

23. My Own Secret Service

1. pages 451-453. **Walter Lippmann...cellar to roof.** Our account of Houdini's thought transference experiment was composited from various sources including "Houdini Gives Illustration Of 'Mind Reading'", *Springfield Union*, ca. February 10, 1925, clipping in the collection of the Library of Congress; Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 352-354; Joseph F. Rinn, *Sixty Years Of Psychological Research* (New York: Truth Seeker Company, 1950), 487-492; "Houdini Reveals He 'Reads' Minds", *Houdini Souvenir Program*, ca. 1926, 15-16.

2. page 453. **"when you turned the doorknob, the door would swing open from what should have been the hinged side."** This was reported in Patrick Culliton, *Houdini Unlocked, book two, the Secret Confessions of Houdini* (Kieran Press & Peter C. Mayer Rare Editions, Ltd., 1997), 241. Culliton verified that this was an eyewitness account; he saw the door open this way when he visited Father Charles Bonnanno at the address. Also see William Lindsay Gresham, *Houdini: The Man Who Walked Through Walls*, (New York: Macfadden, 1967), 247.

3. page 453. **silent homage to Robert-Houdin...** For an account of Robert-Houdin's clever embellishments to his house see Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin, *Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1878).

4. page 454. **Louis C. Kraus, a nephew...Treasury Department** “Activities In The Departments”, *Washington Post*, August 21, 1927.

5. page 454. **had originally wired the house.** “Telepathetic Fake Of Houdini Bared”, *Helena Daily Independent*, February 28, 1927. Also see “Aid Bares Secret Of Houdini’s ‘Telepathy’—Miniature Phone”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 28, 1927; “Houdini’s ‘Thought Reading’ Revealed as Telephone System”, *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 1, 1927; and “Houdini’s House Wired for Tricks, Aide Discloses”, *Minneapolis Daily Star*, February 28, 1927, clipping in the collection of George Daily.

6. page 454. **Feri Felix Weiss, who worked...** “Scientific Tools of Modern Detectives” by Feri Felix Weiss, *Science and Invention*, July 1923, clipping in a Houdini scrapbook the collection at the Library of Congress. Also see “Accuses Federal Agent”, *New York Times*, October 7, 1921.

7. page 454. **rewired and made more sophisticated...Amedeo Vacca.** Edward F. Albee to Dave Behler, February 25, 1925, cited in “Letters From The Past” by Richard J. Weibel, *MUM*, July 1982, 20.

8. page 454. **Before Houdini would come...secret apparatuses.** Ibid. Also see “Behold! A Magician Who Is Modest”, by Bruce Reynolds, *Linking Ring* December 1947, 23-25, 116-118.

9. page 454. **“He bought a barbershop...”** Ibid, 116,117.
10. page 455. **“Now I have placed myself...”** Ibid, 116.
11. page 455. **“my own secret service”** “Houdini, Thru Aid, Exposes Spirit Media”, unidentified newspaper clipping in the Culliton Archives, now housed at the Conjuring Arts Research Center.
12. pages 455-457. **Florence B. Rush...was anxiously awaiting.** Rose Mackenberg’s report on Henry Brooks, November 15, 1925, from the collection of Tom Boldt. For Mackenberg’s first hand accounts of spying for Houdini see “I’ve Unmasked a Thousand Frauds,” *Saturday Evening Post*, March 3, 1951 and “When Crime Poses as Spiritualism,” *The American Weekly*, March 12, 1939.
13. page 458. **“Those of us belonging to that portion of humanity...”** “Showman and Scientist”, *New York Tribune*, February 7, 1925, clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Pusey Library, Harvard University.
14. page 458. **“Please make careful notes of everything...”** Houdini to Betty Ross, May 16, 1924, photostat of letter in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.

15. page 460. **Blue Book, a book that contained...** A facsimile edition of the book was published by Harry Price and Eric Dingwall as *Revelations Of A Spirit Medium* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1922), xxi.

16. page 460. **“secret archives...filed away details...”** Bernard M.L. Ernst and Hereward Carrington, *Houdini And Conan Doyle* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, Inc., 1932), 19.

17. page 460. **“He must have spent thousands...that he was.”** Ibid, 19-20.

18. page 460. **Houdini suggested she carry a gun...** Mackenberg’s account of this suggestion is in “I’ve Unmasked a Thousand Frauds,” *Saturday Evening Post*, March 3, 1951. John Oliver told Houdini researcher Patrick Culliton that Bess’s family acknowledged that Houdini carried a derringer on his person. If he did carry a gun, Houdini was not alone. Referring to himself, Joseph Rinn wrote: “I was compelled to carry a pistol for protection.” From Joseph F. Rinn, *Sixty Years Of Psychical Research* (New York: Truth Seeker Company, 1950), 233.

19. page 461. **Alberta Chapman...** “Alberta Chapman: Houdini’s Undercover Investigator” by Sidney Radner, *Magic Collectors’ Association Souvenir Program*, April 23-25, 1998, 19.

20. page 461. **According to Alberta...** Chapman to Radner in a videotaped interview, in the collection of Sidney Radner.

21. page 461. **Clifford Eddy, Jr.** “The Houdini Will” by Joel B. Miller, *Magicol*, November 1992, 8.

22. page 461. **Barkann Rosinoff** “Glee Club Boasts Magician – Trojan Student Former Houdini Aide”, *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1930.

23. page 461. **he wrote the magician a letter...** “Answers To Various Questions”, *Conjurers’ Monthly Magazine*, January, 1907, 163.

24. page 461. **scaling buildings without equipment.** “Memoirs Of A Magician’s Ghost” by John Booth, *The Linking Ring*, October, 1963, 38. Also see “House of Escape King” by Morris N. Young, *The Linking Ring*, December, 1979, 49.

25. page 461. **“Goodnight, I said, I quit reading...”** Gysel to Oscar Teale, September 23, 1925, letter in the collection of the Library of Congress.

26. page 463. **threw sneezing powder** Gysel to Houdini, May 25, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

27. page 463. **threw a brick into the seance room.** Ibid.

28. page 463. **“put poison” in his coffee.** Gysel to Houdini, August 22, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

29. pages 463-465. **Mrs. Cecil Cook...her to post bail.** A copy of the testimony from the Cecil Cook hearing is in the collection of the American Society for Psychical Research, New York.

30. page 465. **George Renner’s trumpet with lampblack...** Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 355-356.

31. page 465. **Julia Sawyer up to Lily Dale...** “Central City Assembly No. 14, S.A.M., Syracuse, N.Y.”, *The Sphinx*, November, 1925, 270.

32. page 466. **“Houdini Challenges Local....”** “Houdini Challenges Local Mediums!” unidentified clipping in the Quincy Kilby scrapbook in the Boston Public Library.

33. page 466. **Reverend Charles Gunsolas...** Rose Mackenberg report on Gunsolas submitted to Houdini, in the Robert Lund Collection, American Museum of Magic, Marshall, Michigan, cited in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.

34. page 466. **Reverend Alice Dooley...** Milbourne Christopher, *Houdini: The Untold Story* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), 229-230.
35. page 466. **“They are holding indignation...”** Houdini to Harry Price, March 30, 1925, in the Harry Price collection in the University of London library.
36. page 467. **“No, sir, under no circumstances.”** Testimony from the Cecil Cook hearing in the collection of the American Society for Psychical Research, New York.
37. page 467. **Francis P. Houdina Company...** “Summons Out For Houdini”, *New York Times*, July 22, 1925. Also see “Houdini Subpoenaed Waiting To Broadcast”, *New York Times*, July 23, 1925.
38. page 467. **“I had to protect myself...real intentions.”** Houdini to T. Nelson Downs, July 30, 1925, reprinted in Walter B. Gibson, *The Original Houdini Scrapbook* (New York: Corwin Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 126.
39. page 467. **“Lost my temper...”** Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 279.
40. page 467. **“I raised hell foolishly...”** Ibid, 280.

41. page 468. **“I have a four hour job...”** Houdini to F.L. Black, June 25, 1925, letter in the Robert Lund Collection, American Museum of Magic, Marshall, Michigan, cited in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.

42. page 468. **Journalist Maurice Zolotow...his mother and Daisy White.** “Houdini” by Maurice Zolotow, *New York Times*, March 23, 1969. See also “Did Houdini Give Fish Man’s Lady Friend That Code Before He Became A Spook?” *New York Telegram*, undated clipping in the Culliton Archives, now housed at the Conjuring Arts Research Center.

43. page 468. **“walk along the river...about time.”** “Recollections Of Harry And Bess Houdini” by Marie Hinson Blood, interview with Kenneth Silverman, printed in his book *Houdini!!! The Career Of Erich Weiss* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 424.

44. page 468. **“HoneyLamb Sweetheart...”** Houdini to Bess, August 2, 1925, note in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

45. page 468. **lecture about the tricks...Police Academy.** “How I Unmask the Spirit Fakers” by Houdini, *Popular Science Monthly*, November 1925, 154.

46. page 469. **“Let me remind you I have *always*...”** We found this fascinating letter in the collection of Arthur Moses. The letter is signed “George” and is dated September 4th,

1925. From an analysis of the letter, “George” was a practicing medium who had turned undercover informant for Houdini and, among other things, spied on the Margery camp. If George is, in fact, his real name, there are two possible mediums who may have been the operative: George Renner, who Houdini had arrested in Cleveland, and George Valiantine, who Houdini investigated in New York. Valiantine is the more likely candidate since he was based on the East Coast and had an ongoing relationship with Margery and her husband.

47. page 469. **“very anxious to find out...”** Dennett to Crandon, May 15, 1925, letter in the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

48. page 469. **“If you don’t come, I won’t,”** Griscom to Houdini, June 20, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

49. page 469. **“Well, I like and respect...”** Ibid.

50. page 469. **“Houdini’s exploded...”** Griscom to Houdini, June 24, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

51. page 470. **“You have to admit...”** Griscom to Houdini, June 20, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

52. page 470. **“I think we have Houdini...”** Nola to Mr. Scott, no date, copy in a Margery scrapbook in the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.
53. page 470. **“My family doesn’t know I am writing...”** Laura Crandon to J. Malcolm Bird, April 6, 1925, letter in the collection of the American Society for Psychical Research, New York, cited in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.
54. page 470. **“will be the centre of American hopes”** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Crandon, March 23, 1925. Letter in the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.
55. page 470. **Grant Code...** Thomas R. Tietze, *Margery* (New York : Harper & Row, 1973), 59.
56. page 471. **August 4, 1925...Holmes to think it over.** Crandon to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, August 4, 1925. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.
57. pages 471-472. **“bring back to me a small boy...adoption”** Crandon to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, May 7, 1924. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.
58. page 472. **“I want the boy brought in legally...”** Crandon to DeWyckoff, October 3, 1924. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

59. page 472. **“It occurs to me that if you get up...”** Crandon to DeWyckoff, October 6, 1924. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

60. page 472. **“The U.S. inspectors have been up to see me...”** A.J. Gordon to Houdini, June 12, 1925. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

61. page 473. **At one time, the body of a “homeless” boy...** Personal communication from Carolyn Withstandley.

62. page 473. **“I seem to see the hand...”** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Crandon, August 12, 1925. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

63. page 473. **“I am not clear how many boys...”** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Crandon, August 22, 1925. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

64. page 473. **“I want all the information...”** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Crandon, September 1, 1925. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

65. page 473. **“I am sure that you would not...”** Doyle to Harry Day, September 18, 1925. Copy of letter in the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

66. page 473. **“an attractive boy...”** Crandon to Harry Day, October 6, 1925. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

67. page 474. **“a breach of confidence...”** Harry Day to Crandon, October 14, 1925.

From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

68. page 474. **“This is really all a great triumph...”** Griscom to Houdini, October 30, 1925. From the collection of Tom Boldt.

69. pages 475-476. **Dorothy Young...found that liquor?”** Personal communication from Dorothy Young.

70. pages 477-479. **“You don’t know what...” “Then come up here...” “I am greater than you are... Miss Raud is its pastor.”** We based this encounter on several accounts of the performance in the Worcester press including “Houdini Faced With Challenge”, clippings in the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Pusey Library, Harvard University.

71. page 479. **“Will you keep your promise... collect the two dollars.”** “Houdini Calls Medium O’Malley a Falsifier”, unidentified newspaper clipping in the collection of the Library of Congress.

72. pages 479-480. **“Get him... protecting the public”** “Houdini Faced With Challenge”, undated Worcester newspaper article, clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Pusey Library, Harvard University.