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# Perceiving the Future News: Evidence for Retrocausation

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**Abstract.** Thirty-three exploratory psi investigations were recently performed using Conscious State Psi and Dream State Psi protocols for photographic material that did not exist at the time of the psi sessions. Results would provide evidence for retrocausation if the future photographs had influenced the sessions' data. The psi targets were Associated Press (AP) news photographs published in a Reading, PA area newspaper on a specific page three days in the future. These photographs were taken one day after the psi sessions. Following each psi session, and prior to the photograph's existence, perceptions were recorded in project records and email transmitted for date validation. Feedback was provided when the photograph was published. There were two phases: Phase I was an informal investigation performed by the principle author to evaluate project feasibility. Phase II was a formal investigation with a colleague 1,000 miles from the principle author and the area newspaper location. All data were evaluated by direct comparison to the intended photographs using numerical assessment scales and noting unique features. Data from 21 of the 33 sessions (64%) yielded sketches and narratives with medium and high degrees of correlations with the future news photographs. A subsequent binary analysis using control photographs yielded  $p = 0.040$ . Visual informational content of these future newspaper photographs had interacted with the brain's cognitive processes in a retrocausal sense. The future photographs affected the sessions' data. A subconscious interaction between the future and the present or past may be an on-going feature of the mental and physical universe. Suggestions for follow-on investigations into retrocausation are provided.

**Keywords:** retrocausation, precognition, premonition, presentiment, synchronicity, cognition, extra sensory perception (ESP), subconscious, Conscious State Psi (CSP), Dream State Psi (DSP), remote viewing, psychokinesis (PK)

**PACS:** 01.70.+w, 01.90.+g, 03.65.Ta, 03.65.-w, 03.65.Ud, 03.67.Hk, 03.67.Mn.

## INTRODUCTION

The mental ability for perceiving approaching future events is considered to be a real effect by many individuals even though it is not formally accepted in most scientific areas<sup>1</sup>. The historic literature has many accounts of these effects, usually referred to as premonitions or future seeing<sup>2</sup>. In the field of parapsychological (psi) research, these experiments are referred to as precognition or presentiment, terms that mean prior to or before cognition. i.e., knowledge that comes before the events. Precognition can occur spontaneously and is not predictable from existing data or expectations. The term precognition does not imply anything about the source of the perceived information; it could be in the future and accessed through an activated neurophysiological process or it could be from the future and received passively by the brain's cognitive networks. The spontaneous cases of precognitions reported in the case study literature demonstrate their unexpected nature and suggest the later view; an aspect of the future reached

backwards in time to effect, to cause, the experience<sup>3, 4</sup>. The term, retrocausation, may be a more appropriate term for describing these experiences than precognition.

Spontaneous precognitive experiences are usually not well documented and are difficult to verify. Due to their unexpected nature, they are not feasible for parapsychological (psi) research involving scientific protocols and controlled conditions. Our records have clear evidence for spontaneous precognitive incidents for personal and non-personal situations. Some of these precognitions resulted in locating missing individuals and in taking action to prevent a potentially tragic situation<sup>5</sup>. The non-personal spontaneous precognitions related to 9/11, the Space Shuttle tragedy of February 1, 2003 and other incidents with high emotional impact or that had significance for many people, worldwide. Some of these spontaneous precognitions have been witnessed and validated by others.

A variety of research projects have been performed for evaluating the reality of precognition based on statistical methods<sup>6</sup>. A comprehensive review of formal psi research using a meta-analysis approach has yielded combined results that significantly exceed chance expectation<sup>7</sup>. These experiments contribute to the understanding and potential acceptance of psi phenomenon in general, including precognition. However, due to the structured protocols and type of psi target material generally used, these psi experiments do not realistically simulate spontaneous precognitive experiences. For these precognitive studies, the targets used are usually pictorial material selected randomly after the psi session from a previously assembled collection of potential targets. Even though the targets had not been selected at the time of the psi session, they did exist in the target pools.

Although these experiments are classified as precognitive experiments, a form of psi involving ESP, clairvoyance (remote viewing) and psi influence (PK) may have occurred (the super psi hypothesis) at the time of the psi sessions that was not precognition. They do not provide unambiguous evidence for the reality of precognition. In spontaneous precognitions, the events and any information linking to the events did not exist at the time the precognitions occurred. While laboratory experiments provide some insight into the psi process and how spontaneous precognitive experiences may occur, they may not realistically simulate naturally occurring spontaneous experiences. Individuals involved in formal experiments may not be able to perform consistently due to scheduling or other demands that can be disruptive to their natural psi processes. Long duration or repetitive psi experiments, such as those in forced choice experiments, can result in a decrease in performance<sup>8</sup>. Free response research with a variety of pictorial or other types of psi targets has yielded consistent results<sup>9,10,11</sup>. This research, even though structured, involved a slower pace more consistent with naturally occurring spontaneous psi events. For spontaneous psi experiences, the subconscious accumulation of psi derived information can occur over extended times before the completed psi perception enters into conscious awareness or is presented in vivid dreams.

Since experimental procedures for precognitive investigations that used previously prepared target pools does not realistically represent precognition, pictorial targets that did not exist anywhere were needed. These would be targets created somewhere in the future after the precognition psi sessions had occurred. These non-existent targets had to become available in some systematic and timely manner to be practical for psi investigations.

## The Precognitive Initiative

An exploratory study on precognition was developed that would be closer to spontaneous situations than is possible in laboratory environments. It would be independent of formal psi research facilities with a flexible pace without scheduling demands or travel requirements. Pictorial material was preferred since many spontaneous precognitions are perceived as vivid imagery while awake or movie-like presentations in the dream state.

## The Psi Targets

A local newspaper near the principle author's location provided a source for our "non-existent" psi targets' needs. This newspaper consistently published only two Associated Press (AP) photographs on a specific page, A6. One photograph was in the *Across the Nation* section at the top of page and the other photograph was in the *Around the World* section at the bottom of the page. The intended precognitive targets were the *Around the World* photographs. These photographs have brief captions with a few of the events' details including the dates when the events occurred. The photographs were selected by the newspaper editor within a day after they were taken. Scheduling the psi sessions three days prior to the target photographs publication date would guarantee that the photographs and the events they represented did not exist at the time of the psi session. The photographs would be

taken at least one day after the psi sessions. If the psi sessions were successful, they would provide unambiguous evidence that precognition or retrocausation had occurred.

There are no advertisements or other potentially visual distractions on this newspaper page, which is also filled with news articles not related to the photographs. An advantage of using future newspaper photographs as psi targets is that no target pool was required since the newspaper did it for us.

## Objectives

Exploratory psi investigation objectives:

- To determine if sufficient evidence for precognition or retrocausation could be obtained when future newspaper photographs of events that did not exist at the time of the psi sessions were the psi targets.
- To examine the data for possible insight into the psi process.

The Data Evaluation section describes the evaluation methods used by the independent evaluators for determining how well the data correlated with the newspaper photographs.

## Participants

The psi data perceivers for this exploratory precognitive project were the two co-authors. They have extensive spontaneous psi experience and have been participants in formal psi projects under the control of others. The principle author has been involved in psi dream projects with data validating emails and independent evaluation. Some were for pictorial targets at intercontinental European distances and for precognitive targets selected randomly from a large target pool three days in the future. The co-author has completed hundreds of controlled psi projects using pictorial material. Individuals with art and graphic design backgrounds performed the data evaluations.

## Psi Sessions

We explored two modes of psi perception; one mode while in the conscious but relaxed state and the other mode while in the dream state. The following neutral descriptions were used to identify the psi perception modes:

- Conscious State Psi (CSP)
- Dream State PSI (DSP)

A session was defined as the time when the Conscious State Psi (CSP) impressions and the Dream State Psi (DSP) experiences occurred. When some of the psi sessions included both modes, the resulting data were combined into one input.

There were two phases for the psi sessions: Phase I by the principle author for initial feasibility evaluation and Phase II with the principle author and co-experimenter who was located 1,000 miles from the principle author's and the newspaper's location.

## Psi Session Objective Statement

We developed a specific psi objective or focus statement: "To perceive the *Around the World* Associated Press photograph on the bottom of page A6 in the Reading Eagle newspaper, Reading, PA, that would be published three days in the future on ....." Keeping strong focus on this objective and repeating it frequently prior to each psi session would strengthen the psi process that linked to the future photograph and can prevent displacement to the *Across the Nation* photograph at the top of that same page.

## PSI SESSIONS FORMAT

The data from both CSP and DSP sessions were prepared in two formats: sketches of awake and dream state perceptions and narratives with descriptions of the perceptions. Emphasizing sketches would help data evaluation since prior psi experience has shown that sketches provide a better representation of the intended pictorial target than only verbal descriptions. The data was condensed to one page to simplify later review by the data evaluators.

### Schedule

Prior experimental psi experiences indicated that optimum results would occur if the psi session schedules are flexible. A pass option was included should unexpected situations occur. The number of psi sessions could vary from 1 – 3 per week and could be scheduled for any day of the week. Thirty-three sessions were completed between February and mid-April, 2016.

### Recording

The psi session data was recorded, dated and entered into project files and documented via email transmission. These emails provided accurate data flow timing and assured that the data from each psi session was recorded prior to the date when the photograph was taken. The photograph's date was obtained from the *Around the World* caption and the exact date and time was obtained from the Associated Press data base.

### Feedback

Feedback occurred when the newspapers with the designated AP photographs were published and observed. Copies of the photographs were entered into the project files and provided via email to the co-experimenter in Orlando, FL.

### Data Evaluation

Evaluators not involved in the psi sessions performed the data evaluations. One evaluation was based on assessment rating scales of 0% - 100% of how well the sessions' data correlated with the target future newspaper photographs. Another evaluation used a binary ranking method.

The qualitative assessment scales represent the approximate degree of correlation that was achieved. Session data that had sketches with various forms, configurations, colors and implied dynamics could be matched directly with the visual content of the photographs. The scales in terms of percent of estimated correlation were:

- 0 (0-20%)
- Low (L) (20-40%)
- Medium (M) (40-60%)
- High (H) (60-80%)
- High+ (H+) (80-100%)

The binary method required developing a set of two photographs; one being the actual target and the other a control photograph. The control photographs were randomly selected from a pool of 80 consecutive *Around the World* photographs that were accumulated from January to mid-April, 2016. This pool excluded the 33 photographs that were the actual target. A control photograph was only used one time. The resulting set of 33 photograph pairs were randomly arranged and provided to the evaluators. The evaluators used the assessment rating scale as a guide to compare the two photographs for performing the ranking task.

## Results

Based on the assessment scales the evaluators rated data from 21 of the 33 sessions (64%) as having Medium and High degrees of correlation with the target newspaper photographs. Twelve of the 33 sessions had either a Low or no apparent correlation with the target photographs. Data from 5 of those 12 sessions correlated with the photographs in the *Across the Nation* section on page A6 (a displacement effect) and were counted as misses. The other 7 sessions were either a complete miss (psi process not activated) or a shift in the probabilities for the newspaper photographs selection or the events changed after the psi sessions.

The binary ranking method resulted in 22 first place (of two) choices in the 33 sessions. This correlates to a slightly significant effect with a  $p = 0.040$ . One of the first place selections occurred for a photograph with a Low rating since it had a unique feature not present in the control photograph. A content analysis of the 80 consecutive newspaper photographs in the *Around the World* section revealed considerable differences in their main categories:

Photograph's Main Category	Percentage
People (close)	33%
People (distant, crowds)	16%
Buildings	23%
Objects	14%
Scenes	7%
Animals	7%

The evaluators had reasonable success in identifying the correct newspaper photographs. This indicates that the psi data obtained from the 33 sessions was sufficiently accurate or unique and compensated for the potential biasing effects of the off-balance distribution in the photographs' categories. About half of the photographs involved people, either close up or at a distance. Some of the sketches had specific features including correct spatial relationships and an implied sense of dynamics that closely matched the photograph's composition. These received High ratings and first place selections. While target pools with uniform composition are necessary for formal research, the imbalance in the newspaper photographs' content was consistent with conditions present in the "noisy" environment when spontaneous psi experiences occur. The spontaneous precognitive incidents evaluated by L.E. Rhine indicated that most of them related to people known to the experiencers<sup>12</sup>.

## Illustrations

A few of the one page psi sessions data are presented to show how the data was presented to the evaluators and to illustrate the degree of correlations that were achieved with the corresponding photographs. The strengths of the one page data presentation format with the sketches is that the evaluators can closely compare one set of visuals (the sketches) to another (the images in the newspaper photographs). The weakness is that some relevant data is not available to the evaluator. When Conscious State Psi (CSP) data had both a sketch and a verbal description, both were included in the one page summary. For the Dream State Psi (DSP), only one sketch, usually of the dream's ending scene, was provided to the evaluator. All CSP and DSP data summaries were compiled shortly after the sessions at least 2 days prior to the newspapers' photographs publication. Six of the sessions and the corresponding newspaper photographs are shown in the following figures. These photographs were taken about 1-1 ½ days after the psi sessions.

Curving Metal  
Large Boat  
Shipwreck

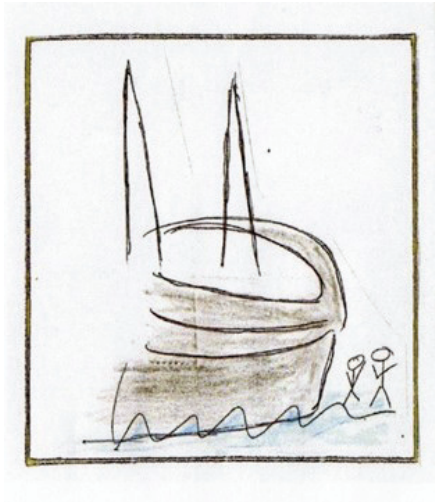


Figure 1 Sketch



Figure 1 Photograph – Indonesian Ship Bombing

**FIGURE 1.** Fig. 1 received a rating of H+. The sketch and word descriptions convey the main aspects of the Indonesian ship bombing scene in the Fig. 1 newspaper photograph that was taken at least a day after the CSP session. The psi perceptions emphasized a large boat but interpreted it as a shipwreck. The sketch is basic but sufficient for evaluators to select the correct target from a control photograph. Photograph with permission from Associated Press.

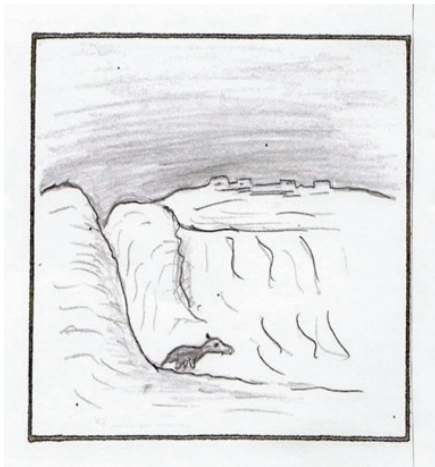


Figure 2 Sketch



Figure 2 Photograph – Ice Bridge – Argentina

**FIGURE 2.** Fig. 2 received a rating of H+. The sketch in Fig. 2 is the ending of a dream that had very little contrast. The dream presented a snow covered cliff, consistent with the actual Fig. 2 photograph of a collapsing ice bridge in Argentina taken a day and a half after the dream. The animal figure in the dream is not present in the actual scene. However, the shape of the rock formations at the base of the cliff was perceived as something animate typical of how irregular forms are often perceived by the psi process. Photograph with permission from Associated Press.

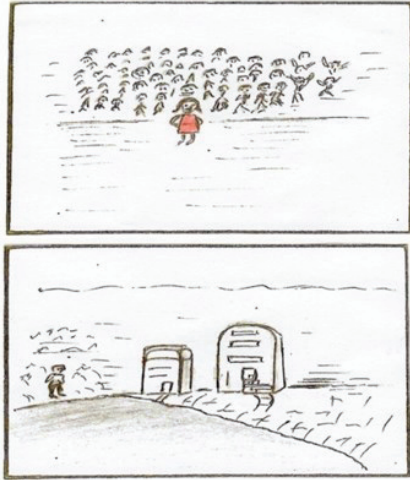


Figure 3 Sketches



Figure 3 Photograph – Bus Crash – India

**FIGURE 3.** Fig. 3 received a rating of M. The sketches in Fig. 3 are the endings of two dreams that together depict the actual accident scene in India (Fig. 3 photograph) where a bus crashed into a river from a bridge, killing 25 people. The angled body of the bus that split into two sections was not perceived accurately and presented in the dream as two separate buildings. However, the river and the group of on-lookers were accurately perceived, including a figure in red clothes in the front center. Photograph with permission from Associated Press.

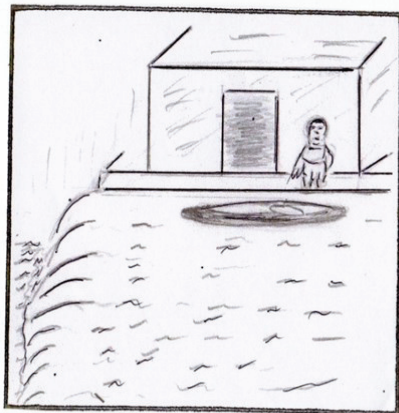


Figure 4 Sketch



Figure 4 Photograph – Flood – Serbia

**FIGURE 4.** Fig. 4 received a rating of H+. The sketch of the dream was almost entirely focused on water with someone standing at or in the water. This is similar to the actual flood scene in Serbia, with a lone figure standing in the water at the photograph's center. The reflection off the water on the left side of the Fig. 4 photograph creates the impression of a discontinuity. The dream process presented this visual effect as a low waterfall. Photograph with permission from Associated Press.



Face on View  
 Female – Dark Hair  
 Wearing Purple Gown  
 Headdress



Figure 5 Sketch



Figure 5 Photograph – School Girls – Iran

**FIGURE 5.** Fig. 5 received a rating of H. The CSP and DSP data shown in the Fig. 5 sketch and word descriptions have the major elements of the actual Fig. 5 photograph. The word descriptions occurred in a CSP session and the image of a woman in a purple gown was presented in a dream. The clothes worn by the Iranian school girls are purple. Combining data from both modes of psi perception led to an improved representation of the photograph. Photograph with permission from Associated Press.

Hundreds of People in Choir Robes  
 Brightly Lit Concert  
 Inside a Building

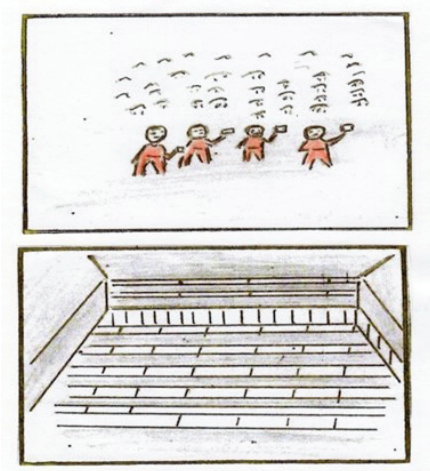


Figure 6 Sketches



Figure 6 Photograph – Buddhist Monks – Thailand

**FIGURE 6.** Fig. 6 received a rating of H+. The complex photograph with over 50 Buddhist monks in the Fig. 6 photograph was presented in two dreams: one with only an empty auditorium or gymnasium filled with long benches, the other with a large group of people in orange clothes holding a small square sign (Fig. 6 sketches). The auditorium dream corresponds with the photograph's setting and the large group is similar to the columns of monks in orange robes who are sitting on the benches. It seems that the basic linear geometrics of the scene were perceived separately from the non-linear shapes of the monks. The small glass objects held by the monks were approximated as small clear rectangular shapes.

Photograph with permission from Associated Press.

## DISCUSSION

The degree of correlation between the psi sessions' data and the target future news photographs suggests that the visual content of the future newspaper photographs interacted with the brain's cognitive processes in a retrocausal sense. The psi process locates or uncovers the future information and facilitates what appears to be its time reverse transfer. A subconscious interaction between the future and the present or past may be a continual feature of the mental and physical universe. This feature resembles holographic and adaptive pattern matching or correlation processes involving basic elements of visual construction and memory. When the photographs' images are complex the best memory match occurs, even if imperfect. For highly complex shapes, fundamental elements of perception may be mobilized from pre-existing forms or templates to create a new memory image that correlates with the photograph's image<sup>13</sup>.

The sessions' data provided some insight into the psi process. Initially the psi data perceiver places focused attention on the objective and then mentally repeats the intent, the desire, to achieve that objective. After this attention-intention phase, the subconscious processes accept the resulting psi information which can be perceived while awake or asleep. The psi process that actually locates the desired information remains to be identified.

The sequence of psi information perceived in the awake, Conscious State Psi (CSP) mode seems to follow a sequence of accumulating elements of information with various aspects of the target photograph. This suggests that an interactive, cyclic process between the source of the future information and the brain's sensory system may be occurring. In the Dream State Psi (DSP) mode the psi accessed information seems to be completely assembled, subconsciously, prior to dream onset and then presented in the dream as an integrated pattern with the same spatial relationships as in the target photograph.

Placing strong attention on the photograph after it is published and observed during the feedback phase may enhance the quality of the psi data perceived previously during the psi session. An intense interaction with the target photographs by repeated observations and by searching the AP data base for that photograph seems to increase the quality of the psi data. This may be a natural result of the entire retrocausal process. Placing strong attention on the psi data shortly after the psi session by repeated sketching the key imagery also may have enhanced results. This may suggest something like a closed loop interactive process between the present and the future was occurring, something like an adaptive pattern recognition process. Since the psi derived information probably entered subconscious awareness prior to conscious awareness, the actual interaction with our brain's cognitive networks occurred in the past, possibly milliseconds or even minutes, prior to the time when it became consciously known. Thus, from a present "now," perspective, the retrocausal event affected the past.

The objective was to perceive the visual or imagery content of the target newspaper photograph. Consequently, specifics of the newspaper photograph's situation, its actual location or event identity, were not presented during the psi sessions. However, the psi imagery was sufficiently accurate for identifying the photographs' general information category of the setting, basic shapes and implied dynamics. The psi process closely resembles how the visual system perceives information. This follows from the intention to perceive as accurately as possible the visual appearance of the future photograph. It also suggests that actually observing the feedback photograph is significant for completing the perceptual loop involved in the psi process. It seems that the act of observing the feedback photograph is the source of the psi data, and not the actual event that is represented by the photograph. Firm conclusion cannot be made regarding the actual source or location of the future information.

## SUMMARY

Since 64% of the psi sessions received Medium to High ratings and the binary evaluation method yielded extra chance results, evidence for a psi effect was achieved. The results indicate that future newspaper photographs are feasible as psi targets for further exploration of precognition that better simulates spontaneous experiences than formal research can provide. Since the psi targets did not exist at the time of the psi sessions, the results indicate that a time-reversal flow of information had occurred. The future interacted with the past in a retrocausal sense.

It is not clear from current theories or concepts how the future should be understood. Does the future exist in some type of virtual reality that continually interacts with physical reality, or is the future a projection of possibilities or potentials from a virtual reality that exists now? From either perspective, the information is effectively from the future.

The psi session data from this exploratory project provided some insight into the psi process. The quality of the data was similar to other psi projects involving existing pictorial material as the psi targets suggesting that differentiating between the present and the future is an illusion. All psi accessed information may be time independent. The actual psi process seems to be primarily a pattern matching activity and that information is transferred via some type of correlation process. It seems that such a pattern matching effect should provide insight into possible quantum-like processes in the brain's neural activity.

The difference between Conscious State Psi (CSP) and Dream State Psi (DSP) data related to how the psi accessed information is presented to conscious awareness. Psi data in the CSP occurred in a sequential manner. Dreams presented completed patterns encoded in memory from the psi accessed information. Dream imagery can be considered as delayed conscious awareness.

The interpretation or the meaning of the psi accessed data has two aspects. One aspect results from conscious or subconscious memory associations with the perceived imagery. The other aspect relates to specific meanings such as exact locations that cannot be obtained from the visual imagery. It is unclear how specific meaning for psi accessed data can be obtained. This may require modifications to the psi activation concepts and our understanding of the psi process or the source of the psi data.

The data from this exploratory psi investigation, or the data from any spontaneous psi experience, lead to these questions. Are these psi accessed futures fixed? Are the perceived futures unchangeable? Many of the photographs had interaction with several individuals including crowds. Some had accidents due to human error or equipment failure. Three of the photographs had future events that depended on weather conditions. Were these events fated to happen?

Further investigations involving future newspaper photographs and the events they represent may provide insight into this universal and uneasy concern. The boundary between free will and fixed fate may be very thin. Some futures may be fixed, other futures probable.

Our exploratory psi project with newspaper photographs was only for 3 days into the future. Will there be a decline in psi data correlation when the psi objective is 5 days, 10 days, or even further into the future? Exploratory investigations and formal research involving future newspaper photographs or some other retrocausal objective may uncover unexpected results and many surprises.

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