

The Phantom Fingertips

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Mr. Tom Cross has a great deal of experience studying trance mediums. Between 1978 and 1992 he carefully recorded more than 150 sessions with more than 50 different mediums. The following case is based on three of these sessions, each with a different medium, each taking place about a year apart from the others.

Our story opens in Liverpool, England, in April, 1989, as Cross was sitting with a woman from Kirkcaldy, Scotland, she suddenly asked if he knew anyone named Kennedy. The only “Kennedy” that came to his mind was a James Kennedy that he worked with for a couple of years at a school in Hong Kong. Cross had not heard from or thought about this man during the intervening three decades and, as he was a younger man, Cross assumed that he was still living. The medium went on to say that she could see a hand with the tops of two fingers missing. At this, Cross recalled an afternoon when Kennedy had explained that “an accident” had cost him the tips of a couple of fingers on his right hand. With that, the medium moved on to other matters.

Cross was curious about his old acquaintance, so he made some inquiries but nothing proved fruitful. Then, over a year later, in August, 1990, a medium from Enfield, England, entirely unprompted, asked if he had ever known a gentleman who was missing two fingers. When asked to confirm her statement, she corrected her impression to only *part* of two fingers. She went on to say that this man had a beard at one time, that she was aware of head injuries with him, and of there being “something wrong in the chest area.” Finally, she gave three names associated with the man: “Phillips,” “Tony,” and “Walty.” Cross recalled Kennedy growing a beard during a vacation, and removing it before classes resumed. But he knew nothing about the man’s head or chest problems, nor did any of the names ring a bell.

Now determined to confirm or deny Kennedy’s death, Cross placed ads in a couple of Scottish newspapers. James Kennedy’s sister responded the very next day. She confirmed that Kennedy had died, in 1986, of lung disease. Furthermore, she said that, as a child, her brother had suffered a serious burn to the side of his head. “Walty,” she said, was the name everyone in the family had called her cousin Walter, who was also deceased.

Nearly another year had passed when, in June of 1991, a medium from Liverpool told Cross that a man was trying to communicate who seemed to be living a dream as a country squire. This man, she said, had a hunting dog, and he appeared to be missing the top of a finger. The medium also mentioned another man named “Phillips.”

Kennedy’s sister could not explain any of this, so she suggested that it might be helpful to speak with a lady who lived near London who had been a teaching colleague and very good friend of Kennedy's over some years. Cross went to visit this woman and she was able to identify “Phillips” as a very good friend of Kennedy’s, who had himself died around 1980. As for the dog, she said, while pointing to an armchair, “Jim Kennedy has sat there on numerous occasions and said that his one wish in retirement was to have a large dog and to take it for long country walks.”

For Further Information See:

“The Missing Fingers Case: Corroborated Evidence of Survival,” by Tom Cross, *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 59, 1993-94, pages 109-113.

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