

You Can Only Die Once...?

| Aviva Sternfeld |

Did you ever wish you would have a second chance at life? Here are the stories of 10 people who did—literally. Read the bizarre accounts of people who seemingly returned from the next world. Some were declared dead, yet woke up at their own funerals. Others were presumed dead but lived to enjoy another day.

A note of caution: You may not want read this article before bedtime. Or shortly after a meal...



The stories keep cropping up. More and more, newspapers are carrying eye-witness accounts of people who were seemingly dead but came back to life. How and why this occurs is not within the scope of this article, but here we present 10 such stories.

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Baby Begins Crying After 12 Hours in Refrigeration

On April 3, 2011, Analia Bouter gave birth to a premature girl in the Hospital Perrando in Resistencia, a city in north-east Argentina. When the child was born, she showed no signs of life. The doctor presiding over the delivery could not detect any pulse or respiration. A second pediatrician examined the baby and concurred that there were no vital signs. After observing the child for a while, the doctors declared the baby stillborn.

Two orderlies arrived with a tiny wooden coffin, placed the baby inside and delivered her to the hospital's morgue. Several hours later, the baby's grieving parents prepared to leave the hospital. On her way out, though, Mrs. Bouter inexplicably decided that she had to see her baby one more time.

Of course, the hospital staff flatly refused the strange request. But Mrs. Bouter created such a commotion that they decided it would be easier to grant her wish. The Bouters entered the morgue to take one last look at the baby. They found the miniature wooden casket lying on a small bed with the cover nailed tightly shut. The couple had to search for a crowbar to open it. They removed the nails and took a deep breath. Then they lifted the cover off to take one last look at the tiny, lifeless form inside.

Mrs. Bouter stuck her hand inside and felt the precious little hand. As she did so, she was certain she felt something move.

She quickly pushed the thought out of her head, blaming it on her bereaved state.

And then they heard their baby cry.

The mother was so frightened that she fell to her knees in shock. "It can't be! I must be dreaming." But her husband had heard the faint cry too.

Mr. Bouter's brother was present, and he had the presence of mind to take matters into his own hands. Literally. He lifted the preemie and ran to the hospital's emergency room as fast as his legs could carry him. All the while he cuddled the baby in his chest to warm her. He later reported that the child was so cold after 12 hours in refrigeration that it felt like carrying an ice-cold bottle of milk.

This incredible story was an instant sensation in the South American press and across the world. It was seen as a modern-day miracle. One official in Argentina's Ministry of Health joked that the baby had received her death certificate just 20 minutes after birth, while her birth certificate only arrived a few weeks later.

The doctors cannot explain exactly how the child survived 12 hours of refrigeration. Whatever the explanation, this baby was granted a second lease on life. After several weeks of hospitalization her doctors were delighted to report that she was gaining weight and seemed to be developing normally.

Despite the happy outcome, the incident was a tremendous embarrassment for the hospital. Every doctor, nurse and orderly



The child who was rescued from the morgue.



Hospital where the newborn was declared dead.



Luz Milagros Bouter in her home.

who was involved with that baby was fired.

The newborn, named Luz Milagros, Spanish for *miracle light*, was released from the hospital and continues to grow in the comfort of her own home among her siblings.

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Man Crashes Own Funeral

On October 21, 2011, in Bahia, a state in eastern Brazil, 41-year-old Gilberto Araújo was walking on the street when a friend stopped him. The friend was pale as chalk and his teeth chattered in fright. "You're alive?!" he asked Araújo incredulously.

"Of course I'm alive! What do you mean?"

"How can that be? You're funeral is taking place right now! The coffin and body are lying in your parents' home, and your

entire family and all of your friends are there grieving for you!"

By now Araújo's staid complacency was completely shattered. "But I'm perfectly alive!" he argued to his badly shaken friend.

It seems that Gilberto's brother Jose had gotten a call from the police some hours earlier. They were sorry to inform Jose that his brother Gilberto had been found dead, murdered. Jose was asked to come down to the precinct to identify the body and arrange for burial.

A startled Jose reported to police headquarters and positively identified the murder victim as his brother Gilberto. Then he called his parents with the tragic news. The body was laid in a coffin and sent to the senior Araújo's home, where the funeral would be held.

Meanwhile, standing there on the street Gilberto decided that something had to be done quickly. He called a close friend who was then attending his funeral in his parents' home. Without the slightest pang of conscience, Araújo did his best to ruin the event.

"This is your friend, Gilberto Araújo. I'm alive! Tell everyone that I'm alive."

Of course, the friend at the funeral was certain that this was a practical joke, and a very poor one at that. He gave a nasty reply and quickly hung up so he would not miss the ceremony honoring his close friend.

There was no other choice. Gilberto Araújo would have to crash his own funeral. You can



Gilberto Araújo after crashing his funeral.