

1. *Can a Failing Memory Can Account for Heironimus's Flubs?*

Roger Knights 8/12/2016 1300 words

Greg Long—I suddenly popped a question: “When you were at the film site, do you remember stepping over a log?”

He had a blank look. “I don’t remember.”

I knew from my transcripts that he had said he stepped over a log. Now he doesn’t remember. Were specific details of Patterson’s film, which Bob had watched on television over the years, influencing his already imperfect memory?

—*The Making of Bigfoot*, p. 405

Or maybe he’s been “winging it” when he tells his story, so he can’t keep the details straight.

Greg Long—“His [Heironimus’s] memory of the distances he drove is partly correct; other distances are not accurate. So? Is this evidence of lying or of a memory that has partly eroded over 35 years?? Read the following from WebMDHealth. There is a medical explanation why Bob Heironimus’s memory of distances doesn’t satisfy John Green’s desire for a PERFECT MEMORY.”

Point 6 of Long’s Rebuttal to Green’s “Responding to the Korff article,” online at http://www.northwestmysteries.com/makingofbigfoot/GreenResponseRebuttal_GLResponses_6_27_05REV_13_05.pdf

Comments: First, his memory wasn’t even partly accurate. His supposed correctness about one of the distances he drove was only according to Long’s mis-measured mileage. (The 2.9 miles Long measured from the Bluff Creek Company Store to the 1967 Bluff Creek Road roadhead, supposedly validating Heironimus’s 3-mile estimate (TMoB, p. 440), was wrong. It’s 1.3 miles (road-tested).

Second, it’s a ridiculous straw man for Long to imply that Green was demanding “a perfect memory,” as though Green were pettily objecting to some small, “understandable” memory lapse, like getting the distances slightly wrong (15 miles, say, rather than 20), or mildly jumbling the sequence of events, or describing a few details inconsistently.

Rather, Green was objecting, and quite rightly, that Heironimus hadn't provided even a rough approximation of any of the key features of the route—and a rough approximation is what any actual traveler in Heironimus's circumstances would have recalled. The drive to the filmsite was as memorable as a portage up the Paraná. What Heironimus described was a paddle in the park.

Here are excerpts—key sentences—that summarize the article Long referenced:

“Memory loss and brain aging are a natural part of growing older. ‘It is often the case that people will start to report in their 50s that they think their memories are slipping,’ says Zola. . . . Memory is tricky, and time is its worst enemy, says Zola. . . . And the longer the period of time that passes between the event and trying to recall it, the greater the chance we’re going to have some memory distortions and forgetting.”

This is superficially plausible, but as applied to Heironimus it doesn't stand up to analysis.

Heironimus told his full story in 1981, when he was 40, to Jim Gosney.

Long—Bob Heironimus opened up to a newspaper reporter who befriended him and told him his story many times, starting in 1981.

—Greg Long, in “Q & A—*The Making of Bigfoot*,” item #13, online at <http://www.rense.com/general51/q.htm>

Presumably Heironimus would have been specific in talking to a newspaperman who interviewed him repeatedly, because he would have peppered Heironimus with Who / Where / When / How questions.

I presume that the version he told Gosney then is the same as Heironimus's current recollection. If it weren't, you'd think Gosney would have notified Heironimus or Long of the discrepancy upon publication of the book.

All Long needs to do to sustain his “bad-memory” theory is to call Gosney and obtain Heironimus's good-memory version. If Long won't do so, we can dismiss his “bad-memory” excuse.

1. Heironimus likely told the full version before he was 40 to his brothers. They could be interviewed just like Gosney.

2. This isn't just a memory of distances, but also of the hard-to-forget character and driving time of the ride, a ride moreover that Heironimus made twice—not just once. Only if Heironimus were completely gaga, which he isn't, could he have forgotten it.
3. This isn't a memory of some mundane, forgettable, and long-gone event that Heironimus has had to dredge up out of the mists of his memory banks—the sort of situation described in Zola's boldfaced phrase above.

Rather, this was a happening that he'd been turning over in his mind ever since it first occurred. He regularly had his memory of the event stimulated by having to field inquiries as to whether he was the man in the suit.

Also, he'd realized at once the importance of “nailing things down” with locked-in memories, because he immediately told the guys at the Idle Hour, “Just look at this and do not forget what this looks like.” Therefore, he'd have been likely to similarly tell himself, “Do not forget what happened.” And, once he had engraved the details of his itinerary in his mind, he wouldn't have gotten most of them so badly wrong later.

4. Unlike most of the people suffering from the affliction described by Zola, who have an awareness that their memory is slipping, Heironimus has specifically and peevishly disclaimed having a foggy memory:

Long—Bob, do you feel your memory has been playing any tricks on you . . . ?

Heironimus— . . . Basically, I told you it was very simple. This is what I done. This is what I remember. And that's the way it happened. I mean, that's it.

—*The Making of Bigfoot*, p. 416

Underlining the point above, Long noted that Heironimus was never hesitant to claim forgetfulness in other matters (pp. 341, 367 (where he specifically blamed the passage of time), and 371). For instance:

Long—When I asked him a question he couldn't answer, he simply said, 'I don't know that,' or 'I don't remember.'

—*The Making of Bigfoot*, p. 341

That forthrightness eliminates the excuse that pride prevented him from confessing to having a foggy memory.

5. **Forgetfulness**, especially forgetfulness of matters one is aware one is forgetting (as in Heironimus's case) **is different from misremembering, which Heironimus heatedly denied** being guilty of (i.e., on page 416, quoted above). **He doesn't sound like he's "all at sea"** (maundering and misremembering) when he's making errors. **He sounds like he's "winging it"** and thereby "losing the plot."

Notice the last three words in his initial estimate of the distance to the campsite from the roadhead: "four miles—maybe five miles" (p. 348). They imply that he was so acutely aware of the distance that he could estimate it to **within half a mile**. His attempt to make it look like he was really there by being ultra-precise about the mileage ironically bars anyone from invoking a bad-memory excuse. His false precision was knowingly phony, given that his guess was absurdly "short" by 18 miles.

Long—"Bob, do you feel your memory has been playing any tricks on you. . . ?"

Heironimus—. . . **"Basically, I told you it was very simple. This is what I done.** This is what I remember. And that's the way it happened. I mean, that's it." Irritated, his voice rose. "I don't know where I stopped to take a leak at between Yreka and Happy Camp, California, stuff like that."

—*The Making of Bigfoot*, p. 416

This last statement implies that he clearly remembered the major parts of what happened, which makes the Long-site's subsequent "bad memory" defense a tough sell.

Memory experts say that extraordinary events are well recalled. [cite]

Heironimus had his chance to plead "poor memory": when he talked to Long & other interviewers—and he did plead poor memory then on

many occasions—too many, IMO. [cite pages] Now it's too late for him or his defenders to claim bad memory, only after the error of a claim of his is revealed. Or at least he can't make that claim more than once or twice. That's his quota, in his position, after having had a chance to make that claim ahead of time.