

THE STATEMENT OF ARCHIBALD SWAYNE

By BURTON PETER THOM

THE doctors say that I have only a short time to live. They are right. My heart is so bad that I have to lie propped up in bed because I cannot breathe lying down. A few weeks at most is the longest I can last. My legs are waterlogged and my lungs are beginning to fill up. Digitalis helps me very little now, and when that fails—good night.

This is written in an asylum for the criminal insane. Society has adjudged me a criminal and the doctors say that I am insane. The former I am, but the latter I certainly am not. For my crime, although I have never considered what I did a crime, I am paying the penalty—and I am paying it without whimpering, but I do object to being classed as a lunatic.

I would not care so much—I would take it as part of my punishment—if it did not prevent me from trying to right a grievous wrong. For whatever I say, or whatever I write, is discounted because of the supposed aberrancy of my mind. But since I know my end is very near I am writing this despite whether it will be read as the vaporing of a disordered intellect or not. Under the circumstances it is all I can do, and if I did not do it I would be more miserable than I am for the little time that remains to me.

This is written to clear the name of a dead man. Robert Q. Emory did not kill Dr. Kendall. I killed him. I am aware that it will be at once objected to that as this is written Robert Q. Emory is not dead and that I am Robert Q. Emory. In part, this is true. The body of Robert Q. Emory still lives, in a very dilapidated state, but his soul has departed from it for some time—about eighteen months, to be exact. My soul, my intelligence, my identity, has inhabited the body of Robert Q. Emory since immediately before the killing of Dr. Kendall, and it was my personal ego that motivated his body to commit the murder. I obsessed his body and used it as an instrument to avenge myself upon my enemy. Therefore I can

say with absolute truth that he is innocent and that I am guilty.

I am Archibald Swayne, and in the body of Robert Q. Emory I killed Dr. Kendall. That is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It is not necessary here to go into the details whereby I learned that Kendall was my enemy. It is enough to say that I unmasked him as a trickster and a liar when he set up the wall I could not climb, and shattered my fondest hopes and broke me. He did it for no reason. Because he did it for no reason I destroyed him.

Now, you will say, the slate is clean, the balance even, but it is not. I hate him now more than I believe I hated him then, and I welcome death and am glad that it is near, because so much the sooner will I come to grips with him again. In the realm of shadows I will strike him as I have struck him here, and in the worlds beyond, if he flees that far, I will follow him.

AS a psychologist I was, and am, not unknown. My monographs on "The Will" and "The Fundamentals of Character" are accepted as authoritative. I have also some reputation as a mathematician, or rather that branch of it which is included in the domain of metaphysics, transcendental mathematics, which was developed by the mystics of antiquity and more recently by Zollner, Hinton, and Einstein.

Into the mysteries of hyperspace I have penetrated farther than any man now living. I am one of the few who can say that physically I have been in the fourth dimension. It was while in this plane that I learned that J. Ensley Kendall had betrayed me. I read his thoughts as if they were an open book. When I returned to three dimensional space I went to him and accused him of his treachery and upbraided him. He listened. It even seemed to me that he listened patiently.

When I was through, and I know that I spoke loudly and excitedly, he simply said, "Is that all?"

I could have throttled him then and there. I felt hot and cold. My legs gave under me and I trembled. I tried to speak, but could not. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, "You're not feeling well, old man. You'd better go home and go to bed." I don't know why I did it, but without another word I left him.

After that the persecution began. Wherever I went I was followed. Once, when a particularly uncouth individual was following me, I turned and asked him what he wanted. He answered, "You're talkin' through your hat. Beat it, or I'll hand yer one."

It made me brood, and brooding is not good; too much of it rots the soul and turns the milk of human kindness into gall.

I began to be persecuted in another and still more devilish way. Voices spoke to me. They whispered in my ears while I was lecturing to my class. They jeered me when I walked the streets. When I sat alone they sometimes fairly yelled at me. They kept me awake at nights so that I became haggard for want of sleep. They called me fool and coward and many another names too vile to write.

I am well aware that in certain forms of insanity, especially dementia praecox and paranoia, hallucinations of sound are not uncommon. But I was not insane. The processes of my mind worked as smoothly as ever. If I were superstitious I would probably have attributed them to disembodied spirits, but this I knew to be absurd.

Finally I solved the problem. It was so absurdly simple that I was actually ashamed of my stupidity in not having done so before. The voices that tormented me, that were driving me almost to the verge of insanity were nothing more than the voice of J. Ensley Kendall speaking to me from fourth dimensional space. He had evidently filched the secret from me; although I have never been able to determine how he did it. Probably he gained surreptitious access to my notes and apparatus.

He undoubtedly had the opportunity to do so.

Patience has its limits, and the limits of mine had been reached. I had no thought of using violence to put a stop to the persecutions to which I was subjected. That would be the last resort. I wrote to Kendall and implored him to stop. He replied in a cunningly-worded letter in which he denied that he had ever injured me in any way. It was the last straw. I decided to kill him—this rat who had gnawed at my heart strings until they were ragged and raw. He deserved to die.

More and more the voices—his voice—gibed and shrieked at me, but I was no longer concerned. They would stop. I began to think of a plan. This was difficult to do, because, while many suggested themselves to me, when I examined them closely none of them were feasible. It was not only necessary that I should kill him, but it was also necessary that the punishment should fit the crime and—most necessary of all—that it should be done with safety to myself. Not that I had any personal fear of Kendall, but that I would not fall within the clutches of the law. After awhile it came to me, and I worked it out to the last detail.

Robert Q. Emory and I had known each other for many years. We were acquaintances rather than friends, but for each other we entertained a high regard. It was quite by accident that I heard that he was ill and it was only the natural and proper thing for me to call and inquire about him. He lived alone (he had been a widower for many years) except for an ancient housekeeper, and he was not so sick that he could not see me. I had always admired him for his vast and abnormal strength. His hulking shoulders and deep chest, the thick columnar neck and the long, thick arms, and his fingers, bony, spatulate and strong, offered a striking contrast to my weak and puny body. When he shook hands with me, his crushing grip brought a thought that thrilled me: What a strangler this man would be! If only I were like him I could throttle my enemy with my bare hands. With the strength that was in those apish arms I could tear him apart. I could crush his life out against that hairy chest like a bear. In order to grasp my idea it is only necessary to remember that from the fourth dimension the interior of a solid is as much exposed as the interior of a plane.

He motioned to me to take a seat, and as I did so I invoked the formula that transported my ego into hyperspace. My body I left sitting in the

chair. I entered into his body and took possession of his brain.

His spirit struggled mightily, but it was no match for mine. While I could not expel it, yet I could prevent it from exercising any further control over its body. Since I held the citadel of the brain my rule was absolute.

To enter a living organism was a new experience for me. The sensation was strange, especially as the personality which controlled it offered a most strenuous resistance. I almost instantly realized that his brain was not as keen and fine an instrument of thought as my own. It worked more slowly and with less precision.

I could see my body lying there very pale and still. It was very unfortunate that the transposition had not been made in my laboratory, where I could have used my apparatus. With it I could have made a physical exit from three dimensional space and thus could have concealed my body. As it was, I would be obliged to run the risk of letting it remain in Emory's apartment until my return. Any one seeing it would take it for granted that I was dead.

It was impossible to foresee, however, what might happen to it while I was away. It could be easily rendered uninhabitable by an inquest or by the embalming process of an undertaker, or if, by any chance, my spirit did not reenter it before the chemical changes which cause rigor mortis had set in. I therefore had to act quickly.

I hastily dressed myself, although I had some difficulty locating various needful articles of wearing apparel. I closed the door of the room and locked it and put the key in my pocket. The housekeeper was not about, and I left the apartment unobserved. The better to conceal my movements I did not use the elevator. It happened that the doorman was not about, and no one saw me leave.

After walking several blocks I hailed a taxi. In less than twenty minutes I was ushered into Dr. Kendall's office. There were two patients waiting to see him, and it was not long before I was ushered into his consulting room.

"I don't think that I have ever seen you before," he said, as I sat down.

"No, you have not," I replied, "but you will know who I am in a moment."

THERE must have been something in the way I spoke, or the expression on my face, that gave him pause and alarmed him. He half rose from his chair, but with that I was on him. I gripped him by the throat with one

hand and smashed him in the face with the other. He clutched and struck at me, but his strength was naught compared to mine. The room was large, and there was no noise of furniture overturned, or crash of broken glass to bring help. He sank to the floor, still struggling feebly, and I throttled him where he lay, and as he slowly died I told him who I was—I, Archibald Swayne in the body of another.

I stood up. I was a little out of breath, for it must be remembered that the body which I had borrowed had risen from a sickbed. My enemy lay dead at my feet. His head was bent back, and his face was black and twisted. His tongue lolled out between his swollen, bluish lips and his wide open eyes seemed as if they were about to burst out of their sockets.

His spies would dog my steps no longer. The voices that had tormented me would be silent now forever. A strange calm came over me, and for the first time in a long while I felt at peace. Not quite. I had to get away. The stimulus of my action was still unspent, and it enabled my intelligence, even in the dull brain in which it was imprisoned, to act promptly and logically.

I visualized in my mind whether the thing on the floor could be seen when I opened the door to go out. It was evident that it would, so I dragged it to one side. I smoothed my clothes, which were somewhat disarrayed, and passed into the foyer. The attendant gave me my hat and opened the door to the street. As I went down the steps I heard the telephone ring. In a few minutes what I had done would be known. I hurried down the street as fast as I could go without breaking into a run. I looked back when I turned the corner, but no one had come to the door. It made me feel a little safer. Just then an empty taxi came by, and the driver pulled up at my hail. Once in the taxi I felt safe. I knew that I had not been seen to enter it, and that neither the nurse nor the doorman knew who I was. As soon as I could resume my own body, detection would be impossible. My desire was to get back to Emory's apartment as quickly as possible, but in order to make assurance doubly sure I told the driver to drive downtown, my purpose being to return to the apartment by a roundabout way. It was my fatal mistake; that, and the mischance of the card. But even the finding of Emory's name and address would not have frustrated my plan. I would have still had time, had I returned directly to the apartment.

MY arrest and trial and commitment by the lunacy commission I shall not dwell on. During the three years that I have been here I have many times attempted to go into fourth dimensional space, but I have never been able to do so. This has been because of the inferior mental instrument I have been obliged to use. The soul of Emory has long since vacated his body. He is dead; only his body lives. I had hoped so to develop his brain that its cellular elements would react sufficiently to allow me to pass into fourth dimensional space again, and while there to select some body with a first class brain. But for the reason given I could not do so. Shortly after I came here the body which I inhabit began to show signs of deterioration in that a severe form of heart disease became manifest. Its rapid progress made me realize that further effort was useless. I have become resigned.

To prove that I am not insane I shall conclude this statement with an exposition of hyperdimensional space. In order to do so it is absolu—

Here the manuscript ends abruptly. The writer's theory or explanation of the fourth dimension was never given. It is to be regretted that he was not able to do so; it undoubtedly, would have been most interesting. The crippled heart suddenly went from bad to worse, and in twenty minutes from the time the last word was written he was dead.

If this was simply a narrative composed by a patient with dementia præcox, or some other form of insanity, it would possess comparatively slight interest except as an example of the thought processes of a lunatic, but when the facts are known it will be found to be much more than that. It is a psychic mystery in which an occult explanation is easier to believe than a scientific. In

fact, no scientific explanation can be offered. The theory of split personality, or of dual personality which might be invoked, cannot possibly apply, because neither take into account the obsession of more than one individual.

Swayne is dead, and Emory, also Kendall, slain by —let the reader form his own opinion. These are the facts.

The narrative states that Archibald Swayne was a psychologist. He was, and, more, he was most distinguished. It is also known that he was deeply interested in higher mathematics and had frequently expressed his belief in spatial dimensions other than those recognized by the senses. It has been further established that he was a close friend of Dr. Kendall for many years. It is known, too, that this friendship was suddenly broken off a few months before Kendall was murdered. During this period Swayne's conduct was observed to have been markedly erratic; so much so, that his friends and relatives seriously considered having him placed under restraint. The letter that he wrote to Kendall, which is mentioned in the statement, was found among the latter's papers, and there is no question but that the writer was insane.

Emory, so far as known, had no acquaintance with the murdered man. He was a widower, without children, and retired from business. As the manuscript states he was an exceptionally powerful man. His acquaintance with Swayne cannot be traced, but it can be easily assumed because of their mutual membership in the Colonial Golf Club. Up to the moment of the crime, there is no reason to suspect that Emory was insane.

On the day of the murder Emory was visited by Swayne. He was just recovering from a severe attack of rheumatism and was still in bed. What conversation occurred between them is unknown, but

the testimony of the housekeeper was that Emory emerged from the room alone. This she thought strange, especially as she knew that he had hardly recovered from his illness. She did not enter the room until the arrival of the detectives, who found Swayne lying on the floor unconscious. He never recovered consciousness and died that night. There were no signs of violence on the body, but it is most extraordinary to record that the inquest showed no definite cause of death. There was some slight hardening of the arteries and thickening of the membranes covering the brain, which was also wetter than usual, but these changes would hardly cause him to become suddenly unconscious and die in a few hours.

Now, if it was Emory who killed Kendall and wrote this account to exonerate himself, how did he come to know so much of Swayne's past history; not scraps that he could obtain by hearsay, but an intimate and exact cognizance of his private and personal affairs?

It is a question that I do not pretend to answer. There is another paradox that is equally mystifying. If the intelligence of Swayne was in the body of Emory, as asserted in the narrative, how did he come to forget so much of his highly specialized knowledge of psychology and metaphysics? That, too, is an enigma. Was it a coincidence that Emory became insane with a homicidal impulse when Swayne came to see him, and was it a coincidence that Swayne simultaneously became unconscious? It is possible, but not probable.

The opinion of the commentator can be best expressed in the words of Claude Bragdon: "Many cases * * * * are more easily explicable as possession by an alien will, than on the less credible hypothesis that the character, habits and language of a person can change utterly in a moment of time."

Table of Contents

The contents of *Weird Tales* is fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers. All communications should be addressed to the publishers main office at 854 North Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Subscription, \$3.00 a year in the United States; \$3.50 in Canada. Single copies, 25c.

THE SPIRIT FAKERS OF HERMANNSTADT	3
HOUDINI	
THE HERMIT OF GHOST MOUNTAIN	7
FRANKLIN MILLER	
JUSTICE IN THE FOOTHILLS	11
CLEMENT WHITE	
ZILLAH	13
VALMA CLARK	
THE FINE ART OF SUICIDE	19
HOWARD ROCKET	
ASHES	22
C. M. EDDY, JR.	
THE RATS IN THE WALLS	25
H. P. LOVECRAFT	
THE VOICE OF EURHEMIA	32
EUDORA RAMSAY RICHARDSON	
YELLOW AND WHITE	36
GEORGE FULLER	
COILS OF DARKNESS	41
SYBLA RAMUS	
THE TOAD	51
DONOVAN G. FITZPATRICK	
THE STATEMENT OF ARCHIBALD SWAYNE	54
BURTON PETER THOM	
THE TRANSPARENT GHOST	57
ISA-BELLE MANZER	
DRACONDA	59
JOHN MARTIN LEAHY	
CREATURES OF THE NIGHT	73
A. P. McMAHON	
THE HOUSE IN THE FOREST	75
HAROLD WARD	
NEVER BET THE DEVIL YOUR HEAD	78
EDGAR ALLAN POE	
THE EYRIE	83
THE EDITOR	

For Advertising Rates in *WEIRD TALES* apply to YOUNG & WARD, Advertising Managers,
168 North Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill.