



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Deadly Phone Number	5
Two Laura Buxtons	9
Vanished into Thin Air	13
Apollo 11 and the UFO	15
Mixed Senses.....	19
Saved by a Jail Cell	23
Do We Get What We Deserve?	27
A World War II Hero.....	33
Sisters Reborn.....	37
He Saw the Future	41
The Silent Twins.....	47
The Lost Hiker	51
The Shadow Wolves.....	55
Beneath the Train.....	59
Ride of a Lifetime	63
The Mystery of the Lost Dutchman Mine..	67
Voices from Beyond	73
The Fajita Thief	77
Who Was Jack the Ripper?	81



DEADLY PHONE NUMBER

Can a phone number kill? In Bulgaria, the number 0888-888-888 seemed to be cursed. It was taken out of service in May 2010. The reason was unusual. Three men with this number had died.

Vladimir Grashnov had the number first. It was assigned to him by Mobiltel. This was a Bulgarian cell phone company. Grashnov happened to be its CEO. In 2001, he died of cancer. He was only 48 years old.

The cell phone business in Bulgaria is competitive. A rival company may have poisoned Grashnov. This might have caused his cancer. That is what many believed.

Next to have the number was Konstantin Dimitrov. This man was a Bulgarian mafia boss. In 2003, he visited the Netherlands. His drug

ring was there. One day, Dimitrov went out for lunch. He was killed outside the restaurant.

Dimitrov's death makes more sense. Mafia members are known for taking out their enemies. Still, the phone number coincidence is hard to shake.

The curse of 0888-888-888 continued. Konstantin Dishliev was the next victim. Dishliev sold houses and land. He also ran a secret drug ring. In 2005, Dishliev was leaving a restaurant. That is when someone shot and killed him.

Within five years, three men had died. They had all had the same phone number. This was more than a little strange. In 2010, Mobiltel stopped using the number. Now people get a message when they call it. It says the number is outside the network area.

THE STRANGE TRUTH

- ◆ Vladimir Grashnov was a good businessman. Still, it was suspected that his cancer was caused by radioactive poisoning from a rival.
- ◆ Konstantin Dimitrov was 31 years old when he was killed.
- ◆ Dimitrov's drug ring was a \$450 million business.
- ◆ It is believed that Russian mafia bosses wanted Dimitrov dead because they were jealous of his drug operation.
- ◆ Konstantin Dishliev had been talking on his cell phone when he was shot and killed.



TWO LAURA BUXTONS

Write a note. Put it in a bottle. Throw the bottle into the sea. Many people have done this. Some may be looking for help. Others might be seeking a new friend. Whatever the reason, the hope is that the message will reach someone.

Laura Buxton put a new twist on the message in a bottle. Her story is quite amazing.

In 2001, Laura lived in Staffordshire, England. The ten-year-old girl went to a party for her grandparents. It was their 50th wedding anniversary. Laura grabbed a balloon filled with helium. Her grandfather stopped her just before she released it into the air. He told her to write her name and address on it first. Perhaps someone would find the balloon. Then they could write back to her.

“Maybe you’ll get lucky,” her grandfather said. “And it won’t get stuck in a tree.”

Balloons normally shoot up into the sky. Then they are never seen again. This one was different. It did float up and away. But slowly, the helium ran out. The balloon began to drop. Two days later, it landed in Milton Lilbourne. Laura’s balloon had traveled 140 miles from Staffordshire to another English village.

A farmer found the deflated balloon in his field. He was about to throw it away. Then he saw “Laura Buxton” written on it. That was the name of his neighbor’s daughter. The farmer brought the balloon next door. His neighbors then wrote to the Laura Buxton who sent it.

The story was already incredible. Laura Buxton’s balloon had floated over 100 miles. Then it landed near the home of a girl with the same name. But things get even more unbelievable. It turns out that the two Laura Buxtons had a lot in common.

At the time, both Lauras were in their fifth year of school. The girls were fair haired. Neither had any siblings. They both had female black Labrador retrievers that were three years

old. Each also had a rabbit and a guinea pig.

There was just one small difference between the girls. Laura in Milton Lilbourne was nine years old. But she would be turning ten soon.

The girls talked on the phone and eventually met. Then they discovered more similarities. They were the same height, and both had blue eyes. When they met, both girls wore jeans and pink sweaters.

Laura Buxton released a balloon in Staffordshire. She was just having some fun. Who knew it would lead to such strange coincidences? More than that, it connected her with a lifelong friend.

THE STRANGE TRUTH

- ◆ It was a three-hour drive between the girls' homes.
- ◆ It was odd that both Laura Buxtons were the same height. They were four feet, seven inches. That was tall for their age.
- ◆ The two Laura Buxtons formed a strong friendship. Their parents say the girls continue to meet up regularly.
- ◆ The girls were interviewed by the radio program *Radiolab* in 2009. Their story was also featured on the popular TV show *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.