

# Disqualifying References?

HOW IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED IS ONE QUESTION. Whether it **did** happen is another and can only be answered by an examination of the content of the transmissions. The first question is whether Betty's notes contain any disqualifying references – that is, described circumstances that are known to be incorrect.

For example, Charles McGill of Oakland, California reported on July 6, 1937 that he had heard:

NRUI KHAQQ KHAQQ SOS SOS SOS  
KHAQQ 281 NORTH HOWLAND CANNOT  
HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER DRIFTING  
SLOWLY NORTHWEST WE ABOVE  
WATER MOTOR SINKING IN WATER  
VERY WET

Not only is the message suspiciously similar to a more fragmentary message heard earlier by the US Navy and widely reported in the press, but the apparent description of an airplane afloat and still transmitting is contrary to our understanding of the reasonable possibilities. McGill, by the way, was subsequently investigated by the Coast Guard and found to be a hoaxer.

Similarly, a note in a bottle recently touted as the “Noonan Document” said that the plane was sinking because “the starboard gas tank ruptured” (there were three fuel tanks in each wing and the rupturing of any or all of them would not cause the plane to sink). The letter, supposedly written by Noonan, also makes reference to Amelia wearing her good luck elephant hair bracelet (which she is said to have left behind in New Guinea).

Betty's notebook contains many references that don't seem to make sense, such as “N.Y N.Y.,” “Hello Bud,” and “Take it away Howland” – but there are no apparent disqualifying references.

apparent  
Amelia  
take it away  
Howland  
N.Y. N.Y. N.Y.  
Marie