A Communicator of the "Drop In" Type in Iceland: The Case of Gudni Magnusson

ERLENDUR HARALDSSON AND IAN STEVENSON

INTRODUCTION

In a previous article (Haraldsson and Stevenson, 1975) we reported the case of a "drop in" communicator who manifested through the Icelandic medium, Hafsteinn Bjornsson. We have also published a report of a successful experiment carried out in the United States with Hafsteinn (Haraldsson and Stevenson, 1974). Since we gave in these papers considerable information about the medium we shall not repeat here what we have earlier written about him.

The case of Runolfur Runolfsson developed differently from that of the usual "drop in" communicator who comes, says what he has to say, and then leaves to be heard from again rarely or never. The communicator Runolfur Runolfsson (nicknamed "Runki") continued to manifest through the mediumship of Hafsteinn and, as we described in our earlier report, he eventually became, and still remains, the medium's principal control. The case we are now presenting conforms to the more common type of "drop in" communication in that after the communicator established his identity he did not appear again.

CASE REPORT

As in our study of the case of Runolfur Runolfsson, we derived our first information for the report of this case from a book by Elinborg

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1 A brief report on this case was presented at the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, Edinburgh, Scotland, September 2-5, 1972.

2 We extend our thanks to Mrs. Elinborg Larusdottir of Reykjavik for her courtesy in answering our questions about this case and in facilitating our further inquiries about it.

3 Icelandic words, including most proper names, have many accented vowels; for reasons of economy in typesetting, we have omitted all such accents in this paper.

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Laruskottir (1946). We have added to this information the results of further inquiries made by ourselves. We present first a summary derived from a translation by one of us (E.H.) of Elinborg Laruskottir’s report.\(^4\)

*The Communication and Initial Investigations*

A sitting with Hafsteinn Bjornsson was held on January 25, 1941, at the home of Gudrun Jonsdottir in Reykjavik. Also attending this sitting were Hansina Hansdottir and Hjalmar Gudjonsson. The latter, a resident of Strandhofn in Vopnafjordur,\(^5\) was visiting in Reykjavik and it was he who asked that the sitting be held and paid the medium’s fee.\(^6\)

Two days after the sitting (January 27, 1941) Gudrun Jonsdottir visited a friend, Asmundur Gestsson, and mentioned the sitting of January 25 to him. Gudrun Jonsdottir complained that the sitting had, in her opinion, been rather a failure since they had had an intruding communicator who seemed particularly to address himself to Hjalmar Gudjonsson. But the latter could not place this communicator and indeed was somewhat annoyed because the stranger seemed to prevent him from receiving messages from deceased persons he had known and hoped to hear from.

Gudrun Jonsdottir told Asmundur Gestsson about some of the details given by the communicator about himself. The latter had mentioned, for example, that he had close ties with a place called Eskifjordur and said that he had died there. This gave Asmundur Gestsson the idea that he could write for verification of these details to a cousin, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir, who was the wife of a physician, Einar Astrads, practicing in Eskifjordur.

On February 26, 1941, Asmundur Gestsson wrote to Gudrun Gudmundsdottir about the “drop in” communicator. He asked in his letter (quoted below) if her husband, who was the only physician in Eskifjordur, had ever had a patient by the name of Gudmundur or Gudni Magnusson (the communicator’s name given by Finna, the medium’s control) and if so, whether he had been injured by an auto-

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\(^4\) Elinborg Laruskottir made it clear in her book that the case was first investigated by Asmundur Gestsson.

\(^5\) We think it will assist readers if we make a few comments here on geographical factors in this case. All places mentioned (except Reykjavik) are in eastern Iceland. During the years concerned in this case, 1940-41, the roads in eastern Iceland were poor and movement was largely by boat. Boats were also the main means of transportation between the eastern part of Iceland and Reykjavik in the western section of the country.

\(^6\) In one of our earlier reports (Haraldsson and Stevenson, 1975) we stated that Hafsteinn is not a professional medium. This is true in the sense that he is a full-time employee of the state radio company in Iceland. But he does accept fees for his sittings.
mobile or in an automobile accident, dying from the injuries. Gudrun Gudmundsdottir replied in a letter (also quoted below) dated March 14. It verified the information contained in Asmundur Gestsson's letter and gave details of how a young man named Gudni Magnusson had died following internal injuries which developed after a long walk made necessary when a truck he was driving ran out of gasoline.

At this point Asmundur Gestsson realized the potential importance of the case and he therefore asked Gudrun Jonsdottir to write to Hjalmar Gudjonsson requesting him to send a written report to her of all the details he remembered of what Gudni had said during the sitting of January 25, 1941. (Unfortunately, no notes had been taken during this sitting.) Gudrun Jonsdottir herself also wrote out a statement about the sitting. We shall give next E.H.'s translation of their reports.

Hjalmar Gudjonsson furnished the following statement, which was dated March 30, 1941:

The first thing that Finna [Hafsteinn's control at this séance? ] said to me was that a young man was with me and that he was of average height, blond, and with thin hair at the top of his head. He was between 20 and 30 years of age and was called Gudni Magnusson. She [Finna] could easily see him. She said that he had known some of my relatives, and also that he and his death were connected with Eskifjordur and Reydarfjordur. He had been a car or truck driver. She saw clearly how he had died. He had been repairing his car, had crawled under it, stretched himself, and then had ruptured something inside his body. Then he had been brought by boat between fjords to medical care, but died on the way. That is all I remember.

(Signed) Hjalmar J. Gudjonsson

The following statement, dated June 6, 1941, was received from Gudrun Jonsdottir:

I am writing the following to clarify further what came through at a séance with Hafsteinn Bjornsson that was held on January 25, 1941, for

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7 In Hafsteinn's mediumship, communicators sometimes give their messages directly to the sitters without a control acting as an intermediary. This was the case in the communications from Runolfur Runolfsson (Haraldsson and Stevenson, 1975). At other times, however, Hafsteinn's control relays the statements of the communicators to the sitters. The communication from Gudni occurred in this way, with Finna playing a role very similar to that generally played by Feda in Mrs. Osborne Leonard's sittings (Thomas, 1947). In Mrs. Leonard's mediumship some communicators also at times dispensed with Feda and communicated without her participation (Thomas, 1950).

8 In everyday use of their language Icelanders do not distinguish, as do English-speaking persons, between "car" and "truck." The communications refer to a car and so do some of the verifying statements. In fact, Gudni drove a truck and his illness occurred shortly after he returned home from a trip in this truck.
Hjalmar J. Gudjonsson. . . . The meeting began in the usual manner. Then Finna, the medium’s control, started to tell what she saw [in connection] with Hjalmar.

Hjalmar had never been at a séance before and did not believe this [what Finna told him] since he did not recognize in any way at all the man Finna described to him. I had the impression that he did not want to hear anything further from this unknown man, so I asked Finna about him myself. Finna said: “This man has living parents and I see connected with him a countryside or ‘herad’.” I asked: “Can you describe the circumstances in which he died?” Finna then said: “He was alone in a car on his way over a mountain pass and then the car broke down. I see clearly how he crawled under the car and then something inside him tore. He died from that.” I asked: “Did he die immediately?” Finna said: “No, he managed to get to his home, and then I see he was carried by boat. He was brought to a doctor. I see the boat between fjords and that he died on the way in the boat.” I asked: “Can you tell me between what fjords he was to be brought [for medical care]?” Finna said: “I cannot get that, but Eskifjordur is what he has most on his mind.” I asked: “How long do you think it is since he died?” Finna said: “I cannot see that clearly. I believe it to be some months, about four or five, but it could be more or less. This man seems to have become well oriented [in the after-life], but he does not feel secure.” I asked: “What do you think he wants from Hjalmar? Something specific?” Finna said: “He just came to him since they are both from the same part of the country and he is also trying to get strength from him. You should think well of him. That gives him strength.” We talked some more about the young man, but I do not remember any of that so clearly that I feel justified in including it in a written statement.

(Signed) Gudrun Jonsdottir

The third sitter at the séance, Hansina Hansdottir, signed Gudrun Jonsdottir’s statement with a short sentence saying it was accurate according to her recollection.

Readers of the above two statements, which were written independently, will notice that Gudrun Jonsdottir’s statement contains many more details than that of Hjalmar Gudjonsson. Two factors may explain this. First, Gudrun Jonsdottir was an experienced sitter whereas Hjalmar Gudjonsson had never attended a séance before. And secondly, when he lost interest in the communicator, Gudrun Jonsdottir took up the conversation with him. It is thus not surprising that she remembered more details of what the communicator said during the sitting.

As already mentioned, the letter Asmundur Gestsson received from his cousin, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir, in Eskifjordur contained details of the circumstances of Gudni’s death, and we now give E.H.’s translation of this letter, which was dated March 14, 1941:
You are probably surprised by my immediate answer to your letter. You know I am always a lazy writer. Because of what you wrote in your letter regarding an accident, I was asked [by Gudni’s parents] to write you immediately and ask for all further information, including where you obtained this little information [shown in Asmundur Gestsson’s letter to his cousin], and if you can say anything more about it. This is the case as we know it:

There is a married couple here [in Eskifjordur] by the name of Anna Jorgensen and Magnus Arngrimsson. The husband has worked for a long time at road building both in Mulasyslu and Thingeyjarsyslu, and in recent years his wife has always lived with him wherever he happens to be working. . . . One of their sons . . . who was about 20-21 years of age [he was actually 24 at the time of his death, see below], was a truck driver and had been for the past two or three years. He had often worked with his father in road building. Last fall this young man, whose name was Gudni Magnusson, was very busy with his truck driving and he left in the morning to go to Vidifjordur, a rather long and strenuous journey. Then later in the day he went to Reydarfjordur. After reaching there he left for home. His truck was not running well and the trip took longer than usual. He was alone. When he was crossing the mountain pass between Reydarfjordur and Eskifjordur, the truck ran out of gasoline. So he left the truck and went down to Eskifjordur to obtain some gasoline in a can. That meant a walk of four miles each way and when he returned home he was exhausted. During the night he experienced extremely severe pain in the stomach. Einar [Astrads, the writer’s husband and the physician of the area] was sent for and went to him, but could not diagnose his condition at first.

The next day Einar had to go to Reydarfjordur and stayed there the whole day. In the evening he received a telephone call at Reydarfjordur asking him to come quickly [back to Eskifjordur] because Gudni’s condition had become very critical. Einar was also asked to bring with him the army doctor stationed at Reydarfjordur if that would make it easier to help Gudni. The [two] physicians arrived at nine o’clock in the evening and they saw immediately that the young man was in a very critical condition and probably suffering from some internal rupture or intestinal obstruction. They could do nothing with the patient where he was. They therefore decided to send the young man at once to the hospital at Seydisfjordur. They could not use an airplane because, being October, it was already dark. They therefore took Gudni in a motorboat, but he died on the way between Nordfjordur and Seydisfjordur. This is what we here know about this incident. When I read your letter, I naturally thought of this young man because his name was Gudni Magnusson, and although this was not an automobile accident, the young man was working with a truck and working strenuously. So I decided to let the boy’s parents see that part of your letter that dealt with this incident. They found it extremely interesting and asked me by all means to write at once and obtain all further information possible. I hope you will write again and tell me all the details.

(Signed) Gudrun Gudmundsdottir
In June, 1941, Asmundur Gestsson visited Eskifjordur, where he stayed with his cousin, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir, and her husband, Dr. Einar Astrads. He wanted to meet Gudni’s parents, but they were away for the summer. He left them a letter in which he enclosed copies of the two statements from the sitters which we have quoted above, and also asked their permission for the use of their names in a publication of the case. This Gudni’s parents readily gave in a letter of reply.

During his stay in Eskifjordur, Asmundur Gestsson was able to verify some other details in the communication from a woman who knew Gudni and his family well. She told him that Gudni’s hair was blond and also that, something rather unusual for such a young man, it was beginning to become thin at the top.

The medium’s control, Finna, had mentioned a connection between the young man and “herad.” This word in Icelandic refers to any large area of land, but it is also a proper name for a particular section of eastern Iceland known as Fljotsdalsherad or, in a shortened form, as Herad. It was therefore relevant to the communicator.

Asmundur Gestsson did not verify that Gudni or his family had actually known relatives of the sitter Hjalmar Gudjonsson, to whom the communicator seemed particularly attracted. The most that can be said about this point is that since both came from the same (eastern) part of Iceland (which is a thinly populated country) it is possible that the two families did have some acquaintance. It is certain, however, that Hjalmar Gudjonsson had no conscious recollection of ever having met Gudni Magnusson or having heard of his death.

Later Investigations by Ourselves

When E.H. returned from the United States to Iceland in the autumn of 1971 and again in the spring of 1972, he continued the investigation of the case with whatever informants and documents were still available.

Asmundur Gestsson had died in the late 1940s, and Einar Astrads, the physician of Eskifjordur, had also died many years earlier. His wife, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir, was near death when E.H. reached Iceland and died not long thereafter, so she was not interviewed. However, E.H. met her daughter, Inga Einarsdottir, who found and gave E.H. two pertinent letters from Asmundur Gestsson to her mother. In her report of the case (summarized above), Elinborg Larsdottir (1946) did not reproduce these letters. However, we shall do so because the first (which we have already mentioned above) provides an additional summary of the communication written soon after the sitting at which it occurred and before any details had been
verified. And the second letter contains some additional details of interest.

Asmundur Gestsson's first letter to Gudrun Gudmundsdottir is dated February 26, 1941, that is, about one month after the sitting:

... For specific reasons I want you kindly to look into and let me know if you have any knowledge of whether a certain man by the name of Gudmundur Magnusson has had an accident by being caught under a car some time ago in Eskifjordur or Reydarfjordur and died from it. Most likely the car had fallen upon him, and the man was under the car repairing it when this happened and he then was injured internally. I do not know with any certainty how long ago; perhaps it was eight to ten months or a year or more. The man probably came from Herad, but this is not certain. I expect that in such a case Einar [Dr. Astrad, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir's husband] would have been called and he could therefore give some information. The man's name might as well be Gudni as Gudmundur. I am not personally involved in this, except that I have been asked to inquire into this... but as you see the information is not very clear and it is not certain if the accident happened in Einar's area....

(Signed) Asm. Gestsson

As mentioned above, Gudrun Gudmundsdottir replied to this letter on March 14, 1941, and we have already quoted this reply as translated by E.H. from Elinborg Larusdottir's book (E.H. was not able to obtain the original). Asmundur Gestsson wrote his cousin again on April 18, 1941, and we quote the following translated excerpts from his letter:

... I must send you a few lines with this ship mainly to thank you for your good letter which I received... I still cannot give you more information, or rather I do not want to at present because this case does not involve myself personally, though I think this so important that I must do something about it. The story that led up to it [the writing of his first letter] is as follows: Last winter there came to me a woman whom I know to be a reliable person [this refers to Gudrun Jonsdottir, in whose home the séance was held]. She is related to my deceased wife. She had a reason to visit me. Then we happened to talk about the fact that she had recently attended a séance with a reliable medium. I asked her if anything interesting had happened. Nothing much as far as she herself was concerned, she said. But a man [Hjalmar Gudjonsson] was with her [at the sitting]. He lives... in Vopnafjordur and was a guest in town. This woman says that what happened to him might be a remarkable proof... He who came through, Gudni Magnusson, wanted urgently to give information about himself to the man from Vopnafjordur, who I understand knew little or nothing about the "guest." He [the communicator] stressed that his death had occurred in connection with a car in Eskifjordur. And more that I will not men-
tion now, though I want to state that the information you gave me in your letter [of March 14, 1941] fitted surprisingly well with his story. As the woman [Gudrun Jonsdottir] was telling me [about the séance], I understood from her that it would be impossible to get the necessary information [for verifying the communication] as none of those present knew the "guest" at all. Then it crossed my mind that the man had said he had ties with Eskifjordur, and if his story made any sense, then the physician at Eskifjordur would know about his death. I promised the woman to write to you and make inquiries. We did not expect much from this, but thought it worth while to try. Nor was this a matter of personal interest to the woman or to myself as neither of us knew the "guest," and not even the man from Vopnafjordur [Hjalmar Gudjonsson] . . . .

I will not write more now, only that the woman above [Gudrun Jonsdottir] wrote to Vopnafjordur and asked the man there [Hjalmar Gudjonsson] to whom the "guest" came to give as detailed a report [about the séance] as he could. Now she is waiting for an answer. [This was the statement dated March 30, 1941, which we have cited above. But it had not been received in Reykjavik at the time of the writing of this letter, probably because of the slowness of the mail by sea.]

I would like to hear from you again and learn something about the dead man's parents, especially of their interest in psychic matters, for if this is their deceased son, as it seems, he certainly wants to prove to them than he lives. . . .

(Signed) Asm. Gestsson

E.H. met Hjalmar Gudjonsson, who was (in 1971-72) living in Reykjavik. He said that in 1941 he was living in the eastern part of Iceland and had only been on a short visit to Reykjavik at the time of the sitting there, which he remembered well. He was a relative of Gundrun Jonsdottir. He told E.H. that he had read the account of the sitting in Elinborg Larusdottir's book (1946) and found it accurate. He added that he had been much impressed by the sitting. At the time it took place he had never been to Eskifjordur, and since then only once. He had never known any relatives of Gudni Magnusson, nor had any of his own relatives, so far as he could ascertain, known Gudni. E.H. asked Hjalmar Gudjonsson if he had received any information—for example, in Gundrun Jonsdottir's letter asking for his statement—about the verifications before he wrote his account on March 30, 1941. He replied that he had not. As indicated above, he had already returned to Vopnafjordur before he was asked for his statement, so he was out of touch with the other sitters except by sea mail.

9 Contrary to the impression conveyed by Elinborg Larusdottir's book, Hjalmar Gudjonsson thought that at this sitting he had received a communication from an uncle who had drowned; he told E.H. that he was much impressed by the details this communicator gave concerning the drowning.
E.H. also interviewed Gudni's brother and sister, Otto Magnusson (born in 1910) and Rosa Magnusdottir (born in 1918). They both confirmed the accuracy of the report in Elinborg Larusdottir's book. Otto Magnusson provided additional verifications of the communicator's description of himself. He was particularly impressed by the detail of thinning hair at the top of Gudni's head, something unusual for a young man of his age at the time he died. He also verified some of circumstances of Gudni's death, as did Rosa Magnusdottir.

Gudni's family did have one relative in Reykjavik at the time of Gudni's death. This was Kafsteinn Jorundsson, his maternal uncle, who died shortly before E.H. 's arrival in Iceland in the spring of 1972. Kafsteinn Jorundsson would naturally have been notified of Gudni's death soon after it occurred. However, Otto Magnusson was not aware of any connection between his uncle and Hafsteinn Bjornsson, nor between Hafsteinn and any other member of Gudni's family. According to Otto Magnusson, his uncle was rather "anti-spiritualist" and probably would not have moved in the same circles as Hafsteinn or ever attended any sittings with him.

The cause of Gudni Magnusson's death. E.H. obtained a copy of Gudni's death certificate. (Such records, incidentally, are not accessible to the general public and E.H. obtained access to it only through special exertions. We do not think that it could have been seen by Hafsteinn.) The officially recorded causes of Gudni's death were "intestinal perforation" and "peritonitis." Otto Magnusson told E.H. that as a child Gudni had developed some kind of intestinal trouble which required surgery, and that during the operation "some of the intestines were cut away and sewed together again." Evidently some exertion during Gudni's truck journey led to a tearing of his intestines at a place of weakness residual from the operation of his childhood. This would then have led rapidly to peritonitis from which he died in a comparatively short time,10 as indicated in Gudrun Gudmundsdottir's letter cited above. There was no autopsy, but the known facts of his illness make the official attribution of the causes of death almost certainly correct.

The death certificate did not mention the place of Gudni's death, but gave the date as September 28, 1940. His birth certificate gave his date of birth as September 14, 1916.

Gudni's obituary notice. Although Inga Einarsdottir had said she was sure that no account of Gudni's death had appeared in any Reykjavik newspaper (in 1940-41 no newspapers were published in eastern Iceland), we felt that we should check on this ourselves. The

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10 In the days before antibiotics, death from peritonitis could ensue within 48 hours, and could be hastened if internal hemorrhage occurred. Gudni died about 36 hours after returning home in his truck.
only paper at all likely to have printed an obituary of Gudni was *Morgunbladid*, so during a visit to Iceland of I.S. in September, 1972, we checked its files for the autumn of 1940. (At a later date E.H. searched the three other newspapers published in Reykjavik during 1940-41, but found no mention of Gudni.) Since Gudni was an obscure person who had lived and died in eastern Iceland, we were somewhat surprised to find an obituary notice about him in the November 7, 1940, issue of *Morgunbladid*. It included a photograph of him and about a third of a column of printed matter. The photograph showed a young man one would judge to be in his twenties. It also indicated that he was blond, but although there was a little recession of hair at the upper left of the forehead, no one would have conjectured from seeing this photograph that the man was becoming bald, with thinning of hair at the top of his head.

The text of the obituary notice gave the date of Gudni’s birth (September 14, 1916) and of his death (September 28, 1940), so that his age at death could easily be calculated. The names of his parents were also given. The article, however, contained nothing about the circumstances of Gudni’s death nor its cause. It mentioned that he had been buried in Eskifjördur (from which it could be inferred that he had lived there), but did not include the names of the other two places (Reydarfjördur and Herad) that were mentioned in the communication. The short article consisted mainly of an eulogy of the deceased, with some reminiscences about his interests and ambitions.

We concluded that this obituary could not have furnished all the verified information in the communication. But we thought that the author of the article, E. Bjarnason, might have known more about Gudni than he had included in it and had perhaps communicated this information in some manner to Hafsteinn. Fortunately, E. Bjarnason (born in 1895) was still living and E.H. was able to interview him. He had lived in Eskifjördur until 1949, when he moved to Reykjavik. Although he was much older than Gudni, they had been good friends and shared various activities. E. Bjarnason was a personal friend of the editor (in 1940) of *Morgunbladid*, and it was because of this friendship that the newspaper published the obituary of Gudni. Otherwise it would probably not have taken any notice of the death of a young resident of eastern Iceland.

E. Bjarnason told E.H. that he had never met Hafsteinn, nor did he know any relatives or friends of Gudni living in Reykjavik apart from Kafsteinn Jorundsson, Gudni’s uncle mentioned above.

In the Tabulation below we offer a summary of the statements made by the communicator, the persons or sources verifying the correct ones, and some associated comments. We have derived the
items from the written statements made by the sitters or by Asmundur Gestsson, who carried out the first verifications. We have grouped the communicator's statement according to topics.

For the verifications of all the main items listed in the Tabulation—that is, the items essential to the definite identification of the communicator with the deceased man Gudni Magnusson—we have relied only on the contemporary information provided in the letters, the newspaper obituary, and the death certificate. For some items we have listed Otto Magnusson, Gudni's brother, as a verifying informant, but readers should remember that we only obtained his oral testimony many years later when E.H. interviewed him.

There is no contemporary verification of the communicator's statements that his truck broke down (part of item 11 of the Tabulation) and that he had crawled under the truck to repair it (item 12). Many years later Rosa Magnusdottir told E.H. that Gudni had said he had been crawling under his truck when he developed abdominal pain, but such a statement coming so long after the events and after the informant was quite familiar with the details of the communication has little value. We should rely, therefore, on the letter of Gudrun Gudmundsdottir to Asmundur Gestsson (dated March 14, 1941) for our knowledge of what happened to Gudni before he became ill. This letter states that Gudni's truck was not running well and that it later ran out of gasoline. It further states that Gudni then had to walk four miles to obtain some gasoline and that after he finally returned home he developed the pains which signaled his fatal illness. The letter says nothing about Gudni crawling under the truck to repair it. However, since the truck had not been running well earlier, we can suppose that when it ran out of gas Gudni may have thought that it had broken down and got under it to make an examination. Or, if the truck ran out of gas unexpectedly, Gudni might have crawled underneath to determine whether there was a leak in the gasoline line. But this can only be conjectured from Gudrun Gudmundsdottir's letter and is not explicitly stated.

The next item (item 13) was verified by Gudni's death certificate. Although the diagnoses in it of "intestinal perforation" and "peritonitis" were made on the basis of clinical signs and symptoms only and there was no autopsy, the known details of the illness together with Gudni's previous medical history make it almost certain that he had "torn or ruptured something inside himself." But in any case, this item and the confirming diagnoses do not depend upon whether or not Gudni did in fact crawl under his truck. The prolonged exertion of his eight-mile (round trip) walk, including his carrying a can filled with gasoline for four miles, might well have brought about an intestinal rupture at a point of weakness resulting from his earlier operation.
**Tabulation**

**SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE COMMUNICATOR GUDNI MAGNUSSON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Verification</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. His name was Gudni or Gudmundur Magnusson.</td>
<td>Letter from Gudrun Gudmundsdottir to Asmundur Gestsson dated March 14, 1941 (hereafter referred to as “Gudmundsdottir letter”)</td>
<td>Gudni Magnusson was the son of Anna Jorgensen and Magnus Arngrimsson. In Iceland a person’s second name indicates his father. Since Gudni was born on September 14, 1916, and died on September 28, 1940, he was just over 24 years old at the time of his death. Otto Magnusson said Gudni was of medium or slightly above average height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He was between 20 and 30 years old when he died.</td>
<td>Gudni’s death certificate Gudni’s obituary notice in <em>Morgunbladid</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. He was of average height.</td>
<td>Otto Magnusson, Gudni’s brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. He had blond hair.</td>
<td>Gudni’s obituary notice in <em>Morgunbladid</em> Otto Magnusson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. His hair was thin at the top of his head.</td>
<td>Otto Magnusson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. He had died about four or five months before the séance.</td>
<td>Gudni’s death certificate Gudni’s obituary notice in <em>Morgunbladid</em></td>
<td>Since Gudni died on September 28, 1940, and the séance took place on January 25, 1941, the interval was almost exactly four months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. He had been a truck driver.</td>
<td>Gudmundsdottir letter Otto Magnusson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Verification</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>8. He had a connection with Herad.</td>
<td>See comment</td>
<td>The exact connection between Gudni and &quot;Herad&quot; is not clear. However, in June, 1941, his parents had moved to a place called Fljotsdalsherad, called Herad for short, where Magnus Arngrimsson was working as a foreman on the roads. Since Gudni drove a truck in connection with his father's work in road building, it is likely that he had visited Herad and may have stayed there with his parents in earlier years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. His parents were living.</td>
<td>Gudmundsdottir letter</td>
<td>The truck ran out of gasoline when Gudni was crossing the mountain pass between Reydarfjordur and Eskifjordur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosa Magnusdottir, Gudni’s sister</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. He was alone in his truck.</td>
<td>Gudmundsdottir letter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. He was crossing a mountain pass when his truck broke down.</td>
<td>Gudmundsdottir letter</td>
<td>This detail was not verified in 1941. Many years later Rosa Magnusdottir, Gudni’s sister, told E.H. that Gudni had told his family that he had been crawling under his truck when he developed pain in his abdomen. (See text for further discussion of this item.)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Otto Magnusson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. He had been repairing his truck and had crawled under it.</td>
<td>Not verified contemporaneously</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
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| 13. He had torn or ruptured something inside himself. | Gudni's death certificate  
Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | Since there was no autopsy on the body of Gudni, we cannot be certain that this was the cause of his death. However, the history of a previous intestinal operation, the sudden onset of a severe illness soon after unusual exertion, and his death within two days attributed to peritonitis make this explanation almost certainly correct. |
| 14. He had not died immediately, but managed to get home. | Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | It would be more accurate to say that he "was being brought by boat" rather than that he "had been brought," because Gudni died in a boat between the fjords. |
| 15. He had been brought by boat between fjords to medical care. | Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | |
| 16. He had died on the way. | Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | Gudni was already with two doctors when he died, but he was being taken to others at the hospital in Seydisfjordur. |
| 17. He was brought to a doctor. | Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | Gudni lived in Eskifjordur and was on his way back there in his truck when he first developed abdominal pain. |
| 18. He had Eskifjordur "on his mind." | Gudmundsdottir letter  
Otto Magnusson | |
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<tr>
<td>19. There was a connection also with Reydarfjordur.</td>
<td>Gudmundsdottir letter</td>
<td>Gudni was traveling between Reydarfjordur and Eskifjordur. See Item 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. He had known some relatives of Hjalmar Gudjonsson.</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Hjalmar Gudjonsson had never known Gudni, nor had any of his relatives, as far as he could ascertain.</td>
</tr>
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DISCUSSION

This case has the unfortunate weakness that no record of the communication was made until at least a month after it was received. And the sitters did not write out their accounts of the séance until approximately two and four months after it was held.

We consider the letter of February 26, 1941, from Asmundur Gestsson to his cousin Gudrun Gudmundsdottir an important document in the case because it provides a written record of some of the communications made before any were verified. It thus compensates, at least partially, for the defect we have just mentioned, the failure to make notes during the sitting. The statement written on March 31, 1941, by Hjalmar Gudjonsson was, according to him, also written before he had any knowledge of the verifications even though Asmundur Gestsson had by then received the first verifications from Gudrun Gudmundsdottir in her letter of March 14. Gudrun Jonsdottir’s statement was not written until June 6, several months after Asmundur Gestsson had verified the main facts of the communication, and thus we cannot be sure Gudrun Jonsdottir’s memory of the communicator’s statements was uncontaminated by her knowledge of the verifications. But Asmundur Gestsson’s letter of February 26, although it does not contain all the details the sitters recalled (especially some of those mentioned by Gudrun Jonsdottir), includes essential items such as the communicator’s name, his connection with Eskifjordur and Reydarfjordur, and the cause of his death. Readers will have noted that at the time this letter was written the sitters evidently thought that the communicator had died as a result of an internal injury that was somehow related to the breakdown of a truck. Asmundur Gestsson’s letter definitely mentioned the detail of some internal injury.

We do not think that anyone will question our conclusion that the verified details of the communication correspond closely with ascertained facts or justified conjectures about the life and death of a single person, Gudni Magnusson of Eskifjordur. The communicator came from a part of Iceland which the medium had never even visited. The sitters, even including the one person present (Hjalmar Gudjonsson) who was from eastern Ireland, had no connection whatever with Gudni or his family.

The newspaper obituary could not have furnished the medium with all the correctly communicated details, nor could the writer of the obituary, who then lived in eastern Iceland which the medium had never visited. The communicator had an uncle in Reykjavik, but as far as we can learn, he had no connections with the medium. Thus despite extensive inquiries we have not been able to find any channel
for normal communication to the medium of the correct information he had about Gudni Magnusson and expressed at the séance under consideration. We conclude, therefore, that despite its obvious weaknesses, the case justifies an interpretation that includes some paranormal process.

The main purpose of this report has been the presentation of another case of a ‘drop in’ communicator that we believe to be authentic. The significance of ‘drop in’ communicators for the question of the survival of human personality after death is a large topic of great theoretical and practical significance. One of us has offered some discussion of this matter in connection with a case of this type reported earlier (Stevenson, 1970) and we do not think it necessary to dilate further on the theme here.

REFERENCES


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