



## Survival Top 40 — Case #75 — ESS = 267r

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## My Mother's Brother Is My Father's Son

**W**hen Samuel Helender was 2½ years old, he made a statement that would seem of no consequence to an uninformed stranger: "Now, Ludi has come to me." To those in the know, however, and to all who have learned the facts afterward, these few words speak volumes about the realities of life and death. The relevant facts include:

- Samuel's uncle, Peter Hastings, died 10 months before Samuel was born.
- At the age of 18 months, Samuel started claiming to be Peter Hastings. He would call his grandmother "mother" and refer to his actual mother by her first name.
- "Ludi" was what little Samuel called his great aunt Lydia.
- Lydia had purchased a tomb to be buried in.
- Peter, who was only 18 when he died, was buried in Lydia's tomb.
- Samuel said, "Now Ludi has come to me," on the day that Lydia died, before he was told of her death.

We can only speculate as to the precise event that little Samuel was attempting to convey. Did he mean that Lydia's body was joining his (that is, Peter's) body in the grave? Or, that some part of his spirit remained in heaven and met her spirit there? The former seems indicated by the uniqueness of Samuel's statement – he never said anything similar when other deaths occurred or other graves were newly occupied.

Still, this case hardly depends on a single statement for its validity. Samuel often correctly identified people in old family photographs, even when he had never met them and when his mother tried to mislead him. Also, Samuel was adamant that certain items in the household that

had belonged to his uncle (a coat, a watch, and a guitar) belonged to him. On the other hand, he did not lay claim to any items that had not been his uncle's.

It is common for traumatic events in the life of the previous personality to be more often and more readily recalled than mundane ones. The case of Samuel Helender is reinforced, therefore, by the exceptional number of accidents and injuries crowded into Peter Hastings' brief lifetime.

**Peter**, when he was 3, fell into a bathtub of water and almost drowned. He almost drowned for the second time when he was 15 as he fell off a dock and broke through thin ice.

**Samuel**, as a child, was panic-stricken whenever his mother tried to give him a bath or a shower. Even as an adult, he refused to swim.

**Peter**, when he was 4, was standing near a construction project and a heavy object fell on him, breaking one leg and injuring the other. He spent 5 months in the hospital, some of the time with casts on his legs.

**Samuel**, when he was about 4, came across a photograph of his uncle Peter using a walker. He took the photo to his grandmother and said that the picture was of him after the plaster had come off of his legs in the hospital. Whether or not the injury to Peter's legs carried over to Samuel is impossible to say, but they did both exhibit the same habit of standing with one foot forward with hand on hip.

**Peter**, not long after leaving the hospital, was severely bitten by a dog.

**Samuel** spontaneously spoke several times about having been bitten by a dog and how much it

hurt. But no such event had actually happened in Samuel's childhood.

**Peter**, only a few years later, injured his back and was hospitalized for a time.

**Samuel**, when he was barely 3 years old, talked about hurting his back and being taken in an ambulance to the hospital. Again, nothing like that had happened to him.

**Peter**, although he was not himself injured, once attended a social event that had to be halted due to a house fire.

**Samuel** once told a story of having to leave a place when a house caught fire.

As with most such childhood recollection cases, Samuel's memories of being Peter faded with time and were pretty much gone by the time he was 8 years old.

### The Research

This is one of some 2600 cases "of the reincarnation type" collected by Professor Ian Stevenson and his staff at the University of Virginia. At the moment, it is the only one to be listed in the Survival Top 40, although there are a few other good candidates yet to be rated. (Also, Top-40 case number 71, *A Country Revival*, is based on Stevenson's work, but is categorized as an instance of possession rather than reincarnation.) Stevenson, with the assistance of researcher Rita Castrén, interviewed the key figures in the Samuel Helender case during three trips to Helsinki, Finland, between December 1978 and October 1999.

As with other case write-ups in this series, some names have been "translated" into English-sounding equivalents for ease of comprehension by Western readers.

### Source

Stevenson, Ian, *European Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003, pp. 152-158.