Daily Mail

A FORMER TELEVISION REPAIR MAN BELIEVES HE HAS POWERS OF THE PARANORMAL

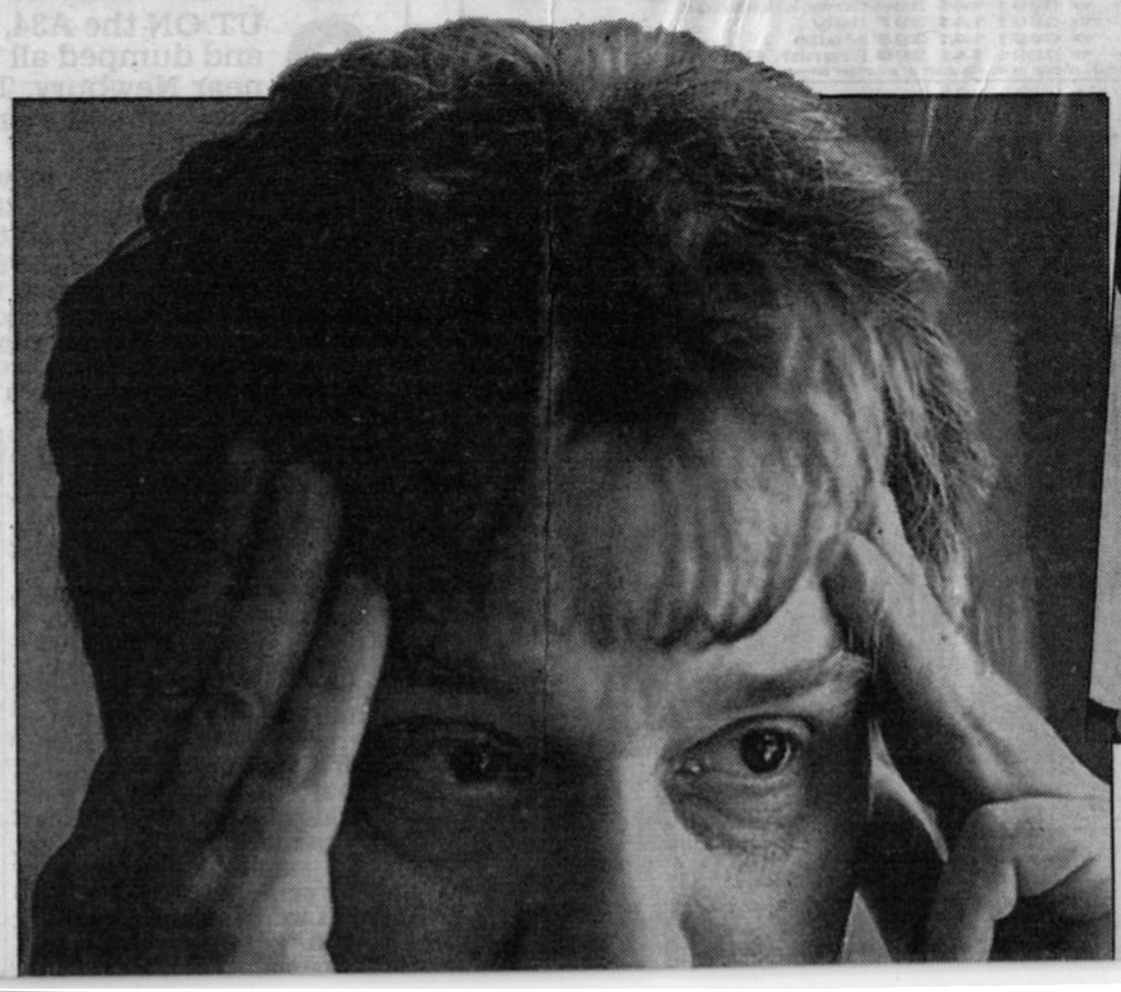
Can this man really predict disasters?

THE BOMB was planted in the lavatory at the front of the plane. It shattered the skulls of two people sitting near him. This was a nightmare Chris Robinson had on the night of May 8, 1990, as his wife slept beside him.

Four days later, on May 12, a Philippine Airlines plane was taxiing to the runway at Manila Airport. As it did so, a bomb exploded in the lavatory at the front of the plane, decapitating the passengers sitting near the explosion. Another five passengers were killed, and 80 were injured. Responsibility was claimed by the NPA (New People's Army), which said it had intended to detonate the bomb at cruising altitude, killing all on board.

Robinson's nightmare exactly mirrored events in Manila. Was this simply an unsettling coincidence or a genuine premonition? Robinson himself had no doubt. By then, he had had a number of similarly unsettling experiences. Indeed, he had become so convinced of his 'gift' for anticipating disasters that he had contacted the police, hoping that he might be able to help prevent terrorist outrages. According to Robinson, the Manila bomb was critical in dispelling police scepticism about his powers.

For the past seven years, Chris Robinson has had these strange dreams. Sometimes, he says, they have been followed by the awful fulfilment of what he has foreseen, like the murder in 1990 of the Tory MP Ian Gow by the IRA; on other occasions, such as with the discovery of a bomb-making factory in Kilburn, North London, he says that his apparent glimpses of the future have helped the police achieve astounding success.



Robinson warned of the kidnap of baby Alexandra Griffiths three days before it happened

Future perfect: Chris Robinson's dreams seem to give him a second sight

Police who have had dealings with him — initially members of the local Bedfordshire constabulary, then later detectives at Scotland Yard — are understandably more sceptical. Often, they say, there is scant documentary evidence to support Robinson's claims. But there are, they will admit, cases like the bombing of the RAF base at Stanmore or the shooting of an army recruit on Lichfield station when Robinson's predictions have proved correct.

Perhaps this was luck: perhaps Robinson could be a charlatan, engaged in a sophisticated guessing game. If, on the other hand, he is blessed with a rare paranormal gift, he could be of real value to the police, not least in a renewed battle with the IRA.

by MARCUS SCRIVEN

What is certain is that, until 1989, when his dreams started, Chris Robinson was an unremarkable 38-year-old with a heart condition.

He was living in a mobile homes park in Bedfordshire, earning a living repairing television sets. His wife worked as a waitress in a nearby hotel.

The birth early that year of a daughter, Lauren, seems to have been a turning-point.

QUITE soon after Lauren was born, Robinson was staying the night with friends. It was then that he claims to have heard a voice in his sleep — that of his grandmother, who had been dead for several years.

She told him that someone was trying to steal his car, which was parked by his camper van. On his return home the next day, one of his neighbours told him how he had seen people trying to break into the car and had chased them away.

After further dreams, including a premonition of an incident at GCHQ, two detectives and the Rev David Bolster, the local vicar with whom Robinson had discussed his gift, suggested that he should keep a 'dream diary'. The proposal was to yield startling results. On the first morning of the 'dream diary' Robinson awoke astonished to find that words were spread out all over the first page. As time passed, he was gradually to accept that he had written the words in his sleep — a process called 'automatic writing'. Dr Keith Hearne, a distinguished psychologist, subsequently spent many nights watching Robinson as this happens.

The process of interpreting the dreams is less easily dealt with. Initially, Robinson was almost as confused by his jottings as anyone else. Among the phrases were the following: 'Parcel In Paper' and 'Something Sent To The Police', with the letters 'SA' and 'SN', one on top of the other and surrounded by a box. There were also references to trains which were more easily comprehensible: Robinson had dreamt of being in the cab of a train. He remembered that his face had been covered with something burning. Then he imagined himself walking along the railway track in Wales where he used to holiday with his grandmother.

Two nights later, a train driver in Wales was blinded by glass when youths threw rocks into the windscreen of his cab.

Robinson's dreams continued. One involved a woman who was setting out to kidnap a baby. Three days later, Alexandra Griffiths, a 36-hour-old baby, was snatched from a London hospital. Robinson's prior warning aided police, but proved insufficient to provide a clear solution to the crime. Robinson began to understand the symbolism of the dreams. A series of words beginning with capital letters should be interpreted as a postcode. Cups signified bodies; meat pies indicated carnage or bloodshed; pigs or bacon warned of Animal Liberation fanatics. Dogs usually symbolised the IRA.

Robinson says that the frequency and intensity of his dreams tended to increase the nearer a disaster loomed.

They were almost always violent, like the one on May 15. The consequences convinced Robinson that he ought to take direct action himself.

HIS dream diary for that night contained references to a Hillman Imp, registration 666 FXX — which he had owned when he worked in the CIVIC shop in Wembley — a lorry, after which he had written: 'weight important — no HGV required or got', and a bomb.

This, says Robinson, convinced him that a bomb was about to go off under a small lorry in Wembley High Road. He says that he passed his warning to the police.

At 5.12pm on May 16, Sergeant Charles Chapman was blown up in his Sherpa van outside Dixons in Wembley High Road. The van weighed under three tons — thus 'no HGV required'; and Dixons used to be the shop called CIVIC. Robinson believed he had been proved right.

Paul Aylott, then a Detective Inspector based at Dunstable, suggested that if, in future, he could pinpoint the place of danger, he should go there himself. It was precisely what Robinson did the following day, May 17. The night before he had dreamt of being in a car speeding through London backstreets. The car was being driven by a dog. On his dream diary the following morning, he saw: 'Large machine gun beautifully made. Wrecked car bomb. Inside car. Steering wheel. Very serious problem. Car like Dick's.'

From other references in the diary, Robinson was convinced that this dream meant RAF Stanmore was going to be attacked.

When he arrived at the base to deliver his warning, the security thought he was behaving suspiciously and he was arrested and questioned for three hours. His dream diary referred to a 'car like Dick's'. The latter, he said, was a friend who drove a battered dark green saloon.

A few days later, a battered green Cortina was stopped by police in Wood Green, North London, near Stanmore. In the back of the car there were two loaded Kalashnikovs and ammunition. There were also traces of Semtex explosives.

Three weeks later, a bomb was found during a routine check at Stanmore.

Robinson's gift would seem to be unerring, but even those who know him well and have worked with him have their doubts. The Rev David Bolster recalls that it was often only with hindsight that Robinson's dreams could be interpreted. 'I have a feeling that a lot of people have similar gifts but don't know how to interpret them,' he says.

■ *Dream Detective, by Chris Robinson with Andy Boot. Little, Brown. £16.99.*

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