

The Killing of Klaas K.

The Survival Files — Case 38 — ESS = 219.7

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Maybe it was his time to go, and maybe, as many spirits claim, it was all planned out for good reason; but, to the casual observer, his death was just the kind of stupid accident that makes folks shake their heads and mumble something about “rotten luck.” Klass Kaaijenbrink was only 24 years old when he got out of a delivery truck to help the driver back into a narrow entranceway. As he walked behind the vehicle, he tripped and fell, and the truck’s rear wheel ran over his head, killing him instantly.

This tragedy occurred on a Saturday afternoon in the town of Gouda¹ in the Netherlands. On the ensuing Monday, March 27, 1939, a report of the accident appeared in the major city paper, the *Goudsche Courant*. This report was inaccurate in two respects: it gave Kaaijenbrink’s first initial as “N” instead of “K,” and it said he was an only child who had resided with his parents at an unspecified address on Willem Tomberg street. When the story was picked up and briefly summarized by the *Nieuwsbron*, a newspaper in The Hague, Klaas Kaaijenbrink’s name was abbreviated to the far more readable, but still incorrect, initials “N.K.”

The importance of how the story appeared in the *Nieuwsbron*, is that that was the paper read by Mrs. Hilgerson-Kleiweg, and it was through her that, six weeks after his death, the spirit of Klaas Kaaijenbrink spoke to a group of investigators. (Henceforth, for the sake of readability, we shall refer to the medium as “H-K” and to the young man’s spirit as “Klaas”.)

H-K was a volunteer trance medium who would remain oblivious while various discarnates apparently took over her vocal chords to communicate with the researchers. During the session in question, the visiting spirit revealed the following facts.

1. His name was Klaas Kraaijendonk.
2. He had lived at Number 2 Willem Tombergstraat.
3. Something “terrible” had happened and he “was gone suddenly.”
4. He had a brother, named Antoon.
5. He shared a bed with his brother.
6. He had a sister named Annie.

Furthermore, Klaas made several statements of opinion:

- a. That his mother should not grieve so much and needed support.
- b. That his belongings should be given away, including his Sunday suit.
- c. That his family cared too much for worldly things and had little faith in God.
- d. That his sister danced too much and should be more closely watched.

Subsequent investigations revealed that Klaas had, indeed, lived with his parents at number 2 Willem Tombergstraat. That, contrary to the newspaper’s report, he did have siblings. His brother, with whom he *did* share a bed, *was* named Antoon. His sister, whose love of dancing

¹ The only place identification given in the source materials is a newspaper statement that the accident occurred at “De Nieuwe Vaart” which, as far as I can ascertain, was some sort of waterway. Further identification from anyone familiar with the area or the language would be appreciated.

had recently been questioned by her parents, was officially named Johanna, but was always called Annie within her home.

The only fact not given absolutely correctly was the spelling of the deceased last name. Since H-K spoke the name rather than writing it, the problem might simply be one of the investigators hearing incorrectly. We aren't told if the investigators asked for the name to be spelled out; but, even if it had been, the problem could be that the medium "heard" it incorrectly. Considering the difficulty spirits commonly have in communicating names and the complexity of this one, such a mistake hardly weakens the case. To the contrary, such a mis-translation is pretty strong evidence against fraud.

When interviewed, Klaas' parents, we should note, did not agree with all of the opinions he expressed. They assured the investigators that their belief in an Almighty was quite strong. Of course, it would be hard to imagine them, in that day and age, admitting otherwise to strangers.

Thorough questioning of all living parties revealed no link between the medium or her family in the Hague and Klaas' family in Gouda. None were even aware of the others' existence. Note, that the only reports of the death did not contain the street address number, had the first initial of the name incorrect, and wrongly stated that the deceased was an only child. All these facts were received correctly through the medium.

ESS Score

The CS rating is "j". CS = 154.

The Witness Reliability rating is "f", WR = 65.

Character/Complexity of Information rating is "n". IC = 0.7.

Total ESS Score: $154 + 65 + .7 = 219.7$

For Further Information See:

The *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 31, 1939-40, pages 142-152.

END CASE 38

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