

'Psychic Witness' is the legal/paranormal thriller about a twelve-year-old Hindu spiritual prodigy who makes legal history when, after he demonstrates his psychic powers, he is allowed by the court to testify in a celebrated murder trial in a Virginia courtroom.

Psychic Witness

by Eli Bernzweig

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The background of the top half of the cover is a black and white photograph of the interior of Yankee Stadium, showing the iconic marquee with the words "YANKEE STADIUM" in large, three-dimensional letters.

Psychic

The background of the bottom half of the cover is a warm, golden-brown photograph of a pair of ornate, antique scales of justice, symbolizing the legal system.

Witness

**HOW A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD PSYCHIC MADE
LEGAL HISTORY IN AN AMERICAN COURTROOM**

A NOVEL BY

Eli P. Bernzweig

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CHAPTER 17

Ezra Sterling was, of course, perfectly aware of the current and long-standing position of the mainstream scientific community that there is no substantial scientific proof that ESP, mental telepathy, intuition, clairvoyance, telekinesis, and the entire array of claimed paranormal phenomena even exist. Although he had never been in a position like this before, Sterling was a resilient and adaptable jurist, as he had proved in many earlier cases. As he began the impromptu meeting with the four lawyers in his chambers, he couldn't stop thinking about the significant information Adam Rodgers had just given him about the court's allowance of testimony by a psychic in the *Daigle* murder case in Louisiana. He wondered: could there possibly *be* something to Morya's claim of psychic powers? Well, we'll all know soon enough. Adam and Zac took seats near one of the room's large windows and listened quietly as Sterling addressed Scott and Lou.

"Well, gentlemen, what can we come up with to test this young man's unusual abilities? Let me say at the outset, I want it to be as fair a test as possible, to protect the constitutional rights of your clients; on the other hand, I expect you to honestly acknowledge any genuine psychic powers the witness may actually prove to our mutual satisfaction."

"That meets with our approval, your Honor," Scott said, confidently. He was thinking that, once the tests of Morya's alleged psychic powers are concluded, the only possible outcomes would be either a hung jury or perhaps the acquittal of both defendants, so agreeing to acknowledge what he felt wasn't going to happen was easy. He told the judge, "Your Honor, I've thought about doing a challenge like this when we first prepared for trial. To begin with, since this young man claims to have

‘seen’ in his minds-eye the entire crime scene at the 7-Eleven store simply by touching the cap of one of the defendants – and, incidentally, there is no proof that the cap he touched was owned by either defendant – why don’t we have him touch something owned by someone else and see if, by doing so, he can get accurate ‘visions’ of that person’s activities. Of course, we’d have to know in advance what those activities were.”

Sterling nodded as he thoughtfully gazed out the tenth-floor window and said, “That sounds reasonable. Offhand, do you have any suggestions, gentlemen?” There was silence in the room for nearly a full minute before the judge’s face lit up as an idea suddenly popped into his head. “I know something he might touch that has a little history attached to it.”

“What do you have in mind, judge?” Lou Edelman asked.

“Well, I’ve been a fan of the New York Yankees ever since I was little. My dad was a Yankees fan, too, and when I was just a kid, he took me to Yankee Stadium in New York. It was the Fourth of July, back in 1939. That just happened to be Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day, the day they honored the well-liked Yankee first baseman who had come down with the rare disease that they eventually named after him. Everyone was given a little ivory-colored baseball bat tied to a keychain, with the words ‘Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day on the tiny bat. I’ve kept that keychain bat in my office safe as a memento all these years. It would be interesting to see if our young witness is able to perceive any of the real-life events from that historic day over fifty years ago merely by touching it.”

Scott and Lou lit up like Christmas trees when they heard the judge’s suggestion.

“What a wonderful suggestion, your Honor,” Scott commented. “Of course, we’d just have to make sure he doesn’t see the lettering on the bat.”

"That's no problem, so let's make that the first test," Sterling said, as he began to warm up to the task at hand. "Now, what else can you gentlemen suggest to challenge his alleged psychic powers?" Adam and Zac were intensely interested listeners but remained silent as the judge and the two defense lawyers pondered other ways to test Morya's claimed psychic powers. After a minute or so, Lou spoke. "Since many so-called psychics claim to be able to see into the future, let's see if he can do that."

"Great idea, Lou," his co-counsel remarked, but how can we ask him something today that we won't be able to verify until sometime in the future?"

"Maybe we could do something reasonably easy," Lou responded. "I've read about a test done at some university where they had the test subjects try to predict what playing card someone else would pick randomly from a fifty-two-card deck. We could have the kid try his hand at that one, and maybe have him do it not just once, but two or three times, to rule out even the remotest possibility of a lucky guess."

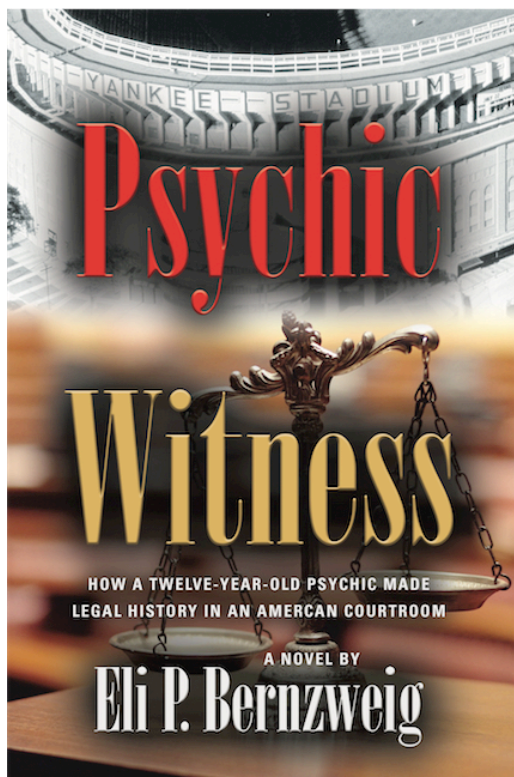
Judge Sterling agreed, so it became the number two challenge. And, a moment later, he offered a third suggestion: "On the mental telepathy claim, we could have Eleanor Maybury, our court reporter, open a dictionary to any random page, select any word her finger happens to land upon, then show that word to either one of you, and whoever is chosen will mentally concentrate on that word. Then, we'll see if the witness can read the sender's mind and get the correct word."

Everyone agreed that this would be a fair test of Morya's mental telepathy claim, and so it was chosen as the third test. After a long pause, Adam could see that the two defense attorneys and Judge Sterling were running out of ideas so, with the judge's permission, he offered to make a suggestion of his own. "Morya has told us that he is able to leave his body at will, so maybe you can devise something to challenge his ability to do

that." At first, Sterling thought that the very concept was totally absurd, but, at the urging of the two defense lawyers, he agreed that this would be a significant test of Morya's paranormal abilities, so they put their collective heads together to devise something. While still believing that the concept was nothing short of ridiculous, Sterling came up with a suggestion: "My home is in Fairfax, Virginia, that's eleven miles away from here. Let's see if our young psychic can travel out of his body and describe the house and anything else of significance. Because my wife is an ornithologist, we have an enclosed aviary in our backyard containing several species of rare birds. If he can see all that while sitting here in this courtroom, then I'd be inclined to allow him to testify.

Scott and Lou smiled but made no comment, knowing that the likelihood of Morya seeing and accurately describing the judge's home eleven miles away was, indeed, nothing short of ridiculous. For this reason, they happily approved this fourth test. At this point, the judge and the defendants' lawyers agreed that no more tests were necessary, so Judge Sterling carefully retrieved the baseball trinket from his office safe and wrapped it in a handkerchief, located a deck of cards and a dictionary, and then all five returned to the courtroom.

The heightened curiosity in the courtroom was palpable as Sterling gaveled the court back into session but, to everyone's surprise, he did not ask the bailiff to bring the jury back in. The spectators in the crowded courtroom could only guess at the reason for the jury's continued absence, but they didn't have long to wait before they got their answer. Showing a definite increase in enthusiasm and interest, His Honor stated, "You may make your offer of proof now, Mr. Rodgers," then turned to Morya, still seated in the witness chair, and reminded him that he was still under oath. Adam walked to the lectern, gave Morya



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