



THE POLLOCK SISTERS – A CURIOUS CASE OF REINCARNATION

When the Pollock twins were born, they were considered a miracle. The two older Pollock sisters had died in a car accident before the twins' conception. So for parents, Florence and John, having the second set of little girls in the household was a welcome surprise. But things started to take a turn...

A TRAGIC CAR ACCIDENT CAUSES THE DEATH OF THE FIRST POLLOCK SISTERS

Joanna and Jaqueline Pollock were born in 1946 and 1957 respectively to a Catholic family in Hexham, Northumberland. The girls had four older brothers so the two stuck together and were inseparable. Their parents, Florence and John, ran a milk and grocery delivery business, and the girls were often left in the care of their grandmother.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE THINGS THAT MADE THE POLLOCK SISTERS + ANTHONY UNIQUE

JOANNA POLLOCK - THE OLDER SISTER

Joanna was a creative little girl. A free spirit who was totally devoted to looking after her younger sister. She liked to play at dressing up and would put on plays that she had written herself. A whimsical child, Joanna was often described as fey. One day while combing her father's hair, she said: "I will never be a lady." Some consider this to be foreshadowing of the tragic car accident that would end her

short life. Joanna was a very generous and kind soul. Her gait was splay-footed.

JAQUELINE POLLOCK - THE BABY OF THE FAMILY

When Jaqueline was three years old, she fell into a bucket and gashed her head. It caused a small scar above her right eye, near the bridge of her nose. The scar was indented and became more pronounced in cold weather. She also had a distinctive dark birthmark on her left hip. Her gait was normal. In temperament, she was less patient than her sister, and being younger, more childlike.

DEPRESSED AND DRUGGED, A WOMAN'S SUICIDE ATTEMPT ENDS THE LIFE OF THE POLLOCK SISTERS

On the 7th May 1957, Joanna and Jaqueline were walking to church with a friend called Anthony Layden. Out of nowhere, a careening car veered off the road entirely and smashed into them, killing all three children. The girls were 11 and six respectively, and they died instantly. An ambulance was called and Anthony was bundled hastily into the back, but he died en route to the hospital.



The driver of the car was a woman called Marjorie Winn who had been attempting suicide after her own children had been taken from her. She had downed several aspirin and overdosed on her epilepsy medication, phenobarbitone. Witnesses said that they saw the car barreling towards the children, but were unable to do anything to stop the collision. Unable to move out of the way due to a stone wall, the children were “thrown into the air like cricket balls” and killed.

DEVASTATION DESCENDS ON THE POLLOCK FAMILY

Florence and John dealt with the loss of the Pollock sisters in different ways. Unable to think about them without sinking into a hopeless depression, Florence tried to get on with life without letting her thoughts drift towards her loss.

On the other hand, John was obsessed. The day that his daughters died, he had a vision of them in heaven and felt a strong pull towards the top of the house. So he began to spend a lot of time in the attic to be as close to them as possible. He said that he felt guilty because he was a devout Catholic, but had been praying for proof of reincarnation. Belief in reincarnation is sacrilege in the eyes of the church and he believed that this was his punishment.

However, he couldn't shake the belief that God would answer his prayer and return his daughters to him in the form of reincarnation. Florence was very upset by this conviction and almost left John when he wouldn't drop it.

MIRACLE FOR THE POLLOCK FAMILY BRINGS JOY BACK TO HOUSEHOLD

Not long after the death of the Pollock sisters, Florence was surprised and overjoyed to discover that she was pregnant again. John suddenly became fixated on his plea to God. Convinced that this pregnancy would be twin girls, the reincarnations of his lost daughters, John eagerly awaited the birth of his babies.

During a checkup, the reincarnation theory was brought up, but the doctor insisted that there was only one heartbeat detected. In a family with no history of twins (and in the days before IVF), it was highly unlikely that Florence was having a multiple birth. The midwife also reiterated that there was only one heartbeat.

But John was staunch in his conviction – he was sure he would be reunited with his deceased daughters in a different form. Strangely, Florence did give birth to twins on the 4th October 1958.

SHOCKING SIMILARITIES TO THE ORIGINAL POLLOCK SISTERS

Two beautiful baby girls were born in perfect health and the new Pollock sisters were named Gillian and Jennifer. The physical similarities were the first anomalies that Florence and John noticed. Despite being identical, Jennifer had a birthmark on her waist that matched the birthmark Jacqueline had had.



She also had a mark on her forehead, which matched exactly the location where Jaqueline had the scar from her fall. Both of these marks would deepen in colour in cold weather. There was no history of these birthmarks in the family and, given that the Pollock sisters were from the same ovum, there should have been no differences at all.

As they grew older, the similarities between the new and original Pollock sisters became increasingly stark. The girls were inseparable, which most twins are. But Gillian liked to mother Jennifer, in the same way that Joanna had liked to take care of Jaqueline. The twins preferred to go to their grandmother for support, rather than their mother, as Joanna and Jaqueline would have done. The twins also liked to comb people's hair, in the same way the original Pollock sisters had, particularly their father's.

POLLOCK TWINS BECOME POLLOCK SISTERS

Gillian was becoming more and more like Joanna as she grew up, where Jennifer was strikingly similar to Jaqueline. Gillian was very generous with everyone around her. She liked to dress up and act in plays. She seemed to be growing up much faster than her twin sister too, who was more childlike in nature. They even held their pencils the same way as their older siblings had.

The twins were similar in build to the Pollock sisters too. Gillian was more willowy like Joanna had been.

Whereas Jennifer was stockier, like Jaqueline. And Gillian's gait was splayfooted like Joanna's, where Jennifer's was normal like Jaqueline's.

When they were two years old, the twins began asking for toys they had never seen before. With some shock, Florence reached out the toys belonging to the Pollock sisters. Without hesitation or argument, Gillian picked up Joanna's toy teddy and said that he was called Teddy, which is what Joanna had called him. Jennifer picked up Jaqueline's toy rabbit and named him Tommy, which is what Jaqueline had called him. They said that the toys had been presents from Father Christmas, which they had been... but for their deceased sisters. Their parents were stunned.

THE LITTLE GIRLS HAD THE POLLOCK SISTERS' RESIDUAL MEMORIES

Remembering details about the toys wasn't the only spectacular synergy in this case. Florence once caught the twins playing car crashes. Gillian was cradling Jennifer's head and said: "The blood's coming out of your eyes. That's where the car hit you." John recalled that, when he had been to identify the bodies, Jaqueline's head had been bandaged above the eyes.

Gillian also once pointed to the birthmark on Jennifer's head and said: "*That's where you hit it on a bucket.*"

Before the tragic accident, Florence would often help John with the grocery business and deliver milk.



She would wear a smock when she was working, but when the girls died, she hung her smock up and stopped helping out with the business. One day, while decorating, John pulled Florence's smock out of the cupboard to wear as a coverup. Gillian spotted her father wearing this smock and said: "Why are you wearing Mummy's coat?" When John asked her why she called it that, she said that it was Florence's coat for delivering milk. She also got annoyed when Jennifer didn't remember that this was Mummy's coat.

THE NEW POLLOCK SISTERS SEEM TO REMEMBERED DYING

The little twins even had a fear of cars. Florence noticed that when they crossed the road, the girls would cling to her hands. She assumed it was because she was also fearful and her daughters were picking up on it. But on one occasion, a car started up abruptly very near to them and they both cringed back and started crying in terror: *"The car! The car! It's coming for us!"*

Nightmares about car crashes were also a regular occurrence in the children.

REVISITING THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

After the death of the Pollock sisters and the birth of the twins, the remaining Pollocks had moved away from Hexham. But when the twins were four, the family visited. As they were walking towards a park, Gillian and Jennifer started getting excited.

They couldn't see the park from where they were, but they knew the way themselves, despite never having been to Hexham before. The girls also exclaimed that they wanted to play on the swings, but they hadn't been told there was a park there at all.

As well as this, they seemed to know their way around Hexham, and even knew shortcuts down ginnels. When they reached the Abbey school their older sisters had attended, they pointed it out as their school. They remembered old school friends and the way to their houses.

"As he was walking the twins up the hill towards St. Mary's church, one turned to the other and said the school is up here where we used to go to and the playground is round the back. "At the time not only would they have been too small to see the school from where they were but there was also a large wall obscuring their view." - John Pollock

When the twins were five, they started talking about their dead sisters less and less and eventually they couldn't even remember a thing about it.

REINCARNATION EXPERT, IAN STEVENSON, TAKES A SPECIAL INTERESTED IN THE CASE

In the early 60s, Dr Ian Stevenson, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia, became interested in the case and paid the family a visit.



The story had been mentioned in news stories all over the world. Ian was an expert in the field of reincarnation. At the time, the Pollock sisters were four years old, and at the peak of their uncanny reincarnation journey. He examined the girls' birthmarks and asked them about their memories of their previous lives as the previous Pollock Sisters.

Ian revisited the Pollocks in 1978, when the twins were 20 years old and had forgotten everything about their previous childhoods. He arranged for blood tests to test their zygosity and discovered that they were indeed, monozygotic. Which is basically just fancy talk for "identical."

The twins were eventually included in his 1987 book, "Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation," as well as his 1997 book, "Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects."

IAN WILSON TAKES A MORE SCEPTICAL VIEW OF THE POLLOCK SISTERS CASE + SCAREDY CAT'S TAKE

The reincarnation of the Pollock sisters was one of several samsara cases discussed by British writer, Ian Wilson. Ian basically did what I'm about to do and noted that all the evidence in this case is reported by Florence and John Pollock. Both ended up believing entirely in reincarnation, but John was obsessed with the topic, so there's no way that bias didn't

enter into his narrative, unconsciously or consciously.

He also pointed out that the twins were related to the Pollock sisters and so of course would have similar characteristics. There is also no way they wouldn't have heard plenty about the Pollock sisters from friends and family. Children are sponges – they are always listening and always copying.

MATERNAL IMPRESSION AND THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

Ian Wilson also argued the case for maternal impression, the pseudo-scientific theory that the thoughts of a pregnant woman can influence the foetus. I'm going to take this one step further and say that, since the twins' conception, they were inundated with stories of their sisters and reincarnation. In the same way that the law of attraction works by micro-influencing people's actions, Florence and John were no doubt drip feeding small directions to their new daughters at a very formative time in their lives. That is bound to have an impact on how the new set of Pollock sisters behaved.

There is also the very real likelihood that John was embellishing his anecdotes of the twins, or even lying. After his complete conviction that these twins were reincarnations, he could very well have been trying to save face. And he is the only person left who can verify any of this, since the now fully grown Pollock sisters have no recollection of this time.



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBER IS BOUND TO HAPPEN

I am shocking like my father in some respects, for example, despite not having spent as much time with him as I did my mother. And I look the most like my mum's sister in colouring and build – we have the same features, including feet, faces, hair and colouring. I am pale and fair like my auntie, while both my parents have olive skin and very dark hair. While being the closest to my Mum, I also have a strange unspoken connection with my auntie that's difficult to explain. Families are very strange.

Similarities between family members, even more distant ones, is no surprise. Birthmarks can be caused by blood vessels not forming quite right or small patches of over-pigmentation. They're not generally genetic, so the fact that one twin had birthmarks and the other didn't isn't that unusual. Given that all the children were grown in the same womb, it's hardly surprising that some did have similar birthmarks.

What I'd like to know is how the boys were as children and whether they also had birthmarks. It would be interesting to hear what they remember of the whole incident and how they dealt with the supposed reincarnation of their siblings.

WHAT DO YOU RECKON?

Once again, I'm bringing up the lovely Sammi McEwan, because she is a twin. I have a fascination with twin bonds, so I'll be asking her about that.

Are you an identical twin? How is your relationship with your other sibling? Do you have differences?

Do you believe in reincarnation? If so, why? And how?

Let us know in the usual way!

