

INCENDIARY POLTERGEISTS,
SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION
and FIRE SUICIDE CLUSTERS

By Loren Coleman

A Personal Note

As I was growing up, I had the rare opportunity to be surrounded by the culture of fire. For 20 years, through the formative days of my early intellectual development and later adolescent turmoil, my father was employed as a professional firefighter for a medium-sized city in the Midwest USA. He would bring conflagratory stories home, talk about carrying cindered bodies out of burnt buildings and cry over fallen comrades on the job. Although he was not a classic firechaser—his dysfunctions existed in other areas—the family often found itself, when he was off-duty, standing in front of sinister burning scenes, transfixed by the beauty and danger of the fire before us. Besides generally wondering why in the hell we were there, sometimes I would question the source of the fact that these fires did, indeed, seem to exert a sort of power over people. Even back then, I found myself trying to make sense of the whys and whens of fires. I continue to wonder about fires, especially the mysterious ones.

Fort and Fires

At eleven I devoured all the words I could discover by Charles Fort and recalled being struck by his discussions of fires. He probably put it most concisely in the following covert preface to his examination of weird fires, as found in *Wild Talents*: "Because of several cases that I

"Two women set afire." *New York Times*, 11 November 1972.

"Veteran in Danang dies in immolation by fire." *New York Times*, 25 August 1971.

"Vilnius pensioner...proclaimed she will...set herself on fire." *Lewiston Sun-Journal*, 22 May 1990.

"Wisconsin student burned." *New York Times*, 19 February 1972.

"Woman in Moscow sets herself afire." *New York Times*, 10 March 1974.

"Woman a suicide by fire." *New York Times*, 29 August 1972.

"Youth's immolation said to stir rioting in a Lithuanian city." *New York Times*, 22 May 1972.

The charred remains of 92-year-old Dr. John Irving Bentley of Couderport, PA, found on December 5, 1966. Note unmelted rubber tip on walker. Photo copyright 1976 by Larry Arnold.

T.A. , 97
SUMMER - 94

have noted, the subject of *Fires* attracted my attention. One reads hundreds of accounts of fires, and many of them are mysterious, but one's ruling thought is that the unexplained would be renderable in terms of accidents, carelessness, or arson, if one knew all the circumstances. But keep this subject in mind, and, as in every other field of phenomena, one comes upon cases that are irreconcilables"

Fort then ventures forth into the topic of fires associated with poltergeist activity. Case after case is given of multiple fires starting in a house or a series of fires following a family from dwelling to dwelling as they attempt to escape the wrath of the unseen firestarter. The parapsychologist Nandor Fodor called them "incendiary poltergeists." In his chapter appropriately entitled "The Rage that Burns the House Down," Fodor used incendiary poltergeists to illustrate his underlying theory for the cause of all poltergeist activity, namely: "The chief motive behind Poltergeist disturbances is repressed aggression in the psyche of adolescents before puberty." He's talking about "psychokinesis" (PK), of course, which means "to move by the mind."

The Poltergeist Girls

The stories Fort gathered from the end of the last century and the beginning of this one certainly supported Fodor's thoughts in this direction. Fort's incendiary poltergeists accounts are populated by families containing adopted daughters, housemaids, servant girls and teenagers. Fort called these young women collectively, the "poltergeist girls." The work of Vincent Gaddis and the late D. Scott Rogo on poltergeists, likewise, contain sets of cases filled with mostly latency-aged and adolescent females. Rogo's excellent discussion of these fiery geists in the first half of his chapter "Bizarre Poltergeists" looks at both Gaddis' and Fodor's notions of PK-induced electrical charges corning from young people on-site. Rogo notes that such PK-sparks cannot explain why normally noncombustible objects are also consumed by the incendiary poltergeists. Nevertheless, all of these authors agree to the abnormality of incendiary poltergeist incidents.

Fire insurance, it should be noted, was a direct result of incendiary poltergeist activity. During the turn of the century, in that debunking, rational thinking world, the rash of incendiary poltergeists

cases were more often than not placed at the hands of the young women who happened to be nearby. Human arson and mischievous firesetting were to blame, we are told. But in a personal discovery unrecorded to date in the anomalist literature, I found through a search of non-Fortean fire investigation history direct links between a series of what I would have to say were fire poltergeists in wealthy New York City homes, the attempted blaming of these fires on mostly German housemaids, and the development in the United States of fire insurance. The insurance underwriters were called in when the fires could almost be classified as an epidemic and the domestic help explanations were found to be full of holes. The implications of such a history are worth pondering for a moment.

Spontaneous Human Combustion

Fort thought deeply about the whole subject of the fire poltergeists and for several pages in *Wild Talents* moved the reader to several scratches of the head. Then, not very abruptly, Fort dovetails his chapter into his cases of spontaneous human combustion (SHC). You know the images by now: a young woman's body bursting into blue flame on a dance floor, elderly individuals catching fire in overstuffed chairs, a man's arm shooting forth a lapping demon of death. The step from incendiary poltergeists to SHC is not a big one. There even seem to be cases that bridge the two.

Take for example the strange plight of Angela Hernandez, 26, of Los Angeles. On 28 May 1990, she was struck by a car and brought into UCLA Medical Center. Then, as surgeons finished operating on her and were about to take her out of the room on a gurney, the sheets and blankets covering her mysteriously caught fire and filled the hospital room with smoke. Staff members who tried to put out the fire were forced out of the room by the smoke. When firefighters arrived five minutes later, the blaze had mostly burned itself out, but Hernandez was already dead. Battalion Chief Chuck Merriman said, "The fire wasn't even hot enough to set off the sprinklers in the ceiling." In many ways, the incident mirrors the intense localized fires recorded for SHC and incendiary poltergeist cases.

Spontaneous human combustion, while little understood,

seems to be experiencing a renewed level of examination, both sympathetic and critical. Recently, during the 1990s, even such organizations as the National Fire Protection Association has officially inquired into how best to include material on SHC in their national fire and arson investigators training manual.

Fire Suicide Clusters

Some answers to SHC's mechanics may lie in a reexamination of incendiary poltergeist cases and, yes, even in the field of suicidology. The parapsychological theory that SHC could be the internalization of destructive psychokinetic impulses is not too distant from the framing of suicides as "aggression turned inward," a leading catch phrase in forensic suicidology. Vincent Gaddis' chapter on SHC uses the word "suicide" to demonstrate his bias in favor of this stance. And many SHC researchers are stumped by some fire suicides that clearly appear to be SHC. As long ago as 1982, SHC investigator Larry Arnold and I shared notes on individual reports of fire deaths that were first said to be SHC, then changed to an official finding of "suicide" to quickly quiet the uproar surrounding such cases.

What is truly amazing is that fire suicide clusters, in general, are not fully understood. Waves of self-immolations, as they are often called in the media, tend to come in certain patterns that have never really been dealt with in the scholarly journals. In many ways, fire suicide clusters are global indicators of political unrest that usually predict a minor or major governmental shift of some sort. It is almost as if the energy we note being exhibited in the incendiary poltergeist or the SHC event is projected on a grand scale.

Fire Precursors

The most vivid recent precursor examples relate to the overthrow of the communist regimes. On April 26, 1990, a Lithuanian man of 52, Stanislovas Jamaitis, threw gasoline on his clothes and set himself on fire in front of Moscow's Bolshoi Theater. He died a short time later. According to his suicide note, he was protesting the Soviet reaction to Lithuania's declaration of freedom. "I went to Moscow to set myself on fire," he wrote in a note addressed to family and authorities.

Stanislovas Jamaitis' suicide was taken seriously by official

Certainly, if the past is any key, these recent incidents are precursors on a macrolevel of human-fire interactions. For example, on May 14, 1972, a Lithuanian student and Roman Catholic, Roman Talanta (also noted as Romas Kalanta), 20, poured nearly a gallon of gasoline over his body and set himself on fire in the western Lithuanian city of Kaunas. During his funeral, several thousand youths battled Soviet policeman and soliders, ending in fatalities among the Soviets. Talanta's suicide was a symbol of Lithuanian resistance throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Self-Immolations: The Vietnam Model

Historically, suicides by fire—also called self-incinerations or self-immolations—have often led to widespread copying and clustering. But no one knows why. Use of this specific method of suicide, especially tied to political and religions reasonings, lends itself to graphic expressions of frustration. These events are then often communicated far from the site of the fire suicides by word of mouth, newspapers, and today, via the electroinic media. While the modern era has had some notable examples of fiery suicide clusters, examples of these types of protests have been around a long time. My book *Suicide Clusters* overviews this history in some detail. Suicide clusters of the fiery type existed long before CNN, of course, hit the airwaves.

As a case example, it is insightful to look at the beginning of the era of modern deaths by fire. During the early days of 1963, the ongoing Indochinese war was made more complex by the dictatorial policies of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime of South Vietnam. This American-backed government was led by the members of the Diem family, all Roman Catholics, who, the country's Buddhists felt, were extremely repressive. At Hue, South Vietnam, on May 8, during a demonstration against the Diem policies, government troops fired on the crowd, killing nine Buddhists. In a country that was 70 percent Buddhist, the resulting protests were frequent and widespread. On June 11, 1963, the protests would take a new form which would influence political suicides for decades to come.

On that date, the Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc doused his yellow robes with gasoline in the public square of Saigon, and set

Lithuanian sources, and slightly less so by Tass, the Soviet news agency. Tass did not mention any of the political motives contained in the suicide note and, instead, reported that Jamaitis had talked of "an impossible family life and a desire to commit suicide." The Lithuanian Supreme Council did release the note's contents. In that version, Jamaitis apologized for "something bad" in his marriage, but identified his strong political reasons for setting fire to himself.

"The occupiers have cut off energy supplies and people are being thrown out of work," noted Jamaitis, who had himself been recently laid off. "I have lived my whole life in occupied Lithuania," he continued. Then he specifically commented that he was killing himself to "let Gorbachev know that Lithuanians will not live in a Lithuania that is not independent."

Then, on May 11, 1990, a Lithuanian identified as Rimantas Daugintis, a resident of Vilnius, doused his body with alcohol and set himself on fire at a border crossing near Zahoney between the Soviet Union and Hungary. Suffering serious injuries, he was placed in a hospital with burns over 80 percent of his body. On May 27, 1990, a Romanian, Miroi Dimitru, 31, set himself on fire in front of the US Embassy in Budapest, Hungary.

Meanwhile in America, the Gulf War stirred up fire suicides. On February 18th, 1991, Gregory Levey, the stepson of *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman, set himself on fire in Amherst, Massachusetts. Three days later in Springfield, Massachusetts, Raymond Moules, did the same thing. Were there more we did not hear about? Probably as with incendiary poltergeist, SHC and self-immolation incidents, the stories are only carried in local papers. Like small regional flaps of UFO sightings, fire phenomena are difficult to track nationally or globally. But we try. Often we end up with more questions than answers.

These fiery suicides seem unrelated, perhaps, to Fortean phenomena, but I propose we dismiss the connection too quickly. Are we dealing with a process we do not yet understand? Can we say these rare events are merely a Lithuanian reaction to Russian political and economic pressure or a college town protest of Bush's war against Iraq? Something deeper appears to be happening.

himself on fire. Thousands watched and Buddhist nuns and monks carried banners demanding religious freedom and social justice. The media had been forewarned that a demonstration was to take place, but they had not known that a monk would burn himself alive. The next day, photographs and films of the event were published and broadcast worldwide. Thich Quang Duc's dramatic declaration of dissent was headlined around the world.

During the summer of 1963, others in Vietnam choose to kill themselves in protest of the Diem regime. On July 7, Vietnam's most famous writer, Nguyen Tuong Tam, a Buddhist, killed himself in prison by taking poison. Thich Quang Duc's specific act was viewed as the more dramatic, and soon imitated by others. On August 4, a second Buddhist monk, Le, in his twenties, burned himself to death in the center of the seacoast town of Phan Thiet. Government troops removed his charred body before his fellow monks could reach it.

The self-immolations spread quickly. On August 13, a 17-year-old novice monk burned himself to death. Two days later, a Buddhist nun, Dieti Quang, set herself on fire in the seacoast town of Ninh Hoa, and died shortly thereafter. The next day, a 71-year-old monk took his own life by burning in Hue's biggest pagoda. Three Buddhists had died by fire in one week. Government troops declared martial law in Hue, and were searching for ways to stop the suicides. But the political repression caused a renewed sense of outrage on the part of the Buddhists, and protests abounded. By the end of the year, at least four other monks had burned themselves to death.

We must pause to reflect that the self-immolations were key indicators of a deep psychic wound in America and Vietnam. By the end of 1963, both presidents of these two countries (Diem and Kennedy) would be dead by assassination. In the two years that followed, nine more political protest self-immolations occurred; these included five Buddhist monks in South Vietnam, one politician in Korea, and three Americans.

In America

The American self-immolations began on March 17, 1965, with Alice Herz, an 82-year-old Quaker and librarian. While on a street corner in

Detroit, she poured cleaning fluid over herself and set it afire. As she was rushed to the hospital, covered with second and third-degree burns, she told a firefighter: "I did it to protest the arms race all over the world. I wanted to burn myself like the monks in Vietnam did." In her purse, police found a note stating Herz was protesting "the use of his high office by our President, L.B.J., in trying to wipe out small nations...I wanted to call attention to this problem by choosing the illuminating death of a Buddhist."

On November 2, 1965, Norman Morrison, 32, also a Quaker, burned himself to death in front of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. because of the Vietnam conflict. Eight days later, 22-year-old Catholic Worker Movement member Roger Allen LaPorte calmly went to the wide avenue in front of the United Nations, doused himself from a gallon can of gasoline, stepped off the curb, and sat crosslegged in the fashion of Buddhist monks. He struck a match, and was engulfed in flames. As he was rushed away, between asking for water repeatedly, LaPorte told the ambulance attendants: "I'm a Catholic Worker. I'm against war, all wars. I did this as a religious action." One of LaPorte's ambitions had always been to be a Trappist monk, and beginning in 1963, he had attended the St. John Vianney Seminary in Barre, Vermont, for a year. As LaPorte lay dying on a hospital operating table, he was visited by two psychiatrists who asked him if he wanted to live. Unable to speak now because of a tube down his throat, he nodded affirmatively. But he died the next day.

The highly visible protest suicides of Herz, Morrison and LaPorte appear to have influenced the method of suicides for other Americans not so politically motivated during this same time period. For example, the day that LaPorte died, a South Bend, Indiana, woman attempted to commit suicide by fire. Despondent over the October death of her three-month-old baby, and the casualty reports from Vietnam, Celene Jankowski, 24, set herself ablaze in front of her home. A police spokesperson noted that one of Jankowski's brothers had been killed in the Korean War, and that she had been deeply disturbed by the Vietnam situation, although she was not a member of any formal protest organization.

The wave of political self-immolations continued in 1966 and

The notion of political protest by self-immolation was not as important during the late 1970s and 1980s, as it was in the 1960s and early 1970s. But what of the 1990s? Was the fatal firestorm at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, where almost 100 men, women and children died, a mass fire suicide? There has certainly an increase in individual fire suicides in Kenya, Korea, India and the United States. Will we also see an increase in incendiary poltergeist cases and SHC? D. Scott Rogo noted that fire poltergeists picked up in frequency at the end of the last century. Can we expect the same as this century and millennium draw to a close?

Whatever the case, we should not let our guard down around fire phenomena. There is much to wonder about in the flames.

References

- "Another suicide arouses Vietnam." *New York Times*, 5 August, 1963.
- Ashton, J. R. and Donnan, S. "Suicide by burning as an epidemic phenomenon: An analysis of 82 deaths and inquests in England and Wales in 1978-9." *Psychological Medicine*, 1981, No. 11.
- Associated Press. "Patient dies on operating table after sheets catch fire." *Maine Evening Express*, Portland, 29 May 1990.
- Buckley, T. "Man, 22, immolates himself in antiwar protest at U.N." *New York Times*, 10 November 1965.
- "Burned student still in danger." *New York Times*, 26 December 1974.
- Clark, J. "Spontaneous Human Combustion" in *The Unexplained!* New York: Visible Ink, 1993.
- Coleman, L. *Suicide Clusters*. Boston and London: Faber and Faber, 1987.
- "Cripple a suicide by fire in Queens." *New York Times*, 14 August 1970.
- Crosby, K., Rhee, J., and Holland, J. "Suicide by fire: A contemporary method of political protest." *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 1977, No. 23.
- Glugy, Y. "Man in Amherst dies after he set himself ablaze." *Boston Globe*, 19 February 1991.
- Fodor, N. *Between Two Worlds*. New York: Parker, 1964.
- Fort, C. *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*, New York: Dover, 1974.
- Gaddis, V. *Mysterious Fires and Lights*. New York: David McKay, 1967.
- Halbertstam, D. "Nun's act a surprise." *New York Times*, 16 August 1963.
- Harrison, M. *Fire From Heaven*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1976.

1967. Thirteen Buddhists in Vietnam, one Soviet citizen, and one American student received widespread publicity during 1966 for their acts. In 1967, five Buddhists in Southeast Asia and five Americans in the U.S. died in fiery political protests. Three other Americans died by self-immolation in 1966 and 1967, but apparently not for political reasons. Still the contagion effect may be important in terms of these suicides.

Indeed, throughout the early 1970s, self-immolations related to the Vietnam War took place in Southeast Asia and America. For example, Times Square was the scene of a dramatic self-immolation at 2 P.M. on Saturday, July 18, 1970, when Hin Chi Yeung poured two cans of gasoline on himself and struck a match. On August 24, 1971, a 37-year-old Vietnam veteran and father of six, Nguyen Minh Dang, set himself afire in Saigon's central market, praying for another veteran who burned himself to death on August 16 in a peace protest. A 58-year-old laborer at Vietnam's Tan Son Nhut Air Base burned himself to death "for the cause of national peace" on September 6, 1974.

The Global Incendiary Poltergeist

The dramatic and news-capturing death of the Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, forever changed the face of political protest. As researchers Kevin Crosby, Joong-Oh Rhee and J. Holland noted in analyzing suicides by fire for the years 1790 to 1972, 71 percent of the reported self-immolations occurred in that last ten year period. The rise and actual clustering of this form of suicide only began after the death of Thich Quang Duc in 1963. These researchers attempted "to explain the clusters of protest self-immolations in South Vietnam" by pointing to the "high level of tension among the opposing factions" and the "intense emotional atmosphere" it produced. They felt similar clusters are likely to recur when times are "unsettled, emotions inflamed and when no appropriate outlet exists for the expression of commonly shared emotions." Is this the global incendiary poltergeist at work?

A Future Worth Watching

Hess, J. L. "France stirred by immolations." *New York Times*, 25 January 1970.

Jones, D. "Woman, 82, sets herself afire in street as protest on Vietnam." *New York Times*, 18 March 1965.

"Lithuanian suicide a message to Gorbachev." *Bangor Daily News/Weekend*, 28-29 April 1990.

"Monk suicide by fire in anti-Diem protest." *New York Times*, 11 June 1963.

"Montclair student sets himself afire." *New York Times*, 24 December 1974.

"Mother attempts suicide by burning." *New York Times*, 12 November 1965.

"Motorist suicide by fire." *New York Times*, 17 July 1969.

Randles, J. and P. Hough. *Spontaneous Human Combustion*. New York: Berkeley, 1994.

"Rebel in torch horror (in Korea)." *London Times*, 23 May 1986.

"Requiem tomorrow for pacifist suicide." *New York Times*, 12 November 1965.

Roache, B. J. "Man who apparently set fire to self is in critical condition." *Boston Globe*, 23 February 1991.

Rogo, D. S. *The Poltergeist Experience*. New York: Penguin, 1979.

"Seton Hall student kills self by fire." *New York Times*, 6 October 1970.

"Saigon army veteran burns himself to death." *New York Times*, 30 April 1974.

"2d Lithuanian sets himself ablaze, near Soviet border." *New York Times*, 12 May 1990.

Severo, R. "Man immolates himself in Times Sq." *New York Times*, 19 July 1970.

Shuster, A. "Czech immolates himself by fire." *New York Times*, 17 January 1969.

Shuster, A. "Czech protester dies of his burns." *New York Times*, 20 January 1969.

"Suicide at Bear Mountain." *New York Times*, 8 December 1974.

"Times Square suicide was ex-N.Y.U. student." *New York Times*, 20 July 1970.

"2 more Buddhists suicides by burning in Vietnam protest." *New York Times*, 16 August 1963.

"2 more French fire suicides." *New York Times*, 31 January 1970.

"2 more persons in France commit suicide by fire." *New York Times*, 27 January 1970.

Boy Roasted In Mysterious Fire

Although probably not connected with any kind of aerial phenomena, the details of the following incident will be, we are sure, of interest to most members:

On the evening of the 13th of December, 1962, at 7 p.m., Billy Peterson (age unknown, but considered to be at least in his late teens) drove from his uncle's home to his own garage. Slightly less than an hour later firemen were called when passersby noticed smoke seeping out of Billy's automobile which was parked in his garage. When Peterson's body was removed from the car he was dead and his face and arms were covered with burns. The car itself was so hot THAT IT HAD MELTED A PLASTIC ICON on the dashboard, BUT THERE WAS NO FIRE IN THE CAR.

At Pontiac General Hospital where an autopsy was performed to determine cause of death, it was found that Peterson had died of carbon monoxide poisoning and there was no doubt of that. The examination also revealed: The tail pipe had been altered and the exhaust fumes led into the car by means of a flexible pipe. The missing piece of tail pipe was found at Billy's uncle's home where relatives recalled that he had been "puttering" around with his car. This fact, plus the information that Peterson had been very ill for two months due to a severe kidney ailment, seemed to point to suicide.

Peterson left his uncle's home at 7:00 p.m.—the drive between there and his own home is 10 minutes and authorities determined that it was 40 to 50 minutes after 7 that the alarm came in. Police at first were inclined to write the whole episode off as just another suicide but doctors at the hospital could not reconcile such a possibility with the balance of their findings, for they were admittedly amazed at the condition of Billy's body:

He was literally covered with burns; his back and legs were covered with second and third degree burns; his left arm was so badly burned that the skin had peeled off; yet, the hair on his body was not even singed! His nose and mouth were burned but his eyebrows were untouched; his genitals were burned to a crisp; the extent and severity and condition of the burns were such that it was certain that he could not have dressed himself after the burns occurred, nor could he have been dressed by anyone else. He was

fully clothed. Whatever caused the burns over most of his body did not burn his clothing, his underclothing or any of the hair on his body. Police and Doctors agreed: "It's the strangest case we have ever seen or heard. It positively defies an explanation!"

Now we come to a few of our observations: The heat in the car was so tremendous that it melted a piece of plastic decoration, YET THE UPHOLSTERY, ETC., WAS NOT BURNED. The parts of Peterson's body, i.e., those parts which touched parts of the car (left arm on arm rest, backs of his legs, genitals on the seat, and his nose and mouth where he possibly fell against the steering wheel when he lost consciousness from the carbon monoxide) were severely burned, but the tops of his legs, his chest, and head were not burned. Why?

We want only to recall a couple of instances about which we are familiar and which demonstrate the manifestation of a peculiar kind of heat. The Desvergers UFO case in 1953 when the Scoutmaster, Sonny Desvergers purportedly was burned by a UFO. The grass where the object hovered, was normal but the roots underneath were charred.

Another case is the Itapu Fortress case of 1957 in which two soldiers received 1st and second degree burns on their body while a UFO hovered over the Fortress. These men were burned ONLY WHERE THEY WERE COVERED BY CLOTHING. Dr. Fontes, our Brazilian Representative, theorized that an ultrasonic beam, possibly used as a "scanner" to determine the size of the installation, had passed over the soldiers. The roots of the grass where the Desvergers UFO hovered, were charred, and Edward Ruppelt, in his book, "UFO Report," pointed out that Air Force scientists could duplicate the effect only by inducting an electrical current into the ground. Fontes felt the soldiers had been burned by an ultrasonic beam. Possibly both phenomena were caused by the same agent.

At any rate, there is a strong suspicion that Billy Peterson may have been burned by an ultrasonic scanner beamed at his car. But why? Therein lies the mystery.

SAC

El teniente Louis Wattigney comentó: "El hombre yacía sobre el piso frente a la puerta y era una pira. En el cuarto no ardía ninguna otra cosa. El estaba muerto. Ignoro qué hacía que el fuego fuese tan intenso. Podía estar impregnado con una especie de aceite. No obstante, no oía a nada. Es la primera vez que veo algo semejante".

No se hallaron fósforos, ni restos de ellos. El individuo tampoco fumaba. Las ventanas estaban cerradas, no se localizaron rastros de lucha, pero había sangre en el piso de la cocina. La víctima —Glen Denney, 46 años— era un comerciante. La investigación policial localizó varios problemas del individuo y verificó que últimamente se había dado a la bebida. Días antes había tenido "shocks" alcohólicos. Dos días después el forense anunció que la muerte se había producido a causa de las quemaduras, pero que las arterias de un brazo y las dos muñecas estaban seccionadas. Que todavía vivía al arder, lo demostraban la gran cantidad de rastros de carbón localizados en sus pulmones. No se dio a los periodistas indicio alguno sobre los orígenes posibles del fuego.

Un investigador privado presionó considerablemente al forense y obtuvo esta explicación: Denney se había cortado las arterias en cinco sitios, había rociado luego su cuerpo con kerosene y se había encendido. No se dijo cómo se supo que era kerosene. Nunca se tomó en cuenta la posibilidad de un crimen. La puerta estaba cerrada por dentro, los bomberos debieron forzarla, la Sra. Cousins no había visto a nadie abandonar el edificio. Indagando, el investigador se preguntó: **¿Cómo pudo hacer todas las maniobras ulteriores un hombre con las arterias seccionadas? ¿Si sabía localizar las arterias —signo de conocimientos científicos— para qué el fuego si la muerte era cosa garantida en instantes? La pérdida del 50 % de la propia sangre causa el deceso inmediato. Cinco heridas**

implicaban un desangramiento veloz. Sólo se halló sangre en la cocina y no en el trayecto hacia la habitación donde se produjo el fuego.

EL AUTO MORTAL

El 13 de diciembre de 1959, Billy Peterson llevó a su madre a la casa de un tío y retornó al hogar. Tres cuartos de hora después, un conductor que pasó frente a su garaje vio que del auto de Peterson (27 años) salía humo intenso. Los bomberos hallaron el cadáver de Billy ladeado en el asiento. Un tubo conectado con el caño de escape reposaba a su lado. Cara y manos estaban intensamente quemados. El fuego había sido tan intenso como para derretir una imagen religiosa de plástico insertada en el tablero. Dictamen: muerte por intoxicación con monóxido de carbono.

La piel del brazo izquierdo había desaparecido, espalda y piernas lucían horribles heridas, lo mismo ocurría con su rostro. Extrañamente, ninguna zona pilosa había sufrido la desaparición de los cabellos, que estaban allí, sin daño. Tampoco su ropa registraba daño, ni siquiera la interior. El fuego calcinó a Billy Peterson respetando sus cabellos y su ropaje.

La policía supuso un crimen. Billy habría sido torturado desnudo, vestido después y envenenado con el humo del caño de escape: suicidio aparente. En el hospital, los médicos comentaron: "Es el caso más extraño que hemos visto aquí. Desafía toda explicación razonable."

UNIVERSO INVISIBLE

Para concluir este informe, queremos mencionar brevemente la cuestión de las fuentes desconocidas de energía electrodinámica en el hombre. Tres años después de terminada la Segunda Guerra Mundial se publicó un libro titulado **El alma del universo**, del famoso astrónomo Gustaf Stromberg.

Toda materia está compuesta de átomos, a su vez formados por electrones, protones, neutrones, etc. Estas partículas poseen singulares "longitudes de onda" que determinan un complejo de diferentes frecuencias, hasta formar nodulos o puntos de concentración de energía. Según el científico, más allá de nuestros sentidos hay una misteriosa dimensión que ni siquiera adivinados. Cada cuerpo humano está determinado por la energía. Stromberg adjudicaba al "otro reino" nuestras estructuras vivientes, un reino no-físico que los instrumentos científicos no pueden registrar y que está compenetrado con el territorio de nuestros sentidos. Según él, mente y energía vital existen dentro de tal ámbito, así como la memoria. ¿Cómo podría mantener la memoria entonces si el cerebro va modificándose constantemente? Hay allí un "campo de fuerzas" autónomo, ajeno a los átomos e indestructible.

Escribió: "Nuestras células nerviosas parecen ser puentes que ligan nuestro cerebro físico con el mundo en el que está enraizada nuestra conciencia. Dado que nuestra memoria se halla grabada en este 'campo de fuerzas', puede ser convocada incluso después de nuestra muerte".

Por lo tanto, la electromagnética del hombre puede ser un lazo entre el mundo físico y el imperio invisible que da coherencia a la energía. Explica otro científico: "El Hombre Real existe más allá de nuestros sentidos, nuestro cuerpo físico y el cerebro son sus instrumentos".

Las conjeturas del Dr. Stromberg y sus seguidores sobre el hombre como ser electrodinámico abrirían un insólito universo de exploración. Ahora trabajan para demostrar que la conciencia humana puede sobrevivir a la muerte física. Las cremaciones espontáneas son un capítulo de esta aventura. El futuro alberga revelaciones que ni siquiera osamos imaginar.

¿SUICIDIO ELECTRODINAMICO?

SHC

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS
AV. MANUEL SIUROT, 3 (Bloque San Leandro)
SEVILLA - SPAIN

I regret tell you I have not the necessary spare time for asking for and selecting the fire events amongst thousands of other happenings. Best regards Well, Larry, I leave you. I hope you get finally the hard core of SHC. Please inform me at the time.

September 17th, 1.975

Mr. Larry E. Arnold
1025 Miller Lane
Harrisburg, Penn. 17110
U. S. A.

Dear Larry,

SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTIONS

Formidable!, your unexpected letter. Thanks. Under separate cover I have forwarded you some copies of SHC material. First of all the Perego book was my personal awakener on unexplained accidents, but actually it is a non-worthwhile account. I attach separate note with several possible addresses which would furnish you some "lost" copies of this curious accident's record. However, long ago I have mailed copies to Mrs. Coral E. Lorenzen (APRO) and Brad Steiger, and they could lend you the out of print book. (By the way the long ago beautiful Mrs. Lorenzen is a rather hermetic, almost apparently unfriendly woman. Her sympathy was focused only on the latest Dr. Olavo Fontes, but we the simple mortals are not short, handsome CIA agents & Brazilian doctors. We ugly people let us resign to not suck a smile from the compact body of Mrs. Lorenzen. We of course may console with the much more amusing intercourse-contactees Laura Mundo and Mrs. Howard Menger. As a Latin I am well-disposed to perform a brilliant cunnilinctus to voluminous Laura in exchange for Messages from a quite more attractive Space Sisters. I am an unhappy noncontactee guy, and Laura could convey me through bed to my beloved Venusians). With regard to "suspicious" fires I have noticed that the blazes vent one's fury on children, ancients and schizophrenics, that is, useless people from economic viewpoint. Suicides - the most "exhausted" kind of individual- and flocks of animals burn as torches, too. Your channelized thought-wave energy theory for explaining the possible cause of these mysterious burnings have stricken me vividly, it is a thought provoking explication. By now, unfortunately, I have no own theory. Simply I do not know the damned cause which is burning thousands of innocent people. Truly innocent?. There is a suggestive alternative theory: the fires are staged by a sort of intentional entities superior to man and inferior to God, in order to make pay to people their karmic debts: certain kind of persons "must" die by fire, due to their own "fire-sins" committed in anterior incarnations. In this manner the sideral engineers (or angels, if you prefer) work out fire incidents which involve individuals with fire errors against karma law in their akhasic records. This staggering theory could explain not only the strange fires and spontaneous human cremations but almost all kind of accidents. There is no "accidents" in the universe, assures Hercilio Maes, a Brazilian contactee who receives alleged communications from "Ramatis", a guardian of planet earth. So the named "accidents" are events carefully planned and organized by invisible guys in order to "burn" the karmic burden previously created by mankind. I would like phone to Ramatis for confirming this assertion, but so far the line is not free. If a Perego Accident wait me in my own terrible karmic corner, I hope Ramatis grant me before to take a lunch with Himself, since this month I have got no amusing meal and I think Ramatis must be a wise gourmet & ingenious converser. Beside Ramatis at the table I should be happy to see Laura for contemplating her baffling gourmand show. I am sure Laura will not go to bed Ramatis during digestion, but I am afraid my dear Miss Mundo could die under a superkarmic-stomach-accident. Larry, it is by now impossible I send you records of fire accidents: my catastrophic file system is the cause: I get the "25,000" clippings

IGNACIO