

The Strangers Were Lovers

— Case 60 —

As far as I can tell, this case is unique in reincarnation literature. Most cases involve one hypnotherapist and one subject who recalls one or more past lives. Sometimes there is solid evidence to precisely confirm the recalled events¹; often the evidence is merely supportive or suggestive.² The evidential basis for a very few cases comes from the agreement of two or more subjects recalling participation in the same past-life event while being separately regressed by the same hypnotherapist.³ The case discussed here goes a step beyond the others in that it involves two different subjects recalling the same lives while being regressed by two different therapists in sessions that were both many miles and several years apart.

Entirely unknown to one another, a woman in Georgia in 1984 and a man in Florida in 1989 recalled associated lifetimes in Ohio in the early 1900s. During a unique joint session, their love affair and tragic deaths were recounted by both, to the amazement of several witnesses. There could be many similar occurrences, but most will never be known due to the privacy typically observed by therapists and patients. The exceptional nature of this case only came to light because Jack Turnock happened to be watching a rerun of *Unsolved Mysteries* in which a woman named Georgia Rudolph was recalling a past life. Her name in that life, she remembered was Sandra Jean Jenkins and she had a boyfriend named Tommy Hicks. As he watched the show, Turnock says,⁴ he began to have strange feelings. When the

name Hicks was mentioned, he reports, “Even though I knew what she was going to say, it still felt like I was punched in the solar plexus.”

Turnock, now a university professor, had undergone hypnotic regression at his wife’s request because she was considering giving a session to her mother as a birthday present. During his session — with Dr. Bruce Crystal in Jacksonville, Florida — Turnock found himself re-living scenes from the life of a boy in Ohio around the turn of the last century, a boy named Tom Hicks.

Rudolph’s Story

Since early childhood, Georgia Rudolph had been haunted by unexplained memories and recurring dreams in which she seemed to be a young girl — some of the times the girl was about 8 years of age, other times about 18 — living an upper-middle-class life around the turn of the century. She could picture the girl vividly and used to spend hours with her crayons trying to capture her face. The memories were often so realistic that she could feel the icy cold air as she seemed to ride in an open carriage, could smell the horses and the leather of their harnesses, could hear the their hoofs striking the pavement.

As she knew that she had been adopted at the age of 5, Rudolph at first assumed that these images must be associated with her earliest childhood. When she queried her birth relatives, however, they could recall no correspondent experiences.

At the age of 33, determined to uncover the

¹ As examples, see case #59, *A Submariner Resurfaces*; case #21, *The Numbers of the Beast*; and case #36, *The Rebirth of Bridey Murphy*.

² As in case #58, *The Prince and the Servant Girl*.

³ Such as case #18, *Dying to Meet Each Other*; and case #22, *The Apprentice Murderer*.

⁴ Details of Turnock’s involvement are taken largely from a written statement he submitted to the author on 17 February 2010.

cause of her dreams and memories that had troubled her so long, Rudolph consulted Dr. Douglas Smith, a clinical psychologist who was the deputy director of a mental health center in Macon, Georgia. At the time, Rudolph did not believe in reincarnation. In fact, she says that the idea frightened her because it “went against everything that I have ever been taught as far as religion goes.”⁵ Smith wasn’t expecting a past-life recall either. He states that, when he began to treat Rudolph, “reincarnation was probably the last thing in my mind about what had happened to her.”

During the initial session, after Smith had regressed her to the approximate age of 2, she suddenly stopped responding. When he persisted in calling her name, she said “I don’t know who you’re talking too.” So Smith said, “Well, if you aren’t Georgia, who are you?” And she responded, “My name is Sandra Jean Jenkins.”

Throughout this and subsequent sessions, “Jenkins” provided an abundance of information about her life as a girl who was born in 1895 and raised in or near a small city beside a river. Although she never specifically identified the town, the name “Marietta” kept surfacing and she deduced that Marietta, Ohio was the location of the recalled events. When the sessions were concluded, Dr. Smith testified: “Georgia seems to me a very down-to-earth person ... I think that she’s a very stable individual ... She is not faking or pretending.” As further testament to her character, the producers of the television segment stated, “What’s definite about Georgia’s story is that, meeting her and spending the time we spent with her while we were doing this story, you

know she wasn’t making this up.”⁶

Rudolph’s memories of special significance include:

- Many scenes on a stern-wheel riverboat, and a feeling that it belonged to her family.
- Her fiancé named Tommy Hicks by whom she was pregnant.
- Tommy’s parents were named Tom and Jennie Hicks.
- Walking from a church through a graveyard to a specific tombstone. She could not read the name on the stone, but she saw that it was near the statue of an angel with one arm up-raised.
- A large white house that felt like home.
- The death of Hicks just prior to their wedding when his boat hit a sandbar in a storm and he was swept from the deck.
- Her grief at his death and her shame over her pregnancy leading her to suicide by drowning.

In 1985, Rudolph traveled the 640 miles to Marietta, Ohio. While touring Marietta with Ted Bauer (a lifetime resident who was the retired City Editor of the local newspaper) Rudolph demonstrated an intimate familiarity with the town. Whatever Bauer couldn’t confirm from personal knowledge he researched and he uncovered no inaccuracies in Rudolph’s descriptions. The television production featured a scene in which Rudolph stopped in front of an insurance office and described an ice-cream parlor that used to be in that location. Bauer stated, “She described the interior [as it was when Jenkins lived] almost perfectly. I checked this with the son of the man who had run it for years.” That interior had been re-done in 1937.

⁵ All quotes in this article that lack source data come from the television series *Unsolved Mysteries*, season 2, episode 21, first airing on 14 February 1990.

⁶ Quoted from commentaries by John Cosgrove and Raymond Bridgers on the *Unsolved Mysteries: Psychics* compilation DVD.

Driving 5 miles north to Newport, Ohio, Rudolph found a house that felt very much like the one in her dreams. Around the turn of the century, the house had been owned by a family named Greene. These same Greenes owned a fleet of stern-wheelers.⁷ Then she found the church that she had so often seen in her dreams. When she walked the path – so familiar from her dreams – twixt the church and the grave, Rudolph found that the surname on the tombstone was Greene. And, yes, clearly visible nearby was the statue of an angel with one arm pointing heavenward. Altogether, a most evidential case that argues strongly for the reality of reincarnation, even without considering the factor that makes it so special.

The Joint Session

The apparent link between his own past-life recollections and those of Georgia Rudolph stunned and perplexed Turnock. “I didn’t know what to do with the information,” he says, so he “decided to deal with it by not dealing with it.” And so, six months passed until one day he happened to turn on his television only to be confronted by yet another re-run of the disturbing *Unsolved Mysteries* segment. Once again, Turnock was both fascinated and agitated by the show. This time, his wife decided to do something about this disruption to her household, so she wrote a letter to Dr. Smith describing the situation. Smith contacted the show’s producers who ultimately decided that Turnock was for real and that a follow-up show should be made in which Rudolph and Turnock would be videotaped during a joint hypnosis session.

The filming (or rather, the attempted filming) was done in Smith’s office in Macon, Georgia. Turnock was not allowed to meet Rudolph until after he was regressed. During his regression, Turnock (as Hicks) recalled many details about his life and death on a riverboat named the *N.B. Forrest*. Afterwards, Rudolph asked him where Hicks had proposed to Jenkins and where they were when she had gotten pregnant. Turnock replied that the proposal took place on a bench by the river. As for the conception: “You walk from Gordon Green’s house away from town on the road by the river. When you get to a corn field turn right. There’s a small bluff overlooking the river where they used to go. That day they had a picnic in the corner of the field and that’s where they made love and Sandra Jean got pregnant.” According to Turnock, “Rudolf’s jaw nearly hit the floor. What I described was exactly what she had seen in her hypnosis sessions.”

In the afternoon, Dr. Smith hypnotized both Rudolph and Turnock together. Turnock describes the experience as being the weirdest part of all. “We both went under fairly easily and we began talking to each other as Tom and Sandra Jean. It was the most surreal experience of my life. It was as if another person had taken over my body and I was watching it happen. Tom told Sandra Jean how he was sorry he left her that way. She forgave him. They/we held hands, reiterated our love and said goodbye. It was incredibly emotional. I was so drained I couldn’t move for half an hour. Jim Lindsey, the *Unsolved Mysteries* director was literally dancing around, saying it was the best sequence they ever filmed.”

Trouble was, they did not actually film the

⁷ After working his way from deck hand to captain, Gordon Greene purchased his first steamboat with his own savings in 1890. Today’s major riverboat-cruise company is a direct descendent of Greene’s company. A photograph of the sternwheeler from which Tommy Hicks is thought to have fallen is appended to this document.

session. Although the equipment was turned on, the cables were connected, and the scene was showing on the monitor, the videotape recorded nothing but static. How and why this bewildering failure occurred is perhaps the biggest unsolved mystery of all.

Discussion

No written record of a Sandra Jean Jenkins has been found in Marietta or Newport, Ohio, but there *is* a record of a Tom and Jennie Hicks (who could well have been Tommy's parents) buying a farm in Newport in 1906. Rudolph thinks that no records were kept of Jenkins because the girl committed suicide. Perhaps that is correct, or perhaps the records were accidentally destroyed, or perhaps they will be uncovered yet. It is also conceivable that the name "Sandra Jean Jenkins" is some sort of spiritual pseudonym intended to protect the reputation of the Greene family. Whatever the case, the evidentiality of the case must rest on something other than public records.

Those skeptics who rely on some imagined form of super-ESP to explain what they cannot otherwise understand, should consider the lack of links between the house, the boats, and the grave. Since Rudolph had not been able to discern the Greene name in her dreams, neither telepathy nor clairvoyance could have associated the grave site with the house – or the river boats with either. Her inability to read the stone, therefore, strengthens the case considerably.

The most convincing aspect of Rudolph's recall is her intimate knowledge of Marietta, Ohio. On first considering the evidence, Rudolph's description of the pre-renovation interior of the ice-

cream parlor seems the highlight of the tour. One cannot rule out, however, that she was simply lucky that her idea of a turn-of-the-century parlor (perhaps gleaned from an old movie) just happened to match reality. Of course, that doesn't explain how she knew that there ever *was* an ice-cream parlor at that location, or how she knew so many other minor details about an unsung little city she had never visited. Even her tour guide, a tough old reporter whom the TV producers called "as skeptical a person as you will ever see,"⁸ admitted that he was baffled because she knew more about the place than most lifelong residents.

As for the joint regression session, the unrecorded tape will, no doubt, provide fodder for the skeptics who will view the missing video as suspicious; perhaps even attempting to dismiss the entire case because one part of it was not recorded. I suspect, however, that if the videotape had recorded perfectly, these same skeptics would simply claim (or, at least, imply) that the whole session had been faked for television. The important validation is the number of participants and crew who either have corroborated or have never contradicted the facts presented here.⁹

The evidence from Rudolph's regressions is impressive in its own right; the agreement between Rudolph and Turnock on the details of the marriage proposal and the love-making between Jenkins and Hicks makes this case truly exceptional and extremely evidential.



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⁸ Quoted from commentaries by John Cosgrove and Raymond Bridgers on the *Unsolved Mysteries: Psychics* compilation DVD.

⁹ If any witness to these events can corroborate or contradict the information presented here, please send a note to m-media@comcast.net.



From the files of the Public Library of Cincinnati.