatment. I tried every type of therapy I could think of: aversive conditioning, behavior therapy, client-centered therapy, Gestalt therapy, and insight therapy. Nothing I tried had any effect upon the patient's condition. He continued to have nightmares about being chased by dogs. I decided to try a new approach based upon a pseudo-Freudian theory I had been working on.

Analyzing the dream under hypnosis could unlock the hidden trauma buried deep within his mind, but the use of this technique is highly controversial. My standing in the psychiatric community could be in jeopardy if this treatment failed. Although sometimes, I must think about the patient more than I think about my reputation. Jean would argue that point, but she's a lawyer and my ex-wife. In legal

circles her reputation and credibility must be impeccable, or she could become disbarred. But in the psychiatric field, there are no cut and dried precedents to cling to and no judge to decide that the case is too questionable. I had to use the only measure that matters to me: my conscience.

I loaded the camcorder with the tape I had labeled for this session. I videotape most of my sessions as extra insurance against a malpractice suit. This was another of Jean's ideas, but sometimes she's right. Anything can happen in a session involving hypnosis, and it doesn't hurt to be a little cautious.

I sucked the last drops from my Pepsi and threw the cup away as I checked the batteries in my strobe light. The strobe itself has little to do with hypnosis. It only provides a focal point for my patient to concentrate on, allowing me to do the real work of putting them under.

My intercom buzzed. I put the strobe down and pressed the talk button, "Yes."

"Mr. Mulakin is here for his appointment," Joyce said.

"Send him in," I said.

The door opened and John appeared. Today he was wearing blue jeans and a light-blue Henley shirt. It was embroidered with the words "Grand Canyon" over the left breast. He smiled at me. But from the look in his eyes, I could see he hadn't been sleeping well.

"Good Morning, Dr. Orwell," John said.

"Morning John. How's the advertising business?" I asked.

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“The usual, pushy clients and bossy editors.” John pointed toward the camera. “What’s that for?”

“I would like to try a new treatment today. The treatment involves hypnosis and a visual record of the sessions is sometimes useful.” I didn’t want John to feel uncomfortable, so I omitted the legal reasons for the camera and concentrated on the medical reasons.

“Why the new treatment?” John sat in the padded chair across from the desk.

“Sometimes under hypnosis patients will remember specific events which are the basis for their trauma. If I can find the specific events in your life on which these nightmares are centered, I can help you deal with them.”

“Is this dangerous?” He smiled then asked. “I won’t wake up thinking that I’m a chicken or anything?”

“I hope not,” I laughed. “Contrary to popular belief, hypnosis is nothing more than a heightened state of awareness. It is a state of mind where you can filter out all of the distractions and concentrate on a single task. I will begin by suggesting that you describe your recurring nightmare.”

“Doctor, I describe my dream to you every time I have it. It’s always the same.”

“Yes, but with hypnosis, I will be able to discover the memory that’s causing the dream. Then together we can bring that memory to the surface and find out why it’s bothering you.”

“Okay,” John sounded dubious. “When do we start?”

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“Right now,” I turned the camcorder on and placed the strobe on the edge of my desk.

“Is that light set to my brain wave pattern?” he asked.

“No, it just gives you something interesting to look at while I hypnotize you. Just sit back and relax. . . . Look into the light and let your mind wander. . . . Now clear your mind and let yourself float.”

I could see that John was already beginning to lose himself in the light. It could be his fatigue, or he may just be easy to hypnotize. A moment later, I noticed that his pupils had fully dilated. He appeared to be under.

I turned to the camera and said, “Let the record show that the subject is under hypnosis in less than five minutes.”

“John, can you hear me?”

John said, “Yes doctor.”

“Good, I want you to become an unattached observer. You are in no way taking part in the events you will witness. I want you to focus on the dream where you are being chased by dogs.” After I said this, John’s fingers and feet began to twitch nervously, but his pupils remained dilated.

“Remember you are a casual observer, not a participant in this dream. Tell me what kind of dogs are chasing the man in your dream? I asked.”

“Not dogs . . . Wolves,” John said.

“The dreamer is being chased by wolves?” I asked. Wolves can symbolize things in dreams that dogs don’t, so I wanted to be clear.

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“Yes,” John said. “They’re hungry.”

“What’s the dreamer doing?” I asked.

John twitched a little when he replied: “Running for a tree.”

“What kind of tree?”

“Oak.” John said.

“Does he make it to the tree?” I asked.

“No . . . a wolf came out of nowhere and bit him on the arm. Another wolf has jumped on him and he is being pulled to the ground.” John suddenly grasped at his throat.

“Remember,” I told him firmly, “you are not involved in these events. You are only an observer.”

John slowly pulled his hand down from his throat and relaxed. His pupils were still dilated, and he appeared to be relaxed again.

“What happened to him?” I asked.

“A wolf tore his throat out.” John’s face contorted as if he were experiencing extreme pain.

“Stay with it,” I said. “What happened next?”

“He’s floating over his body and watching it being eaten. He turns and a light is drawing him away from his body. He floats into the light.” John’s face became relaxed, almost serene.

This new detail troubled me. In all my experience and all of the journal articles I’ve read on dream therapy, this is the first time a patient has reported that a dream continued after death.

“What happens after that?” I asked.

“Nothing . . . Blackness.”

I made some notes in John's file. "How old are you in the dream?"

"Not sure."

"Take a guess."

"No more than twenty summers," John said.

"Why do you say summers?"

"He thinks his birthday is sometime near the first full moon after the summer solstice. He really doesn't know."

I was dismayed by this so, I checked John's file. I was certain that he was born in December. I flipped through until I found his original patient application and verified that he was born on December 12, 1960. I was trying to establish when in his childhood the traumatic incident occurred. Now, I'm not sure what I've got. I decided to start from the beginning.

"What is the man's name?"

"Yalt," John replied.

"What kind of name is that," I asked incredulously.

"Don't know. It's the only one he has."

"Tell me where Yalt is?" I asked.

John's eyes darted back and forth. "He's where the river passes through the wall that the invader's built."

"Describe the wall," I asked.

"It's made of stones. It runs to the horizon in both directions. Every few miles or so a guard outpost is built near the wall. There is one near the bank of the river."

"Tell me what this place is called?" I asked.

John twitched in the chair as he replied, "The invaders call it Hadris."

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I had listened to just about enough of this. It was getting too much to believe, so I decided to test my patient's condition. I picked up a glass ash tray from off my desk and flung it across the room. It struck the ceramic base of a lamp and made a loud cracking sound. The lamp was cracked, but the ashtray bounced off unbroken. John's condition remained unchanged. He didn't flinch, and his pupils remained fixed and dilated. He was actually under hypnosis.

At first I thought the wolf was a physical manifestation of John's guilt or fear. I believed his subconscious was communicating to him through these dreams: combining his present guilt or fear with a memory of a childhood trauma. This new information about another personality buried deeply within his subconscious changed everything. It could be a past-life regression, or it could be a multiple personality disorder.

I made some notes and continued my questions.
"Tell me about the people who built the wall."

"They came from the south. They march in great numbers and burn everything in their path." John said.

The intercom buzzed. I slapped the button hard,
"Yes."

"Sorry for the interruption, but you've run ten minutes over." Joyce sounded apologetic. I knew she hated interrupting me when I'm with a patient. "Your next patient is here to see you."

"Thank you," I said, trying not to sound annoyed.

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“John, I want you to remember the time and place you’re in now. When you hear the word “Yeux,” I want you to return to this dream. Do you understand?” I asked.

John replied without flinching or rapid eye movement: “Yes.”

“Good, now when I clap my hands you will wake up feeling fine and not remembering any of the things. You watched Yalt do.”

I clapped my hands not quite knowing what to expect. John opened his eyes and looked about the room.

“What happened?” he asked.

“It went well,” I replied. “I’ll need to see you again in two days. Have Joyce set up the appointment.”

“Why so soon?” John asked.

I walked John to the door. “I need to follow up on a few things. Once this treatment is begun, it’s best not to stretch it out longer than necessary. Call me if the dream returns, or if you have any other problems.”

John’s reply was relaxed and casual, “Okay Doc, See ya later.”

I had a difficult time keeping my mind on my next patient. He was an obsessive compulsive who could barely go an hour without a cigarette. I could see the tension on his face, and I knew he wasn’t trying the treatments I suggested. His wife forces him to see me, and I thought he wouldn’t mind ending early. I was right. He had a cigarette in his mouth before his hand reached for the door.

I put John’s tape into the VCR and watched it for any sign that he was faking the hypnosis. I didn’t see

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anything unusual, except for the way his eyes darted back and forth when he answered my questions. I examined the tape for any sign that he reacted to the ash tray hitting the lamp. John didn't flinch or react to the sound. His pupils remained fixed and dilated. I rewound the tape and didn't watch the monitor, but only listened to his voice. I listened for voice inflections or pauses which would indicate John was lying. I didn't hear any.

I decided to call Frank Wells for a second opinion. In college, he was one of my favorite professors, and he was invaluable to me during my residency. His advice was the only one I could trust in a case this unusual. He's a noted psychologist, twice published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. I hate to make a fool of myself, but if I must, I would rather do it with a friend.

He invited me up for the evening, so I decided to leave right after my last appointment. Frank always had a few drinks after dinner to help him sleep. I wanted him to see this tape stone sober. It was the only way I could be absolutely certain of his findings. I hated to think of Frank as having a drinking problem, but alcohol and psychology don't mix.

I told Joyce to head out early as well. Then I walked across the street to the Seven-Eleven and bought a Big Gulp for the long trip. Caffeine is my only vice, and fortunately, it's cheap.

Two hours and a Big-Gulp later, I arrived at Frank's house. It was a copy of one of those lush manor homes straight out of *Gone with the Wind*. It had a large front

porch with huge Greek columns. Ellen's car was missing, and I couldn't remember where she liked to park, so I pulled out of the driveway and parked on the grass next to the road.

Frank answered the door before I could ring the bell. He looked relaxed. He held a large glass of iced-tea in his hand and a copy of Psychology Today under his arm. He wore shorts and a polo shirt. I suddenly felt very overdressed and loosened my tie.

"Don't just stand there, come in," he said.

I wiped my feet and entered Frank's posh foyer. "Sorry to trouble you like this, but I could really use your opinion."

"Did you come here straight from the office?" he asked.

I shrugged my shoulders and nodded yes.

Frank pushed back his glasses to regard me with his serious brown eyes. "So what's got you so worked up?"

"I've had a very curious hypnotic session," I said.

"So you put it on video tape?" He took the cassette out of my hand and examined the label.

"I tape all of my sessions for legal reasons."

"I guess it paid off marrying a lawyer."

"It did . . . until it came time for the divorce."

"How did that turn out? . . . If you don't mind me asking?" Frank put the cassette into his VCR.

I hate taking about the divorce. I still love her, but she hurt me in ways I never thought possible. I caught her in bed with one of the senior partners, and she had the nerve to

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tell me that she did it for me. That it wasn't cheating, but she was enhancing her career options.

"I only get to see Kim and Tim on the odd-numbered weekends of the months that have an "R" in them. And I have to pay her fifteen-hundred dollars a month child support," I said.

"Doesn't she earn more than you do?" Frank asked.

I rolled my eyes. "Tell that to the judge."

The tape started and Frank and I watched it carefully. He stopped the tape when I threw the ashtray across the room.

"Got tired of listening to this, did you?"

"I wanted to monitor his response to unexpected stimuli," I said.

"And your conclusions were?"

"See for yourself, he didn't react to the sound.

Either he was completely under, or he somehow knew it was going to happen," I said.

Frank rewound the tape and watched it again. When it was over, he asked, "Did you see any pupillary response or changes in his voice inflection?"

I knew this would happen. He was treating me like a grad student again. "No, not a thing," I said.

"Good," Frank replied. "Neither did I."

"So where does this leave us?" I asked.

"Well Brian, you could have the genuine article on your hands. Although as head of the University Psychology Department, I can't say that officially." Frank smiled at me.

"How should I proceed with this case?" I asked.

“Well, first we should get an E.E.G. on this guy while he’s under. It’s possible that he’s just one hell of an actor. If he’s for real, the E.E.G. won’t lie.”

I was puzzled by Frank’s tone. “Frank you said we.”

“If you’ve discovered the first real evidence of past life experiences, I want to be right there with you.”

I raised an eyebrow. “And if it doesn’t pan out?”

“Then I never heard of you.” Frank smiled.

“Gee thanks . . . I don’t have access to an E.E.G. at my office. What about multiple personality disorder?” I asked.

“If it were MPD, he wouldn’t have mentioned the death of the other personality. I’ll lend you one from the University. I’ll even throw in a split camera VCR, so you can record both the E.E.G. and the patient simultaneously.”

“Thanks Frank,” I said.

“When are you seeing him again?” Frank removed the cassette from the machine and handed it to me.

“The day after tomorrow,” I said.

“Good, it’s not a good idea to have someone running around with a post hypnotic suggestion like that in his brain. If these really are precognitive repressed memories, who knows how he could react if they break through to the surface.”

Frank gestured toward his den. “Why don’t you go in and relax while I make a few phone calls. I won’t be long.”

Frank entered the den just as C.N.N. was about to start Headline Sports. I clicked the remote and muted the

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set, after all I still wanted to know how the Marlins were doing. Keeping one eye on the set, I asked Frank, “How’d it go?”

“The E.E.G. will be delivered to your office tomorrow morning. I spoke with Jim Belves of the linguistics department. He has no idea of what kind of name Yalt is. He thinks it may be Celtic, from around the Gaul region of France, but he isn’t sure.”

“Why did you involve him?” My voice must’ve been sharper than I had intended because Frank’s reply was measured and atonal. The kind of voice a psychologist uses to calm a patient. “I thought if you had more information about your patient’s claims, you may be able to determine if he is trying to pull a hoax.”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” I felt stupid for doubting Frank. “I’m just concerned about my patient that’s all.”

“As am I,” Frank replied. “But we can never stop being scientists as well. We have to pursue every claim no matter how outlandish. Dr. Belves is going to fax a list of questions to your office. They should help you decide if your patient is a fraud.”

Ellen came home with boxes of takeout, a typical dinner at the Wells’ residence. I stayed late, and we talked about old times.

The next morning, I got up early and headed into the office. The list Dr. Belves sent was waiting for me in the fax machine. I was grateful that Joyce wasn’t in just yet. I didn’t want anyone knowing about this who didn’t absolutely have to know. I’m still unsure why Frank felt it

was necessary to drag Dr. Belves into this, but looking at the questions wouldn't hurt. Most of the questions asked him to explain Celtic customs, but a few of them asked him to translate phrases into Celtic.

I dug out my trade journals and even a few of my old text books. Only one out of every thousand people who are hypnotized report having a past-life experience. Many of them reported the death experience and walking into the light. I wasn't really encouraged by what I read. John may be trying to tell me what he thinks I want to hear. Or he may have seen a television show about a past life experience, and his subconscious is imitating that.

The journal articles I read ridiculed psychologists who thought they had discovered proof of past lives. In every case, an investigation later discovered that the patient had previous knowledge that explained away the patient's claim to a past-life. It seems, absolute proof is almost impossible to obtain. The subject would have to provide concise information that was previously unknown, well documented, and absolutely verifiable. Thus far, it just hasn't happened.

I noticed a pattern in most of the cases I read about. No one who claimed to have a past life experience could speak in the language of his or her previous life. Most claimed patients who claimed to have a past life experience also claimed to be English-speaking Americans. One notable exception was a man who claimed to have been an ancient Egyptian. When asked to converse in Egyptian, he suddenly snapped out of the hypnotic state.

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I decided to use some of Dr. Belves' questions. I wanted to get to the bottom of this as soon as possible. If John was delusional, then I wanted to know just how well constructed this delusion was. If he was pulling some kind of hoax, I didn't want him as a patient. I've got too many people with real problems to deal with. Either way, getting to the bottom of his Celtic heritage would resolve my dilemma.

I heard the outer office door open and realized Joyce had come in. She buzzed me a moment later. She brought in my list of patients for the day, and I had to put away my journals and settle down to business. My schedule for the day was full, and had to think about my other patients.

As I stepped out of my office with my last patient, I noticed that the E.E.G. from the university had arrived. I sent Joyce home and set the machine up in my office. John was my first patient, and it seemed to be easier to set it up now than coming in early to do it tomorrow. I attached the electrodes to my head and pointed the camera toward myself. It worked fine, the E.E.G. recorded every blink of my eyelashes. The monitor displayed a split view of me and my readings. I shut the E.E.G. down and rewound the tape for tomorrow morning.

I couldn't sleep and awoke thirty minutes early. Instead of lying in bed waiting for the alarm, I decided to head to the office early. Instead of turning into the office parking lot, I decided to stop by the Seven-Eleven to buy a Big Gulp and a danish. I didn't usually eat breakfast, but today I was hungry. As I was paying for the food, I noticed

the newspaper. On the front page was a police artist's sketch of a man suspected of robberies in the area. I suddenly had an idea. Assuming John was genuinely having precognitive experiences, I could ask him to sketch out some of the details of his nightmares. At least then I would have something concrete to work with, or I could see how deep his delusional state really was.

I went back to my office and rifled through my desk. I found a clipboard, typing paper, and a mechanical pencil. As I placed them on my desk, I heard the outer office door open. I met John at the door to my office.

“Good morning Dr. Orwell,” John said cheerfully.

“Hello, John.” I noticed that the dark circles under his eyes had disappeared, and he seemed much more relaxed. “How have you been?”

“Absolutely wonderful, I haven't had any problems since my last visit. Our neighbor's golden retriever got into our yard last night, and I actually chased him out. I couldn't believe it.”

I couldn't help but smile. This is why I chose psychology over medicine. I can't describe the glow in his eyes or the delight that having a new lease on life has given him. “What about the dreams?” I asked.

“Gone,” John said. “I don't think I've ever slept this well.”

“Terrific,” I said. “Let's get started, shall we.”

I stepped out of the doorway to let John into my office. He saw the E.E.G. for the first time and seemed troubled.

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“What’s with the new gizmo?” he asked.

“It’s an electroencephalograph. I want to record your responses to the questions I ask you under hypnosis. It may help me discover the source of your trauma. It’s completely harmless.”

“Well, if it means I can sleep peacefully every night, you can plug me into a toaster.” Then he got suddenly serious, “is this going to cost me anything extra?”

“No, I borrowed it from a friend at the University. It’s on the house.”

“Great,” John said.

I gestured to his usual chair, and he sat down. It took me about five minutes to hook John up to the E.E.G. He was quiet and didn’t offer the usual complaints about the adhesive on the sensors ruining his hair. I turned on the machine and verified it was working correctly.

Then John thrashed around a little. “Doc, I feel like something out of a ‘B’ science fiction movie.”

“Just relax,” I said. “The worst is over.”

I started the strobe and set it on my desk. John looked into it, and I could see the tension melt off his face as he relaxed. As he began to slip away, I quietly said the magic word, “Yeux.”

He relaxed completely. His arm dangled outside the chair, and I knew he was under. I confirmed it with the E.E.G. Most of his readings had leveled out, so he was under hypnosis.

“John can you hear me,” I asked.

The readings spiked slightly when he replied: “Yes.”

I picked up the list of questions and asked the first one I saw, "I want you to tell me what a sandal is called in Yalt's language."

John flinched in the chair. The E.E.G. spiked furiously, and his eyes darted about under his eyelids. The lines on the E.E.G. which represented beta and delta waves shot off the scale.

"Rrifael," he replied.

I was shocked. I didn't really expect an answer. The E.E.G. leveled out right after he answered, so I decided to try another question. "Can you say "Yalt ran to the river" in Yalt's language?"

The E.E.G. spiked again, but he replied, "Faehl swieton Yaelt."

I looked at the paper tape from the E.E.G. It showed that when John answered a question involving language he was producing enough neural energy for two people. I decided to skip to a question which didn't involve language. Whatever was happening to him required time to examine, and I didn't want to push him too hard.

"I want you to tell me why Yalt is at the wall?"

"He's looking for invaders."

The E.E.G. returned to normal except for his beta waves. They remained unusually high. I'm not certain if they were the cause of John's condition or merely a symptom.

"Why?" I asked.

"They burned his village, took his livestock, and killed his wife and daughter. He wants revenge."

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“Did he get it?” I asked.

“Yes,” John said.

“How?”

“He killed one of them,” John said.

“Who did he kill?”

“A messenger,” John said.

“How did he know he was a messenger?”

“He was carrying a pouch of scrolls.”

“What did Yalt do with the scrolls?”

“He buried them inside the wall with the body of the messenger.”

“Why did he hide the messenger’s body?” I asked.

“The scrolls he carried were of great value to the invaders. If they knew he was dead, they would kill more of his people,” John said.

Brian picked up the pencil and the clipboard from his desk and handed them to John.

“Can you sketch the wall and how the body looked after it was placed inside?”

John said, “Yes.”

“Please sketch it for me.”

The sketch was better than I had thought possible. I’d forgotten that John had a degree in commercial art. After he had finished the sketch, I held it up to the camera and waited for the auto-focus to get a good look at it before setting it down and giving John another piece of paper. I didn’t want the chain of documentation to be broken, especially in a case as bizarre as this. I asked John to sketch the wall and the surrounding countryside. He went to work

immediately. I sat down and examined the details on his first drawing. The features on the drawing were excellent. He had represented the man's shield, sword, sandals, skirt and armor very clearly, right down to the straps used to hold them on. The only thing that seemed unusual is that the man's head was missing.

"John, what happened to the messenger's head?"

He answered without looking up from his sketch, "Yalt took it."

"Why?"

"Collecting heads is how a warrior earns the respect of his peers."

I noticed the sword lying next to the armor. The end of the sword was broken, but an inscription was visible on the blade. It couldn't have belonged to the Roman because the inscription wasn't in Latin. If it were, I would've recognized it.

"John, whose sword is that lying next to the messenger?" I asked.

"Yalt's"

"What does the inscription on the sword say?"

"Yalt, keeper of the truth," John said.

"What does that mean?"

"In Yalt's village he was responsible for keeping the village record."

"What's that?"

"A record of when people are born, die, and how many heads a warrior takes in battle. Trade agreements between his own people and with the traders in the South."

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“Can Yalt write?”

“Yes,” John said.

I noticed that he had finished with the second drawing, so I grabbed another sheet and put it on the clipboard. “I would like you to write the inscription on Yalt’s sword in both English and Yalt’s language.”

John started writing right away. The readings on the E.E. G. spiked again, but he did it without pause or thought, almost as if he had written in both languages all his life. I examined the second drawing. It showed in vivid detail a wall stretching to the horizon. A river cut through the wall. The wall appeared to be about four feet tall, judging from the size of the oak trees nearby.

I glanced at my watch and realized that I had been at this for over an hour. It was well past the normal session, and my regularly scheduled appointments would be arriving soon. I took the last page off the clipboard and held it up to the camera. Once it had been recorded, I turned my attention to John.

“How did the wolves find Yalt?” I asked.

“The head he was carrying left a trail of blood. The wolves followed it to him.”

“Thank you John,” That was the missing piece to this puzzle. Now if I only knew what to do with it. Nothing even remotely resembling this has ever happened in the hundred years since Freud. “John, when I clap my hands, I want you to awake relaxed and remembering nothing about Yalt.”

I clapped my hands and watched the E.E.G. carefully. All of John's responses returned to normal, except for his Beta waves. They dropped down to a level far below what he had been reading when I first connected him to the machine. It took me a while to figure out what that meant.

"Doc, how long do I have to keep wearing these wires?" John asked.

"You can take them off now. We're done."

"That didn't take long," John said. "What happened?"

"I discovered the basis of your trauma, but . . ." I hesitated. Without knowing how he is going to respond, I thought it best to save the full explanation for when I had more time to deal with it. Plus, I didn't have all the answers yet.

He stopped pulling the electrodes off of his head and asked, "Doc is something wrong?"

"No, I've just got to review these readings before I can continue the treatment." A half truth is better than a lie, although not much. I could see he was a little overwhelmed by the electronic gadgets I've subjected him to, but he seemed to take them in stride.

"Oh, well when can I see the videos," he laughed. "I hope I didn't cluck like a chicken or anything."

"Next time, have Joyce set you up with another early appointment. We'll confront the source of your dreams together."

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Removing the last of the electrodes, he said, "I can't make it before Monday. I've got to fly out to Colorado for an advertiser's convention. No way I can get out of it."

"No problem," I said.

My appointments for that day were light. I was finished by three o'clock, so I used the time to write a summary of John's session. As usual I omitted any reference to whom John was. I faxed it to Frank along with the drawings and the runic writing. Then I dug out my old textbooks and reviewed the theories on which neural transmitters were responsible for what wave bands and how they interacted with the rest of the body.

I watched the tape of the second session about a dozen times. I watched the changes in his E.E.G. readings and his rapid eye movement as he answered the questions. It seemed that the more complex the question the stronger his beta wave response. It also took him slightly longer to answer each question. This could indicate that he was using a specific neurotransmitter to generate the necessary beta wave activity. That would explain why he hasn't had an episode since the first session. When the level of the neurotransmitter responsible falls below a specific level, his connection with "Yalt" is broken. The hypnosis is forcing him to use more of the neurotransmitter than usual, thus depleting his reserve. Thus controlling his beta wave response is the key to his treatment. If I can develop a method of keeping his reserve of the neurotransmitter below the key level, his nightmares will vanish forever.

I decided to spend Saturday in the library to research the latest trades on what neurotransmitters could be responsible for John's problem. It took me forever to sift through all the journal articles. I've noticed that the language used in trade journals is often falsely elevated, apparently to prove how intelligent the authors are, but unfortunately all they're doing is proving that they're poor writers. After about four hours of searching, I was able to find some agreement between researchers as to which neurotransmitters were responsible for the increased beta wave activity. Then I was able to determine which commercially available sedative would suppress the beta wave activity. I discovered that a number of sedatives had side effects which resulted in the reduction of beta waves. I made photocopies of the three most promising candidates, so I could work out the proper dosage for John when I got back to the office.

I awoke Sunday morning to the ringing of my phone. I answered it believing that only my ex-wife would hate me enough to call me at four a.m. "Yes dear," I said in a pleasant non-offending tone that she hated.

"My God! Brian they found it." Frank shouted into the phone.

"Slow down Frank, found what?" I asked. The sound of Frank's voice was bringing my mind to wakefulness.

"The Roman messenger!" Frank shouted. "He was exactly where your patient said he would be."

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“Frank, what the Hell are you talking about?” I asked, still not fully awake.

“I gave the faxes you sent me to Dr. Bellves, he verified them and sent them to Dr. Robets of the Archaeology Department. Between the two of them, they located the general area where Yalt died. It’s in Northern England. The wall Yalt buried the messenger in is Hadrian’s wall.”

“Why wasn’t I told about this?”

“I just found out myself. Anyway . . . the department has a group of students over there looking for Roman coins and stuff, nothing serious. Dr. Robets faxed the location and the sketches to them, and they located the site from the drawings. Two hours later representatives from the British Museum were there giving them permission to dig. Everything checked out right down to the position of the body.”

“And Yalt’s sword?” I asked.

“It was there . . . Inscription and all. It’s absolutely remarkable.”

“I wish you had told me about this sooner,” I said.

“Brian, you haven’t heard the best part yet. The dispatches the messenger was carrying were two lost plays by Sophocles and Aeschylus. They’re priceless.”

“Frank, is there any way we can keep this out of the news?” I asked.

“Don’t know, . . . Why?” He sounded surprised.

“Well for starters, I haven’t told my patient about his past life experiences yet. I wanted to keep his treatment as

uncomplicated as possible. What's been going on has been pretty unbelievable. I'm not sure how he's going to react when he finds out about this."

"You mean you haven't confronted him with this yet?"

"That's right," I said.

"And the post hypnotic suggestion?"

"It's still in there. When I probed deeper into his subconscious to get those drawings, I could've stirred up some really repressed memories. Since nothing like this has ever happened before, I'm not sure how he's going to react when he hears about this."

"Brian, it can't be that serious."

"Frank, a dog barking at him can send him into shock and trigger nightmares for a week. What's going to happen if he should see . . . say . . . the messenger's body on television. He could have a serious regressive episode. That's something I would like to avoid."

"How likely is that?" Frank asked.

"To be honest, . . . I don't know."

"I'd better let you locate your patient," Frank said.

"Good idea Frank."

I hung up the phone. At that point I didn't know what to feel. I was excited that I had made the most important discovery in psychology since Freud, but I was also concerned about what effects this would have on my patient. If the media got a hold of this event, it could have repercussions that would change him forever. He would be

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studied and probed for the rest of his life. The press would hound him for quotes from Yalt until the day he died.

I sat on the edge of my bed and it dawned upon me what I had done. This is the first time in history that it has been proven that past lives exist. The effect this will have is incalculable. It is the biggest thing to hit our society since the atomic bomb. For one thing, Western religion was in serious trouble. Eastern religious leaders would look upon this as proof that they were right all along. They would seize the opportunity to become a dominant influence in world affairs.

I tried to put the more complex social issues out of my mind and got up to take my morning shower. As I was shaving, I looked into the mirror and tried to determine the age of my soul, or even if I had one. I've opened Pandora's box, and I'm not sure I like what's on the inside. I wondered how many bright young people would throw their lives away, so they could try life again in another incarnation. I reminded myself that I didn't plan for this discovery, and that the circumstances controlled me, not the other way around. I had to play the hand that fate had dealt me, and so far it was all Jokers.

Even though it was Sunday, I dressed for the office. I was going in to get John's home phone number from his file and it seemed to be the thing to do. As I was dressing, I turned on CNN, hoping that they hadn't picked up on the story. They had. It was on at five minutes after the hour. Fortunately they didn't show any close-ups of the body or the sword. The reports concentrated on the scrolls they'd

found, how long a complete translation was likely to take, and all the textbooks that would have to be re-written.

Once I had reached the office, I checked the fax machine as usual. I found some faxes that Frank had forwarded to me. They were photos of the messenger, the sword, and the scrolls. One shot was of the wall itself with the hole where the body was found. When I saw that photo, I realized how they had discovered the body. The pattern of the stones in the wall was sketched with such precision, they were able to use them as a guide to the exact spot where the body was hidden.

On the bottom of the pile was a fax from the London Daily News asking me to confirm my involvement in the discovery of the messenger. "Oh, great," I muttered to myself. "Now the press knows." I picked up the phone and dialed Frank.

As soon as he picked up the receiver, I said: "Frank, we've got to put a lid on this."

"Calm down, Bri." It was Ellen.

"Sorry Ellen," I said reigning in my voice. "I've got to speak with Frank."

A moment later Frank answered the phone. By then, I had calmed down enough to speak rationally. "Frank's we've got a problem."

"What kind?" he asked.

"I just got a fax from the London Daily News asking about my involvement. How'd they trace this back to me?"

"Your fax number is printed on top of your faxes," he said. "Someone must've gotten a hold of one of them."

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“Frank, we can’t let this hit the media. There’s no telling what kind of repercussions this event may have.”

“Yes,” Frank replied calmly, “The publicity could contaminate our research.”

“What are you talking about Frank?” I asked.

“This is the greatest discovery in the history of psychology. It must be researched. I’ve already put out some feelers for some grant money. I can promise you a generous salary for the next few years.”

I had a hard time believing what I was hearing. Frank had no consideration for the well being of my patient. His only interest was making a quick buck and getting written up in a few trade journals.

I paused and considered the implications of his offer. I understood why he was making it. With the kind of money and publicity that I would receive, I could afford a lawyer better than Jean. I could win back custody of Kim and Tim. I could travel, write, consult, and do anything I wanted. I would have the respect of my peers, and I would be a keynote speaker at every convention I attended. I felt my lips curl into a smile. Then I glanced down at John’s file lying open on my desk. That was when my conscience reminded me that my success would come at a price: another man’s soul.

John’s life would be ruined forever. The media would never leave him alone, and Frank would want to experiment upon him for years. There is no telling how organized religion would react to proof of the existence of past lives. The world as I knew it would be irrevocably

changed. I may be on the vanguard of a new age in psychology, but the cost for recognition was just too high. I decided to see if I couldn't turn Frank's greed to my advantage.

"Frank, contact Dr. Roberts and tell him to shut up. We don't need any premature publicity on this. It could hurt our chances when we go to publish."

"I agree," he paused as if he were expecting more of an argument, "but what do we tell them?"

"Tell Roberts to take credit for the discovery. Have him make up some kind of story about an old map, space aliens, leprechauns, . . . anything. We need some plausible deniability."

"And then?" Frank asked.

"I've still got to find my patient. We can't do anything without his permission," I said.

I hung up. I didn't know what else to tell Frank. I hoped he didn't tell too many people about this case. It won't do his career any good when I deny everything. Only Frank could find grant money for a project like this on a Sunday morning. I called John's home, and I only got the machine, apparently he had taken his wife with him. I tried his work number and only got his voice mail. I left messages on both machines to contact me as soon as possible.

I spent the rest of the day waiting by the phone. Late that evening, he called. I told him to avoid watching the news and to meet me at seven o'clock tomorrow morning at my office. He was puzzled by my request, but he agreed.

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I slept restlessly all night. My dreams were filled of visions of myself desperately trying to close the lid on Pandora's box. Each time I drew the lid down, Frank's hand would reopen it.

I woke up to the sound of my alarm. As I was shaving, I looked into the mirror at the eyes staring back at me. I didn't know what to think of them. I no longer knew what truth was anymore. Was I doing the right thing by suppressing this discovery? Who appointed me judge and jury for the World? My conscience was my only guide, and it was telling me that the first rule of good medicine is never make the patient worse. But am I doing the right thing, or am I just being a schmuck?

I got to the office about six thirty and opened up. I got the equipment set up to record John's last session. If I could get him to burn off the excess Serotryphopan in his brain, he wouldn't be able to produce the beta waves necessary to have a regressive episode. In order to do that, I had to teach him some biofeedback techniques for learning to produce them while he's awake. This should keep him from having any further episodes. He'll have to buy a beta wave monitor and practice for a while, but it was the only long term solution I could offer him.

As I was moving the chair closer to the E.E.G., I heard a crash from outside. I peered through the blinds and saw John's car parked at the Seven-Eleven across the street. A microwave oven had just been thrown through the door and slid to a halt just short of the street. I grabbed the strobe from off the desk and ran out the door.

When I got across the street, the assistant manager was hiding behind John's car. I ran up and crouched down beside her. She had her cell-phone in her hand and was calling the police. I grabbed her arm, and she jumped with terror.

"Don't do that!" she shouted.

"What happened?" I asked trying to appear more calm than I was.

"I don't know. He came over to the register and started shouting in some foreign language. I tried to talk to him, but he just went berserk. He picked up the microwave and smashed the door. That's when I got out."

"I had better go and talk to him," I said.

She stared at me incredulously, but she didn't say anything. I got up and slowly walked through the door. As I walked by the register, I noticed that the paper rack was overturned. On the front page of today's paper was a picture of Yalt's sword and the messenger's body.

John was in back, studying his reflection in the beer cooler. When I got to about ten feet of him he turned to face me. He had a look of panic on his face, not unlike the look of a trapped animal. I slowly held up the strobe and turned it on. John was captivated. When I knew I had his attention, I said the keyword "Yeux."

I saw the tension drain from his face and his pupils dilated. I could tell that he was under hypnosis. In a quiet tone I said, "John, when I snap my fingers, you will return to the present and not remember anything that Yalt has done." I snapped my fingers.

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I could see that John was confused. “Hi Doc,” he said. “I didn’t see you there.” He looked around at the chaos that surrounded him. “What happened?”

“You’ve had a minor regressive episode,” I said, using my gift for understatement.

He looked at the shattered door. “It doesn’t look too minor to me, doc.”

“Why don’t you go over to my office and wait for me there,” I said. “I’ll handle things here.”

I walked him to the door. As he stepped over the broken glass, he looked me in the eyes. “I want an explanation for this.”

I returned his stare. “You’ll have one in a few minutes. You’d better go before the police arrive.”

“Police, oh God.” He rolled his eyes and left.

As John crossed the street to my office, a police cruiser pulled into the parking lot. The assistant manager reappeared as soon as the police had arrived. It took a little fast talking, but I managed to persuade them not to press charges. Once I agreed to pay for the damages, the police lost interest in John. They took an incident report and left.

As I was crossing the parking lot, a T.V. news van pulled into the parking lot. Out jumped Brenda Buchanan of Channel 3 News. She shoved a bad copy of one of my faxes into my face and turned to her camera man.

“Are we rolling?” She asked.

He replied by giving her a thumbs up. She turned back to me and tried to make eye contact. I tried to smile as she asked me her first question.

“Are you Dr. Brian Orwell?” She asked.

“That’s me.” I tried to sound flippant. Reporters hate that.

“It seems you’ve made quite a discovery. Proof of past life experiences,” She said.

I decided to throw her a red herring. A flat denial would be too suspicious, but if I could make the discovery less significant, she may lose interest.

“I think you’ve got the wrong Dr. Orwell,” I said.

“Weren’t you instrumental in the discovery of the Roman messenger?” She asked.

I just laughed at her.

“This article in the London Daily News claims that you directed the archaeologists to the site.”

“Ms. Buchanan, the London Daily News is a tabloid, I wouldn’t trust it to get my obituary right.”

“But, what about these faxes?” she shoved them into my face. The send date was circled in red.

“The clock on my fax machine isn’t set right. It’s something I’ve been meaning to fix.”

She looked puzzled, so I followed up with a quick explanation. “I’ve been using a new therapy where I replace a patient’s nightmares with harmless news events. Those faxes are part of my treatment. One of my friends from the University sent me those photos before they were published. I had my patient sketch them under hypnosis, to replace the bad dreams with a harmless one.”

She made a chopping motion with her hand. “Cut,” she said.

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I could tell she wanted to chastise me for wasting her time, when someone from the van shouted, “Car fire on twenty-third street!”

Taking her camera man with her, she jumped back inside the van, and it sped off. I walked back across the street. John was waiting in the reception area. We went into my office, and I showed him the video tapes. I could see the disbelief in his eyes as I got up to rewind the last tape.

“I must apologize for not showing you these tapes sooner, but this was too much to be believed. I had to verify your story to try to understand where in your life you experienced it. I had no idea it would be in a previous life.”

“I can understand that,” he said. “I don’t believe it myself. Have you revealed my identity to anyone?”

I took a deep breath. “Dr. Wells knows I’ve got a patient with past life incursions, that’s all. Your name hasn’t been released to anyone.”

“What did you tell the police?” John asked.

“I told them that you were a recovering alcoholic from Germany. When I agreed to pay for the damages, the manager dropped all of the charges. After that, the police didn’t care who you were.”

I heard some movement in the outer office, so I glanced at my watch. Eight-thirty on the dot, Joyce was starting her day. I pressed the intercom button and asked her not to disturb us until the session was over. Then, I answered all of John’s many questions and explained how to use biofeedback and medication to control his beta wave production. I told John that between the beta-blockers I

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prescribed and the biofeedback techniques, he should live a normal life. He seemed skeptical, but he agreed to the treatment.

As I was shaking John's hand at my office door, the phone rang. Joyce put her hand over the receiver and said, "Dr. Orwell, I have Dr. Wells on line one."

I could see myself in the glass of the office door. The man in the reflection peered at me without judgment or remorse. "Joyce," I said, "tell him Pandora's box is closed."