



It's Our History, Our Country

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The Man Who Killed Harry Houdini

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We Canadians love to test drive our vehicles before we buy them. We try clothes on before we bring them home and most of us love free food samples that delight our taste buds from the local grocery store. When something or someone makes a claim we like to see if that claim holds up to its promises.

Unfortunately, the 52 year-old Harry Houdini, (real name Ehrich Weisz) (1874 -1926) world-famous magician, made claims that he could take a punch to the abdomen by anyone. It was a McGill University (Canadian university) student, J. Gordon Whitehead, (?-1954) who took him up on his offer and delivered multiple blows to Houdini's abdomen (with permission) while he was in Montreal.

The eyewitnesses were students named Jacques Price and Sam Smilovitz (sometimes called Jack Price and Sam Smiley). The following is Price's description of events:

"Houdini was reclining on his couch after his performance, having an art student sketch him. When Whitehead came in and asked if it was true that Houdini could take any blow to the stomach, Houdini replied groggily in the affirmative.

In this instance, he was hit three times, before Houdini could tighten up his stomach

muscles, to avoid serious injury. Whitehead reportedly continued hitting Houdini several times afterwards, and Houdini acted as though he were in some pain."

Houdini simply had no time to tighten his stomach muscles before the punches and was already suffering from appendicitis but refused to let the pain slow him down.

Houdini died 10 days later on Oct. 31, 1926 of peritonitis a type of inflammation of the peritoneum .

Houdini's wife Bess, (1876-1943) tried in vain to reach Houdini via séances on the anniversary of his death but to no avail.

Some theories state that Houdini was murdered while others say it was a grave mistake and Houdini would have died regardless from his appendicitis. Regardless of what the outcome would have been history will say it was a McGill University student who killed the great Houdini.

Take what you will from this true story and remember, it's our history, our country.

For more information go to the links below.

<http://www.vehiculepress.com/titles/386.html>

<http://www.apl.org/history/houdini/biography.html>

<http://www.montrealmirror.com/2004/102804/news1.html>