While making the rounds of the news sources, I came across this straightforward article from the Trinidad & Tobago Express
. Tony Deyal, a Caribbean journalist, discusses perhaps the most famous "hit" in all of psychic prophecy:

**Parade** magazine in 1956 quoted Dixon as predicting: "As for the 1960 election Mrs. Dixon thinks it will be dominated by labour and won by a Democrat. But he will be assassinated or die in office though not necessarily in his first term."

What was not said is that Dixon actually predicted that John F. Kennedy would fail to win the presidency and that Richard Nixon would be victorious.

Yes, that's right. She "predicted" a Democrat would become president would be assassinated, and that Republican Richard Nixon would win office. How could she lose? She couldn't, and she didn't.

Jeanne Dixon, born Lydia Emma Pinckert, died in 1997. Though she claimed to be a devout Catholic, she apparently disregarded Leviticus 20:27:

A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.

Fortunately for people of reason, she has largely faded from the public mind. But it's important to remember her, because her betting on both sides of the coin toss earned her a lifetime of fame and fortune, thanks to those who choose to believe rather than perceive.

Tony quotes Mark Twain to illustrate Dixon's technique:

A man who goes around with a prophecy-gun ought never to get discouraged. If he will keep his heart and fire at everything he sees he is bound to hit something by and by.

The hits are touted, and the misses are ignored or explained away (I can't be right ALL of the time!) This particular brand of confirmation bias is now known as the "Jeanne Dixon Effect," and I hope that's the major part of her legacy.

Of course, the current crop of "psychics" use the same technique, because it remains effective.

I'd like to thank Tony for reminding me of Jeanne Dixon, and also for quoting Twain. More Twain quotes on prophecy can be found at twainquotes.com .