To Sleep, Perchance To Scream

September 28th 1934

Today I begin what is to be my single most important contribution to mankind, the result of my years of research and most assuredly the catapult to which my career will launch from mediocrity to infamy. I was given the grant today to being in earnest my dream research. My hard work and dedication has paid off and now I have only to produce the results, which I know will inevitably be produced. In addition to operating money I have been given a small lab on campus with which to preform my tests. It is not quite as large as I would have hoped and the accouterments are lacking but I can make due. The important thing is that I have gained the ear of the Dean and others; my research has been elevated from fanciful to legitimate and testable. I great day indeed, I must now acquire the necessary equipment for the endeavor and begin to interview volunteers and subjects for the study.

As I see it, I will need two or three volunteers, students of psychology, to help with the subject interviews as well as day-to-day maintenance. I have my eye on a few students already that I believe have a certain proclivity for the type of research we will be conducting. It should not be difficult to procure those I have in mind as they have already expressed interest in the area of study we will be breaking ground on. The subject of dreams has such a tendency to attract the mystical minded, but I am emphatically barring from consideration those who would see this research as a probe into the metaphysical. We are doing real science here, not some parlor tricks to shock and amaze the patrons of a circus tent. We will attempt to prove that our subconscious mind has the power to affect the physical world and that our dreams have the real possibility of being altered in a way that will lessen and in some cases cure certain mental illness. This will be a huge step forward in the science of psychology and a great benefit to mankind.

September 30th 1934

I have managed to convince two of my star students to come on board with the research and they both seem very excited at the prospects. I have my eye on a third however it may take a bit more convincing since she is an even more of a staunch skeptic than I, in regards to the connection of dreams to the mystical, which is something I believe we will fight against throughout this endeavor. I believe that given my track record and the research thus far I can convince her that we are doing legitimate research and that if anything we need a skeptic to keep our research balanced.

William Nickels, a graduate student, was the first of the volunteers I was able to have come aboard. He is a student of mine and I have become a bit of a mentor to the lad. He sits at the top of his class in all categories, and has a keen understanding of the subtleties of the mind, which so few I have taught have. He will be a great addition to the team and I am even considering co-authoring a paper with him on the subject.

Terence Polanski, an undergrad, who has sings of becoming a exemplary student and a leader in the field of psychology. He has already shown signs of great foresight in regards to the mysteries of the mind, and in particular, the area of dreams. He has also amassed an enormous amount of knowledge regarding the mystical notions of dreaming and dream interpretation. His research into the history of dreams has been focused on debunking the notions held by charlatans, mystics and witchdoctors. It will be good to have that body of knowledge on board to keep us from heading into the realm of snake oil salesmen ourselves.

Penelope Withers, my hopeful acquisition, has a PhD in psychology however she is currently a student of anthropology with the university. As such, she has much to offer in the way of understanding the socioeconomic and genealogical aspects of the test subjects. I have made initial inquiries with her about joining the team, to which she has thus far not responded to in any way that would indicate her interest in the research. I am not completely deterred however, being that her graduate thesis was focused on the power of dreams to affect biological aspects of the dreamer. This is paramount to our research and having her on the team would bolster our collective knowledge as well as add more legitimacy to the project in the eyes of the university.

October 1st 1934

I was able to acquire the favor of Ms. Withers, it looks as though we have built a great team for the project. With the team now in place and the facilities almost ready to accept test subjects we are very close to beginning our journey.

October 2nd 1934

Our first official meeting was held tonight at the small but serviceable set of rooms that the university has afforded us for the test subjects. The entirety of the facility is tucked away from the main buildings of the university and is, to my chagrin, a considerable distance away from the medical and psychology departments of the school. Being that we do not need an inordinate amount of medical equipment for our research it is not too inconvenient, however it would have been nice to feel that we were part of the legitimate research happening in those departments. Instead it seems we are being hidden from public scrutiny in the back corner of the agricultural and life sciences department building. The space consists of a main lab with four connected rooms, two to the south and one on the east and west walls. The entrance on the north wall is accessed by the seemingly unending labyrinth of corridors that are accessed via a small alleyway that runs along the back of the main building. In every way it seems we are being hidden away. No matter though, the results of our research will serve only to embarrass those who so smugly pushed us aside in the humble beginnings, I am sure of it.

October 10th 1934

We managed to secure most of the equipment that we will need for the project, we have the beds and linens, medical and first aid supplies for monitoring the subjects vitals as well as an electroencephalograph. Things are coming together nicely. Mr. Nickels has taken the lead in obtaining test subject and has assured me that progress is being made.

October 13th 1934

We have made progress on the acquisition of test subjects and Mr. Nickels assures me that we should have four test subjects by the end of the month. He has been interviewing several candidates and says he has narrowed it down. The four individuals are patients at the Arkham Sanitarium in Arkham Massachusetts. It is not too far of a distance for transport and William say that the sanitarium was happy to provide assistance in the hope that our research will help these individuals over come their maladies and eventually be released from the institution.

October 17th 1934

Our test subjects have been selected and each has agreed to participate in the research. It is my hope that we can help these individuals eventually become functioning members of society. Each of them has a significant malady which prevents them from living a life outside the walls of the sanitarium. We can change that for them and user in a new dawn in psychology and medicine in general.

Mrs. Edith Lowe age 52, suffers from acute paranoia and agoraphobia, she refuses to go outside and has a fear of open spaces. It will be difficult to transport Mrs. Lowe to our test facility but I believe of the subjects she holds the strongest possibility of a full recovery.

Mr. Abram Wilkes age 34, suffers from schizophrenia, irregular sleep patterns and other sleep disorders, which have not been properly diagnosed. We hope to help Mr. Wilkes with the sleep disorders and by proxy help with the schizophrenia. He will be one of the most difficult cases.

Ms Evelyn Saltonstall age 24, suffers from exchanged personality disorder, she manifests at least two other personalities, which the sanitarium could identify. She has not had much treatment in this regard and there may be more egos of which we have not yet been introduced. I am very interested in this particular case. If we can have her confront her alternate personalities within he dreams she may be able to aggregate them all into her own real personality.

Mr. Thomas Rhodes age 28, suffers from severe depression and sleep disorders. I believe Mr. Rhodes to also be a likely candidate for full recovery. He is also the least difficult of the subjects to maintain and interact with.

October 24th 1934

We have undertaken the difficult task of transporting the patients to our facility and we will begin the research soon. For the moment we are getting everything prepared and allowing the subjects to acclimate to their new living situation. We do not have as much space as the hospital they are used to, however these particular patients did not leave the confines of their rooms much and so it will not be too jarring a change for them. Once they have settled in and begun to normalize their daily routines we can begin.

Everyone is doing fine work and I am please with the selections I have made for my assistants. They seem to require little oversight and understand the gravity of what we intend to accomplish. All the preparations have been made and we are fully ready to being our grand adventure.

October 30th 1934

Today began our first trials today; the patients were receptive to the treatment and seemed to easily understand what was asked of them. To begin with, we have all of the patients writing down their dreams as soon as they wake. This helps in allowing them to remember what has occurred in their dreams and builds a stronger memory of the dream once awake. We have set each subject up on a regulated sleep cycle and they all seem to be having little trouble with the regiment.

October 31st 1934

An uneventful Halloween, I stayed with the subjects and we had some baked treats. The weather is turning; I think it will be a severe winter. The others all have social engagements for the evening; I gave them the rest of the week off. I will work with the patients and we will reconvene this coming Monday.

November 5th 1934

The subjects all seem to be coming along well with their dream journals. Mrs. Lowe, who began the process hardly remembering anything from her dreams, now has an almost full page of notes each morning. The others have always had strong recollections of their nightly wanderings but are showing signs of deeper retention and more vivid descriptions. They are becoming accustomed to the sleep schedule we have set for them and I believe we can implement the electroencephalograph soon.

Mr. Rhodes, whose issues with sleep are the most sever seems to be acclimating to the facility and all of us, in fact he says he is sleeping better here than he had at the sanitarium. The subjects still remain in their rooms for the most part, though we did have a bit of socializing on Halloween, I am hoping that they will begin to confide in one another so we can start group sessions. It is ambitions to thing of that at this juncture but things are progressing quickly.

November 13th 1934

The dream journals are really having a strong affect on the subjects. They are able to recall vividly their dreams and can speak at length, not only of their surroundings in the dream but of their feelings and thoughts. I have begun to suggest that they try and affect the dream world in some way. I asked them to imagine an apple in their hand while in dream. If they can become proficient at creating objects for themselves we can then move to the next phase of the research.

I will be implementing the electroencephalograph tonight on Mrs. Lowe. If all goes well I will begin a round robin schedule of monitoring each of the subjects every other night. Mr. Rhodes may be a problem in this regard as he already had such difficultly with his sleep. Adding machinery to the matter could prove disastrous in his case.

November 14th 1934

Mrs. Lowe did well on the electroencephalograph last night. She did not seem to have any trouble sleeping and I was able to monitor the readings through the night without any issue. She exhibits larger frequencies of Alpha and Theta waves and seems to rarely, if ever, produce any of the Delta waves we are hoping to have the subjects produce at a higher frequency. It is still early and I am pleased with the initial results.

November 16th 1934

Ms. Saltonstall was on the electroencephalograph last night and did well as expected. She seemed to slip into deep sleep quickly and was exhibiting strong Delta waves quickly. They remained strong through the night fluctuating from Delta to Theta and rarely raising back to Alpha, which would indicate very light sleep or even wakeful resting.

Ms. Saltonstall related to me that she had been able to product the apple in her hand, which I had asked of her. I was delighted to say the least. She seems to have a knack for producing affects in her dreams and I believe she may be the first of the subjects to achieve success in affecting her physical waking self from within the dream state. She also told me that she had seen Mr. Wilkes in her dreams. I thought that a bit odd since they had only seen each other once since they were brought here. Usually we dream of things that are familiar to us or significant is some way. Their brief encounter on Halloween night would not classify as such, it could be that the change of living situation has her mind grasping for the familiar and she may have seen Mr. Wilkes at the sanitarium previously.

November 18th 1934

I chose to work with Mr. Rhodes last night due to some anxiety he was having during the day. I told me that he had seen Mr. Wilkes in his dreams on the previous night and that he seemed to dog him through his various dreams throughout the night. I thought it strange as Ms. Saltonstall had described almost the same thing in my last session with her. Again, the two had only ever met the night of the Halloween party and even then only briefly. It was perplexing that Mr. Wilkes had made such an impact on the other subjects. Nonetheless I was able to get Mr. Rhodes to sleep and was able to monitor him through the night. His levels fluctuated between Theta and Alpha waves; it was easy to tell that he was a restless sleeper and rarely ever dropped into the Delta level which we were really looking for.

November 20th 1934

Mr. Wilkes proved to be a very interesting subject indeed. I monitored him through the night and found that though he seemed completely asleep his readings were mostly in the Gamma level. It was not surprising being that Mr. Wilkes suffered from schizophrenia but the readings looked to be that of a fully awake subject. There were moments when he would go from Gamma directly to Delta and stay there for long periods of time. Rarely did he have exhibit any Alpha or Theta waves. It was odd and unexpected but research into uncharted territory like this is rarely ordinary.

I asked Mr. Wilkes about his dreams and in particular if he had encountered any of the others in his dreams. He only smiled at me with an uneasy stare. Eventually he said that he had not but I get the feeling he is holding something back. There is something off putting about that man. I have yet to see signs of the schizophrenia he was diagnosed with, he seems stoic but intelligent, he appears almost cunning in a way. As if there is something he is waiting for and will not share with the group.

November 21st 1934

I have left the subjects in the care of Mr. Nickels and Ms Withers for the next few days. It seems the I must be aware of my own sleep patterns. I have been burning the candle at both ends as they say. I am taking some much needed time to rest. I will be back in a few days, renewed and ready to move on to the next phase.

November 25th 1934

Ms. Withers came to me today with some unsettling news, it seems that Mr. Rhodes has been refusing to maintain his sleep schedule. He told Ms Withers that he is afraid to sleep and blames Mr. Wilkes for the disturbance. He claims that Mr. Wilkes is visiting him in his dreams and trying to lead him into a dark cavern with a long stair case in it, which leads down into what Mr. Rhodes believes to be hell. He is now adamant about not falling asleep and refuses to lie down in bed. Ms. Withers informed me that the other subjects were staying on task with their sleep schedules and making progress with their journals as well as their ability to create inanimate objects requested of them within their dreams. She says that Mr. Wilkes seems to have the most proficiency in this regard. She has started small, the apple, and has since moved to larger and more complex objects. Apparently Mr. Wilkes was able to create a sofa which to seat himself in his most recent dreams. I believe if we can get Mr. Rhodes back on track we can move on to the next phase.

November 27th 1934

Mrs. Lowe seems to believe that she is in danger, and like Mr. Rhodes, she fears Mr. Wilkes. We have kept the subjects separated for the most part and have not been allowing them to discuss their dreams with one another however Mrs. Lowe describes in great detail the same dream scape that Mr. Rhodes had. She describes Mr. Wilkes trying to convince her to follow him into a cavern which contains a long descending staircase. She is very distraught and her sleep is severely disrupted. I am beginning to think that possibly some sort of mass suggestion is happening. It could be the the subjects are able to hear the conversations that the others are having with Ms. Withers, and myself. That can be the only explanation. This is becoming a distraction from moving on to the next phase of the research. I believe we should move forward quickly before this begins to disrupt the sleep patterns of the rest of the subjects.

November 28th 1934

I had a great session with Mr. Wilkes today and I believe him to be a prime candidate for moving to the next phase. His sleep patterns and readings have been promising and are becoming increasingly normalized. He is able to achieve and level of deep Delta waves for prolonged periods of time. This is the deepest of sleep where the mind has a direct connection with the subconscious. He is able to make objects with ease and in increasingly more complex fashion. He related that he was able to make a dog appear and then accompany him through the dream. I was blown away by this, the ability it would take to create an animate object, then have it be a part of the greater landscape, fascinating.

Mr. Polanski has expressed concern for the subjects, in particular Ms. Saltonstall. He maintains that again she had confided in him that she fears Mr. Wilkes because he has been visiting her in her dreams. She went as far as saying she attempted to turn him away in her dream physically and she was overpowered by the man. She woke horrified by this and told Mr. Polanski that she had been attacked. He calmed her down and helped her understand that it was just a dream and that as part of the research she is experiencing her dreams more vividly than she normally would. This was why all of this seemed so real, but to rest assured it was still only a dream.

November 30th 1934

Against the better wishes of Ms. Withers I have move to the next phase with Mr. Wilkes. He has shown incredible aptitude at staying in deep Delta level sleep for long periods of time. We are working on his ability to manipulate the environment of the dream. He shows remarkable promise at manipulating his dreams and dictating what he is dreaming. Once he can manipulate environments consistently we can move on to attempting to affect his physical body in the dream. This will be the major break through. If he can affect his waking self by actions preformed in the dream state we will be ready for the final phase of the research.

I am still uncomfortable in the mans presence but his abilities are greater than any of the other subjects and so I must work with him closely. I mentioned that the other patients had been dreaming of him and he said the strangest thing on the subject. He said that the others were fledgling dreamers and did not understand the power that they possess in their dreams. He said they were fools to be afraid. I asked him what this meant but he only fell into a silence, staring at a half eaten apple he had on his night stand. It is difficult to speak with Mr. Wilkes about anything but his dreams. When speaking of his dreams he is eloquent and present. When speaking of anything else he shuts down almost immediately.

December 5th 1934

Last night something horrible happened, Mr. Nickels and I were attending the subjects for the night and Mr. Polanski had just left, when Mr. Nickels began to monitor Mrs. Lowe. Things were progressing as usual and I was going over some of our data in the lab when I heard screaming coming from the room. Mrs. Lowe was screaming wildly I was able to make out several works in her uncontrollable wailing. I distinctly heard “Please stop” and “no, Mr. Wilkes, no” then finally “what are you doing… no”. The last was screamed with such a level of terror that I ran to the room expecting that Mr. Wilkes had somehow left his room unnoticed and attacked her. What I saw was even more alarming. I entered the room and Mr. Nickels was beside the bed frantically trying to revive Mrs. Lowe. Upon closer inspection I could see that Mrs. Lowe was bleeding from a large laceration across her throat and to my absolute horror, the womans eyes were missing, as if gouged out. I stopped the boy from trying to help the poor woman as I could see that the neck wound had severed the major artery and she was beyond help. She was dead, at this I threw Mr. Nickels against the wall and demanded an explanation. It could only have been him who had done this, he was the only person in the room.

Mr. Nickels emphatically denies having any part and tells a quite unbelievable story. It will be for the police to decide now as they have come and taken him away, the body of Mrs. Lowe has been taken to the university morgue where a coroner appointed by the police will examine the body. Mr. Nickels claims that he was monitoring the subjects waves on the electroencephalograph and as such his back was to the patient at the time of the screaming. We are all used to having the subjects speak and even scream in their sleep so initially he did not have cause for alarm and continued to monitor the readings. With the last horrid scream he turned to see that the laceration on her throat was already present and spewing blood out onto her torso, and then he claims that he watched as each of her eyes were gouged out but the eyes themselves vanished after the gouging.

I can only imagine that Mr. Nickels has had some sort of psychotic break brought on by the hard work we have been doing, lack of sleep and the proximity to other individuals with similar mental issues. It must have been a latent condition brought on by the research and the stress of the last few months. In attempting to revived Mrs. Lowe he was covered in her blood which makes his story difficult to substantiate, the eyes however were not found, in the room or on his person, and there does not seem to be any place where he could have put them. Moreover there does not seem to be anything in the room which could have been used as the murder weapon.

I am devastated by this event and I will attempt to speak with Mr. Nickels as soon as I am allowed to try and understand what has happened to this promising young man. I feel responsible, it was my research which put him in such close proximity to these subjects, it was the research which undoubtedly exhausted him to the point of this break, it was I who put poor Mrs. Lowe in harms way.

December 6th 1934

Ms Withers and Mr. Polanski will be monitoring the patients today as I attempt to recover from the mortifying events of the last two days. I have told them to go easy on the subjects and simply have them sleep and monitored. I have also asked them to not speak of the events so as not to introduce any suggestive influences into their dreaming. The research must go on, I have to present my case at a school board hearing next week after the incident and plead that they let use proceed.

December 7th 1934

I visited Mr. Nickels today at the police station lockup. He is being held there until he can be moved to a nearby prison to await trial. What he confided to me has me furious and frightened. He was visibly shaken when I arrived and it was not because of his impending imprisonment, it was a genuine fear for his own life. He told me that he had kept from me some details of how he had acquired our subjects from the Arkham Sanitarium so quick and easily. Apparently all of the subjects were, in addition to having mental illness that would normally constitute commitment, convicted of crimes which resulted in their placement in the sanitarium. All but one of the subjects were convicted of non-violent crimes but one was not. Mr. Abram Wilkes was convicted for the murders of his mother, father and two siblings. I was shocked at the recklessness of Mr. Nickels, but he reminded me of how difficult it had been obtaining any subjects for the research and that we were running out of time. He did what he had to do to keep the research alive. I was taken aback by this news and asked Mr. Nickels if he had any details of the murders, to which he did not. Then he told me that he feared for his life. He had been speaking with the other patients and they all had a fear of Wilkes, they had been seeing him in their dreams and he was becoming increasingly forward with them, to the level of physically accosting them in the dream. He then told me something that sent cold shivers up my spine, he said that last night in his cell he had a dream, and in the dream he saw Mr. Wilkes.

I then drove to Arkham to see if I could talk with some on there about the events which sent Mr. Wilkes there. I found them but I wish I had not, I could hardly believe what I was seeing. Mr. Wilkes had killed his entire family one night eight years ago. His victims were his mother, his father and his younger brother and sister. The first murder was his mother, and to my utter shock and disgust, the murder was horribly familiar. He sliced the throat of his mother, which was the killing blow, then proceeded to remove her eyes and consume them. This being the exact situation that Mrs. Lowe had been dispatched in. The next victim was his brother, who he suffocated in bed and removed his heart and consumed it. I felt sick as I read on. Then he murdered his sister stabbing her repeatedly and finally removing her hands and consuming them. Last was his father who he strangled, removed his brain and consumed it. This was too terrible to bear and I immediately made arrangements at the sanitarium to deliver Mr. Wilkes back into their care. I rushed back to our facility to see to the removal of the man as a severe storm was rolling in.

Her I sit, tonight, it’s Friday evening and the storm is raging outside. Arkham Sanitarium has informed me that they are having difficulties with the storm and will not be able to take Mr. Wilkes back until Monday. The rest of us are stuck here as well, the storm has turned to a blizzard and the roads are too unsafe to travel. Ms. Withers, Mr. Polanski and I are stuck her for the time being. We will not be conducting any research and we are keeping a close eye on the subjects. Mr. Polanski told me trivially in passing that he must be getting in too deep, he said this in a joking manner but I felt the gravity of the words. He told me that the night prior he had dreamed of Mr. Wilkes and that he was trying to convince Mr. Polanski to accompany him into a strange cavern with stairs leading down into darkness.

December 8th 1934