

## No Surprise

Written by James Randi  
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King Edward VIII of England reigned for only 11 months, abdicating in December of 1936 so that he could marry the twice-divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson. He was automatically succeeded by his younger brother, who became George VI - King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, Emperor of India, and King of Ireland. George reigned until his death in 1952.

It has now been discovered that Edward consulted a famous "mystic," Dr. Alexander Cannon, in an attempt to solve the dilemma brought about by his intended marriage to Simpson, which was of course strenuously opposed by politicians of the day and would have caused a constitutional crisis, had he remained on the throne.

The rich-and-famous of the 1930s in the UK - as in the USA - were heavily tuned to woo-woo, and they'd made this Dr. Cannon a wealthy man by spending small fortunes on "treatments" at his consulting rooms. Formally trained as a medical doctor, Cannon - who became known as "The Yorkshire Yogi" - had obviously found much more reward for himself in "alternative treatments," mystical techniques, and black magic, and since he'd already dabbled in the performance of magic tricks, he had some savvy about how giddy socialites could be dazzled by sleight-of-hand - and sleight-of-mind.

Previously undisclosed archives that have now emerged reveal that Edward VIII was seeing this

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mystic during the abdication crisis, prompting the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Cosmo Laing, to intervene. Laing began an investigation into the rumors and alerted the prime minister about his concerns. Lambeth Palace - official residence of UK Archbishops of Canterbury when they aren't in the Tower of London awaiting decapitation - was informed that the King was receiving "hypnotic treatment" from Dr. Cannon for alcoholism, and that soon segued into other expensive and useless applications of woo-woo such as "electrotherapies" and Tibetan "hypnosis" techniques learned while Cannon was a prison doctor in China. One act in Cannon's repertoire involved putting his assistant Rhonda Deronda - no relation to [Roseanne Roseannadanna](#), I'm sure - into a "hypnotic trance" to diagnose physical and psychological problems by simply glaring at the patient. This highly unorthodox medical practitioner became quite close to the King, and became, in effect, a confidant.

Dr. Cannon was the subject of a justifiably alarmed MI5 - the UK equivalent of the CIA in the USA - investigation, following which his existence was covered up by the establishment, and he quietly retired in virtual exile to the Isle of Man, where he spent his time putting on magic shows and "psychic" performances.

Many years ago, I was invited to a posh NYC town house to entertain Edward and Wallis, and though I have heard that she never addressed him in public by any term but the respectable "sir," I can tell you that Wallis - perhaps just a bit tipsy - repeatedly used the appellation "Eddy" while I was with them, though I declined to do so. Edward was, I feel, reasonably well titillated by the card trick I designed specifically for the occasion. He selected a card from my proffered deck which turned out (!) to be the King of Hearts. I asked him to place it in his inner jacket pocket, then I ran through the deck to show him that it had found its way back. He immediately reached for the one he'd put away, and discovered that it was now the Jack of Hearts, which had Edward's profile inserted...

The Duke of Windsor graciously accepted the souvenir I offered him...