

Icelandic Leg Hunting

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Sometimes discarnate souls can be real pests, even to people who assemble for the purpose of making contact with them. One of the best-known, and especially irritating, discarnates simply popped in one evening, in 1937, at a gathering in Reykjavik, Iceland. The tone for the communications was set straightaway when the spirit, upon being asked his name, replied: “What the hell does it matter to you what my name is?”

Only slightly taken aback, someone in the circle asked what the gentleman wanted. “My leg,” he said, “I am looking for my leg.” He then said that his leg was in the sea. This is pretty much all the information the spirit was willing to part with, although he kept dropping in on the séances for the ensuing 15 months. At that point, he added that his leg was currently in a house owned by a sitter, Ludvik G., who had just joined the group; but he still refused to give his name.

The medium for these sessions was Hafsteinn Bjornsson, probably the most famous in Iceland at the time. Bjornsson was a trance medium who was apparently “possessed” by various spirits during the séances. His drinking was confined to a rare glass of wine, he did not use tobacco, and was always a congenial fellow; except, that is, when “the pest” took over. Then he would brusquely demand alcohol, coffee, and snuff.

Finally, the circle had enough of this spirit’s rude intrusions and told him to either reveal his name or cease making contact. This ultimatum seemed to shut him up for awhile, but he apparently decided that revelation was better than isolation because he soon returned to tell his tale of dissolution and woe.

His name, he revealed, was Runolfur Runolfsson. Generally known as Runki (a nickname for which we can all be grateful). One October evening in 1879, when he was 52 years old and quite drunk, Runki was walking through stormy weather from a nearby town towards his home. He paused beside the seashore to rest — and take another sip from his flask. Sitting down upon a large rock, Runki proceeded to pass out. His body slid from the rock and was carried away by the tide. The following January, according to Runki’s spirit, his body washed ashore, and dogs and ravens then tore it to pieces. The remnants were recovered and buried in a graveyard, about four miles from his home, but a thigh bone was missing from Runki's remains. It was later washed onshore and, after being passed around for a while, it ended up in Ludvik's house.

Runki claimed that his story could be confirmed by checking the books at a nearby church. There, the sitters did find the record of someone named Runolfur Runolfsson, whose date of death and age at the time of death matched the story told by the spirit. Furthermore, other records of the man were found, including a clergyman’s description of Runolfsson having gone missing during a storm on his way home and his dismembered bones being found later.

As for the missing leg bone, a few elderly locals recalled vaguely that during the early 1920s a thigh bone had been washed up on shore. Thinking it would be disrespectful to throw it away and improper to bury it on hallowed ground, it had been passed around until a carpenter built it into the wall of the house that Ludvik G. would someday purchase. After an unsuccessful initial search, a person who had lived in the house at the time pointed out the correct wall and the femur of an adult male was, indeed, found behind it.

Once his “leg” was located and properly buried, Runki’s spirit mellowed considerably and often assisted the group during future séances.

Discussion

It is tempting to score this case very highly because no one who ever lived ever knew that the leg bone belonged to Runki's remains until so informed by the spirit. Trouble is, we have no DNA-test results or other evidence to back up that claim. After all, 45 years or so is a long time for a bone to be washing around the ocean. Even without the leg, however, the case stands quite well on the numerous bits of information that required several documents and the memories of several people to corroborate.

For Further Information See:

“A Communicator of the ‘Drop-in’ Type in Iceland: The Case of Runolfur Runolfsson”
by Erlendur Haraldsson and Ian Stevenson, *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*, Vol. 69, 1975, pages 33-59.

Drop-in Communicators, article by Stephen Braude, Ph.D., at
<http://www.survivalafterdeath.org/articles/braude/drop-in.htm>

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