

## 24. I...Am A Fake

1. page 481. **“What is your full name?”**... “Fortune Telling: Hearings Before The Subcommittee of Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia - House Of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session on H.R.8989” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 2, 6-7, 118-119.
2. page 481. **Sol Bloom, who had gone from...** “Master Magician of Capitol Hill”, *The Washington Post*, October 16, 1942, p.B11.
3. page 482. **Senator Fletcher’s wife testified...** Fortune Telling: Hearings Before The Subcommittee of Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia - House Of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session on H.R.8989” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 51.
4. page 482. **“That money belongs...”** “Say Lawmakers Consult Mediums”, *New York Times*, February 27, 1926.
5. page 482. **“In the beginning...2,000 years ago...”** “Fortune Telling: Hearings Before The Subcommittee of Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia - House Of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session on H.R.8989” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 155.

6. page 482. **“a pronounced atheist and infidel.”** Ibid, 39.
  
7. page 482. **“My religion and my belief...”** Ibid, 50-53.
  
8. page 483. **“would have seriously injured...”** “Anti-Medium Bill Gives Congress Horse Play Hour”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 19, 1926.
  
9. page 483. **“most of the U.S. senators did consult...”** “Fortune Telling: Hearings Before The Subcommittee of Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia - House Of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session on H.R.8989” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 32.
  
10. page 483. **“I insist that Mrs. Coates....”** Ibid.
  
11. page 484. **“Liar! Faker....”** “Hints Of Seances At White House”, *New York Times*, May 19, 1926.
  
12. page 484. **“I’ll break your nose....”** “Anti-Medium Bill Gives Congress Horse Play Hour”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 19, 1926.
  
13. page 484. **“On the verge of tears...”** Ibid.

14. page 484. **“The original Houdini was a Hindu....”** “Fortune Telling : Hearings Before The...House Of Representatives : H.R.8989” (Washington : Government Printing Office, 1928), 150-153.
15. page 486. **Burns was a former Secret Service...** “Detective Burns’ Prisoner”, *The Washington Post*, June 7, 1900. Also see “William J. Burns, Detective, Is Dead”, *The Washington Post*, April 15, 1932, and “William J. Burns – Detective” by Frank A. Garbutt, *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1932.
16. page 487. **“You’re a smart man...”** “When An Astrologer Ruled The White House” by Madame Marcia, *Liberty*, April 9, 1938, 18-20,22.
17. page 487. **“You are doing work that is killing....”** “Fortune Telling: Hearings Before The Subcommittee of Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia - House Of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session on H.R.8989” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 74.
18. page 487. **“friends of the Coolidge...”** “ ‘Not Interested,’ Say Coolidges Of Spiritualism”, *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 19, 1926.
19. page 487. **“neither the president...”** Ibid.
20. page 487. **“Houdini Expresses Regret...”** *Washington Post*, May 20, 1926.

21. page 487. **“Believe me, it was no desire...”** Ibid.
22. pages 487-488. **“has not reached Congress...about the law.”** Houdini to Harto, August 23, 1926, letter in the collection of Milbourne Christopher.
23. page 488. **“Sorry to tell you that I have heard...”** Houdini to Lippmann, May 26, 1926, in the collection of the Yale University Library. A copy of the letter is in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.
24. page 488. **“rather a large sum for private individual...”** Houdini to the Editor of the British Journal of Psychological Research, June 24, 1926. Letter reprinted in Gabriel Citron, *The Houdini-Price Correspondence* (London : Legerdemain, 1998), 170-171.
25. page 488. **“I believe the work I am doing...”** “Houdini Will Devote Life To Spiritualism”, unidentified newspaper clipping in the Quincy Kilby scrapbook in the Boston Public Library.
26. page 488. **“the self-claimed private medium...”** “Fake Spirits Invoked By Medium”, *New York Evening Graphic*, January 4, 1926.

27. pages 488, 490. **“You liar, you contemptible....”** “Transcript Of Spiritualist Mass Held At Broad Street Theatre”, February 21, 1926, 80, 82-83. From the collection of Tom Boldt.

28. page 490. **Houdini’s campaign peaked...** Houdini’s campaign against the Chicago area mediums received tremendous publicity in the press. For example, see “Elusive Ghosts Fail To Respond At Houdini Trial”, *Chicago Evening Post*, March 26, 1926. The Harry Price collection at the University of London library has many other clippings of Chicago area newspapers covering Houdini’s expose. The *Chicago American*, particularly, had extensive front page coverage.

29. page 490. **“I really believed in Spiritualism all the time...”** Benninghofen was quoted in Milbourne Christopher, *Houdini: The Untold Story* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), 242. Houdini reproduces Benninghofen’s entire affidavit in “National Spiritualistic Association Ordained Minister Confesses Trickery After Thirty Years of Mediumship”, page from a Houdini pitchbook in the collection of Don Bell.

30. page 490. **“I have all reason to believe...”** Transcript from Houdini’s Spiritualism Lecture at the Princess Theatre, Chicago, April 21, 1926. From the collection of Ricky Jay.

31. page 491. **“at the instigation of a certain magician...”** “Spiritualists Want Mediums Protected”, unidentified newspaper clipping in the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

32. page 491. **“I get letters from ardent believers....”** “Houdini’s Mail Reveals Harm Mediums Do”, *Chicago American*, March 22, 1925.

33. page 491. **“Am going to lay off and do nothing...”** Houdini to F.L. Black, May 13, 1926, 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.

34. page 491. **“Egyptian” fakir...** “Magic And Magicians”, *The Billboard*, May 22, 1926.

35. page 491. **“I guarantee to remain in any coffin...”** Houdini to City Editor, *New York Evening World*, July 13, 1926. Copy of letter in Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.

36. page 491. **“burial stunt in the Dalton swimming pool...”** *New York Times*, July 21, 1926.

37. page 492. **“If I die, it will be the will...”** Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 371.
38. page 492. **“deathly white”** Hereward Carrington, *The Story Of Psychical Science* (Kessinger Publishing; Facsimilie Edition, 1997), 187.
39. page 492. **U.S. Bureau of Mines** “Unpublished Houdini Letter Aid to Miners”, *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1974.
40. page 493. **Bernard Ernst’s Sea Cliff...** Walter G. Gibson, *Houdini’s Escapes and Magic* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1976), vii. Preface by Bernard M. L. Ernst.
41. page 493. **Lucille** “The Great Houdini – His Remarkable Career” by W.E. White, *Nelson Evening Mail*, November 2, 1926. Copy in the collection of George Daily.
42. page 493. **H.P. Lovecraft** “Imprisoned With The Pharoahs”, *Weird Tales Magazine*, May, June, July, 1924 (single issue). Citation from “Houdini: A Definitive Bibliography” compiled by Manuel Weltman, *Genii Magazine*, November, 1967, 82.
43. page 493. **“I am very busy working on a book...”** Houdini to W.S. Davis, July 16, 1926. Letter in the collection of Tom Boldt.

44. page 493. **Who's Who, who overrode his own...** Cedric A. Larson, *WHO: Sixty Years of American Eminence* (New York), 1958, 317.
45. page 493. **buy, lease, produce, exhibit...** Certificate of Incorporation of Houdini Attractions, Inc., September 23, 1926, cited in Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.
46. page 493. **"You know, I actually live in a library..."** Houdini to MM. Soule, July 31, 1925. Letter in the collection of the Library of Congress.
47. page 494. **"Perfectly amazed at the profundity..."** Carter to Houdini, July 7, 1926. From the collection of George Daily.
48. page 495. **August 20,26 Darling Wife & Loved one...** Houdini to Bess, August 20, 1926. Note in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.
49. pages 495-496. **"Are you still in pain...that last time.** We created this scene using the following sources: "Houdini's Body Gets Here Today", *New York Times*, November 2, 1926. Gertrude Hills to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, November 22, 1926, from the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. "Houdini's Illness" by Gertrude Hills, *New York Herald Tribune*, October 31, 1926, copy found in the Culliton Archives, now housed at the Conjuring Arts Research Center.



50. page 497. **“It is evidently of very great advantage...”** Thomas R. Tietze, *Margery* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 110.

51. page 497. **“He is being sued for \$40,000...very mysterious.”** Prince to Hyslop, February 4, 1926, Boston. 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.

52. page 497. **Margery, Harvard, Veritas, financed...** L.R.G Crandon, *Margery Harvard Veritas : A Study in Psychics* (Boston : Blanchard Printing, 1925).

53. page 498. **“Do not act on your own...”** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Pheneas Speaks* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), 149.

54. page 498. **“Tell the people all I am...”** William Elliott Hammond, *Houdini Unmasked* (self-published), ca.1926, 15.

55. page 499. **“Love and kisses and lots of them...”** Houdini to Bess, September 1, 1926. Letter in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

56. pages 499-500. **One Saturday afternoon...and hung up.** This scene was composited from two Fulton Oursler sources: his letter to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, December 27, 1926, in the collection of the Georgetown University Library and an

article, "The Mystery of Houdini's Death" in Samri Frikell (Oursler pseudonom), *Spirit Mediums Exposed* (New York: New Metropolitan Fiction, Inc, 1930).

57. page 501. **Around that time, Houdini...** Frank Garcia & George Schindler, *Amedeo's Continental Magic* (New York: Million Dollar Productions), 1974, 70.

58. page 501. **He was taking the suits...** Houdini bill of sale to Bess, July 6, 1926.  
Copy in the Silverman files in the Houdini Historical Center at the Outagamie Museum, Appleton, Wisconsin.

59. page 501. **Houdini slowly climbed into...** Houdini to Harto, October 12, 1926, letter reproduced in Patrick Culliton, *Houdini Unlocked, book two, the Secret Confessions of Houdini* (Kieran Press & Peter C. Mayer Rare Editions, Ltd., 1997), 375.

60. page 501. **Mystery of the Sphinx** Ibid.

61. page 502. **Houdini and Bess went to dinner...** L. Sprague De Camp, *Lovecraft: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine, 1976), 214, 264-265.

62. page 502. **Bess was stricken with a non-specific...** Sophie Rosenblatt affidavit, 1, copy found in the Don Bell archives. Also see Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 376-377.

63. page 502. **Houdini arrived at Ernst's...** Milbourne Christopher, *Houdini: The Untold Story* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), 252.
64. page 502. **“Joe, I just got in town today...”** William Lindsay Gresham, *Houdini : The Man Who Walked Through Walls*, (New York : Macfadden-Bartell Book), 1967, 237-239.
65. page 504. **“Go back, Joe...my house again.”** Ibid.
66. page 504. **“You will have to go to the hospital...”** Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 378.
67. page 504. **“Three years ago...”** “The Mystery of Houdini’s Death” in Samri Frikell (Oursler pseudonom), *Spirit Mediums Exposed* (New York: New Metropolitan Fiction, Inc, 1930).
68. page 505. **“Thanks for your wire...”** Ibid.
69. pages 505-506. **“There are three kinds of mediums....” “Houdini assails...” “She produced for me twenty....”** “Houdini Assails ‘Slickest’ Medium”, *Montreal Gazette*, October 19, 1926. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

70. page 506. **“with deadly hatred...” “If I were to die...”** “Was Houdini Killed?” by S.J. Smiley. Smiley’s account was sent to Fulton Ourlser and can be found in his files in the collection of the Georgetown University Library.

71. page 506. **“without personal injury”** Don Bell, *The Man Who Killed Houdini* (Draft Version), 25. From the Don Bell archives.

72. page 506. **“an endowment...of an ancestral cleanliness .”** “He Can Keep A Secret”, unidentified clipping from Robinson Locke scrapbook in the collection of the New York Public Library.

73. page 506. **Houdini did informal demonstrations...** Personal communication to Sidney Radner from Alberta Chapman.

74. page 506. **Gerald Pickelman took up Houdini’s...** Communication to Don Bell from Pickelman’s widow in the Don Bell archives.

75. pages 506-507. **“His reply was grossly insolent...crowd with him.”** Bernard M.L. Ernst and Hereward Carrington, *Houdini And Conan Doyle* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, Inc., 1932), 213-214.

76. page 507. **On Thursday, October 21...Pheneas responded.** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Pheneas Speaks*, annotated typescript version in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

77. page 508. **“the broken bone in my...”** Houdini to Dunninger, October 22, 1926. From the collection of Tom Boldt.

78. page 508. **“His sallow complexion...”** This account was composited from “Was Houdini Killed?” by S.J. Smiley, from the Fulton Oursler files in the collection of the Georgetown University Library, along with the depositions of Smiley, Price and Whitehead obtained by Ernst for Bess Houdini’s lawsuit against Houdini’s life insurance firms. Copies of the depositions are in the Don Bell archives.

79. page 509. **“His face was ruddy, his hair very thin...” “It seems that Houdini...”** Ibid.

80. page 509. **“Think of the trouble..” “I prefer not to discuss...” “Is it true...” “Is it true...” “My forearm and back...”** Ibid.

81. page 509. **“Would you mind...”** Ibid.

82. page 510. **“You made me look a little...”** Ibid.

83. page 510. **“Champagne coquette....”** Houdini to Bess, October 23, 1926. Note in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

84. page 510. **“just where I got the blows...”** Sophie Rosenblatt affidavit, 3, copy in the Don Bell archives.

85. page 511. **After Saturday’s evening...walked out of the lobby. “You shouldn’t have done that...”** Recollections of Gilles Larin regarding his grandfather’s hotel, The Prince Of Wales, where Houdini received another blow in the stomach. From the Don Bell archives.

86. page 511. **“We have just made a thousand-mile...”** Milbourne Christopher, *Houdini: The Untold Story* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), 259.

87. page 512. **“They’re here to see...”** “The Mysterious Death of Harry Houdini” by Manny Weltman, *Genii*, May, 1990, 759.

88. page 512. **F.L. Black, a collector friend...** F.L. Black to Quincy Kilby, November 9, 1926. Letter in the Quincy Kilby scrapbook in the Boston Public Library.

89. page 512. **a reply to his friend Fulton Oursler...** Samri Frikell, *Spirit Mediums Exposed* (New York: New Metropolitan Fiction, Inc.), 1930, 87.

90. page 512. **A young physician named...** “Houdini’s Last Hours” by Ethel Cohn Schatz, *Oakland Sunday Magazine*, no date, 12. Copy found in the Don Bell archives.
91. page 512. **“Well, if there is nothing...”** “History Of Famous Patient Reviewed By His Doctor” by George W. Stark, *The Detroit News – Magazine Page*, October 2, 1950, 14.
92. page 512. **“Author. And Magician.”** “Houdini’s Last Hours” by Ethel Cohn Schatz, *Oakland Sunday Magazine*, no date, 12. Copy found in the Don Bell archives.
93. page 512. **“Say, I can still lick...”** Harold Kellock, *Houdini His Life Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1928), 382.
94. pages 512-513. **“Please keep that woman...”** “The Doctor Evaluates Nature of His Patient” by George W. Stark, *The Detroit News – Magazine Page*, October 3, 1950, 31. Dr. Kennedy not only reported Houdini’s characterization of Bess as “the most peculiar woman I have ever known in my life”, he then went on to give his own explanation of why Houdini never returned with a message at the various séances that were conducted after his death. “So you can see that when it was claimed in California that for 10 years a group of good folks was trying to get in touch with him through an approved spiritualistic medium, I took little interest in the prospect of such an accomplishment. I was quite sure that if he really intended to communicate with anybody, it would not be his apparent soul mate.” Dr. Kennedy’s frank evaluation may have ruffled feathers, even almost twenty-

five years after Houdini's death. When the afternoon edition of the paper was published, the Bess anecdote had been deleted.

95. page 513. "**pus overflowed from Houdini...**" *Detroit Free Press*, no date, cited in William V. Rauscher, *The Houdini Code Mystery – A Spirit Secret Solved* (Pasadena: Mike Caveney's Magic Words, 2000), 114.

96. page 513. "**a great long affair...**" "History Of Famous Patient Reviewed By His Doctor" by George W. Stark, *The Detroit News – Magazine Page*, October 2, 1950, 14.

97. page 513. "**expressed grave concern regarding...**" "Fear For Life Of Harry Houdini", unidentified newspaper clipping, October 26, 1926, in the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Pusey Library, Harvard University.

98. page 513. "**I have a yen for....**" "Houdini's Last Hours" by Ethel Cohn Schatz, *Oakland Sunday Magazine*, no date, 12. Copy found in the Don Bell archives.

99. page 513. "**If I die, don't be surprised if phony...**" Ibid.

100. page 514. "**HAS IMPROVED WONDERFULLY...**" Jim Collins to Jack Arden, October 28, 1926, Western Union telegram. From the Tom Boldt collection.



101. page 514. **“Mr. Houdini has reacted to the second....”** “Houdini Slightly Better”, *New York Times*, October 31, 1926.

102. page 514. **“Box offices here are...”** Houdini to Thomas, October 30, 1926. This is possibly the last letter Houdini wrote. Copy found in the Don Bell archives. Despite Oursler’s contention in his *Spirit Mediums Exposed* (New York: New Metropolitan Fiction, Inc.), 1930, 87, that he believed he “received the last letter that [Houdini] ever wrote, only a few hours before he was stricken”, it appears that Houdini was still writing letters in the Detroit hospital.

103. page 514. **“Doctor, you know I always...am a fake.”** “The Doctor Evaluates Nature of His Patient” by George W. Stark, *The Detroit News – Magazine Page*, October 3, 1950, 31.

104. page 514. **“I guess I’m all through fighting,”** “Wizard Houdini Is Dead”, unidentified newspaper clipping, November 1, 1926. From the Libbet Crandon de Malamud Collection.

105. page 515. **Bess burst out laughing...** Reported in the *New York Journal*, cited in “The Mysterious Death of Harry Houdini” by Manny Weltman, *Genii*, May, 1990, 760. For another take on Bess’s reaction to her husband’s death see “Houdini’s Widow Wept Over Rudy But Could Not Cry Over Husband. Houdini Jested Of Death, Says Widow.”

by Dorothy Van Dyke, *Leat's Leaflets No. 10*, 1926, but bear in mind that Harry Leat devoted a large amount of space in his leaflets to scurrilously discredit Houdini.